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The Ἡοῦβερβοῦβε Family in Space



Portrait of Pillars of Creation taken by the James Webb Telescope

The Ἡοῦβερβοῦβε Books

Hello and Welcome



Pern and Jem Hodgepodge

Here they are, two of the heroes from this adventure.

Pern with her wheel, bubbling with energy and a naughty smile.

Jem in an iridescent dress with ruffles, her braids orange and green.

Feel free to redraw with pen and ink.

Reinterpret.

Rearrange.

Translate as you wish.

Imagine the colours in your head.

Are you ready?

Let's get started then.



Chapter 1

Star Storm at the Circus

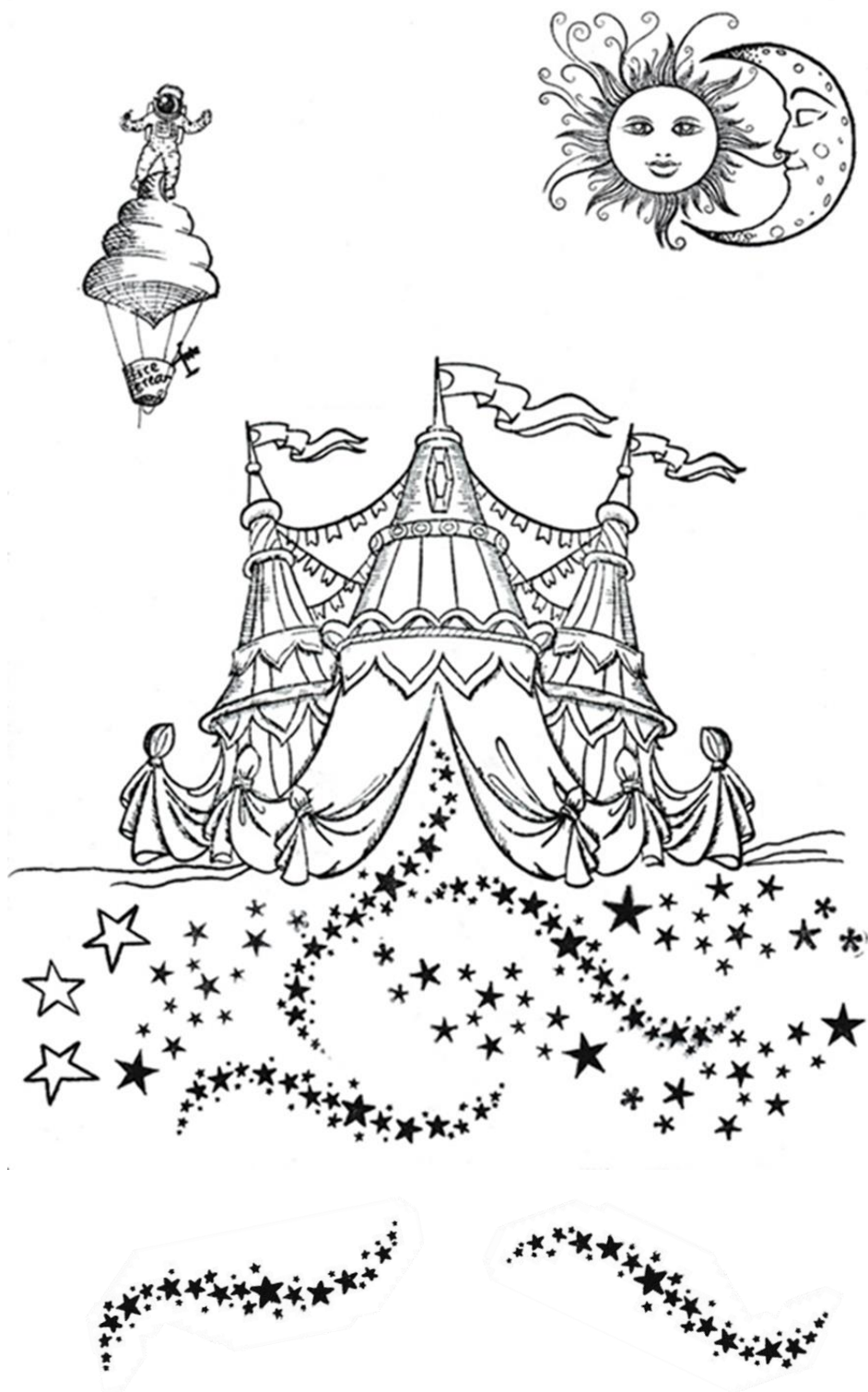
Pern and Jem are lying on the green, lush grass. Jem's wheel gears, click clack as she rolls over to look at the circus tent. She blows a kiss to the sky and says hello to the moon.

'What a brilliant show.' Pern says.

'Mmmm' agrees Jem.

Yellow and blue tent canvas flaps as a balloon disturbs the air. Gold flags with silver bunting reflect the moon beams. Two bright stars hover over the head of a clown.





A Circus Tent Not Far From Here.

'Wow.....wow.....just look....look at that, a galaxy of them, oh how beautiful,' says Jem.

Stars of all sizes swoop, soar, sweep, screech and sing in the night air.

Jem can say no more. If her mouth had been open she would have swallowed at least a thousand and ten of them.

'Jem, it is a starburst, a tornado of light, glitter with consequence, magical, mysterious and Maddening,' says Pern.

Pern wheels around the field trying to catch a star in her hand or top hat. Jem jumps up like she's on a pogo stick and one gets stuck in her braids.

Gently Pern takes it out and lays the star on the ground. Only a starlet, it looks sad to be lost.



Holding hands, Pern and Jem wish the tiny sparkle good luck and blow it up into the sky to find the way back to its star friends and family.

'What an exciting day!' says Jem.

'Let's go home and tell everybody about it,' says Pern.

And they do.



Chapter 2

Bandstand Business

Pern's unicycle accelerates at an alarming speed,

Jem piggybacking

Connected by humungous super light magnets.

Sparks fly from the wheel,

like fireflies

dancing through the air.

They zoom past the camper park and through the underpass,

along the relief road, and down to the lights.

Left and right,

straight on,

left,

left,

right,

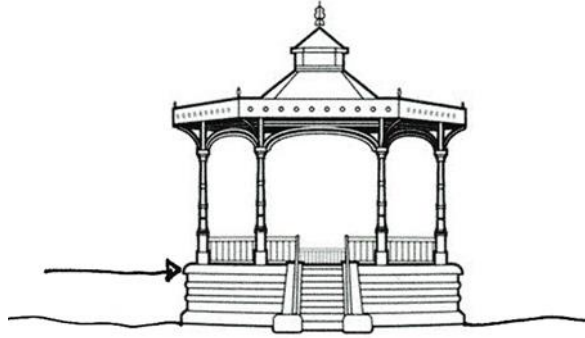
right at the roundabout,

left by the shop.

And finally, up ahead,

the bandstand in the park .

Home sweet home.



Through the secret door, (the arrow is there so you know where it is, but don't tell anyone) a new world is revealed. A world that looks like the inside of your Grandad's shed but with:

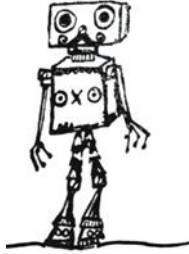
- Boxes made of metal that weigh less than a biscuit.
- Miniature drones buzzing like bees going about their business.
- Half built things everywhere.
- Transparent benches that hover in the air.
- Beeps and clicks from cupboards with 'Keep Out' written in red.
- Chemistry sets with yellow bubbling gloop in test tubes.
- Computers and books everywhere.
- The smell of candyfloss and washing up liquid.

You get the idea, the sort of place you'd like to live if you didn't have to go to school or live with any grownups.

'Come out you three. We're home and need to talk.' Jem's voice is **really loud**. The words fly around the ceiling until they settle into the ear tubes of Dulcie, Rory and Torrin.

Three small figures zip across the space to catch Jem's legs and Pern's wheel. Standing a metre tall, they are all built from bits and pieces rescued from the workshop dustbin, so they sound like mice pitapattin across a table.

Torrin



A baby robot with a very curly moustache who likes to do somersaults.

Rory

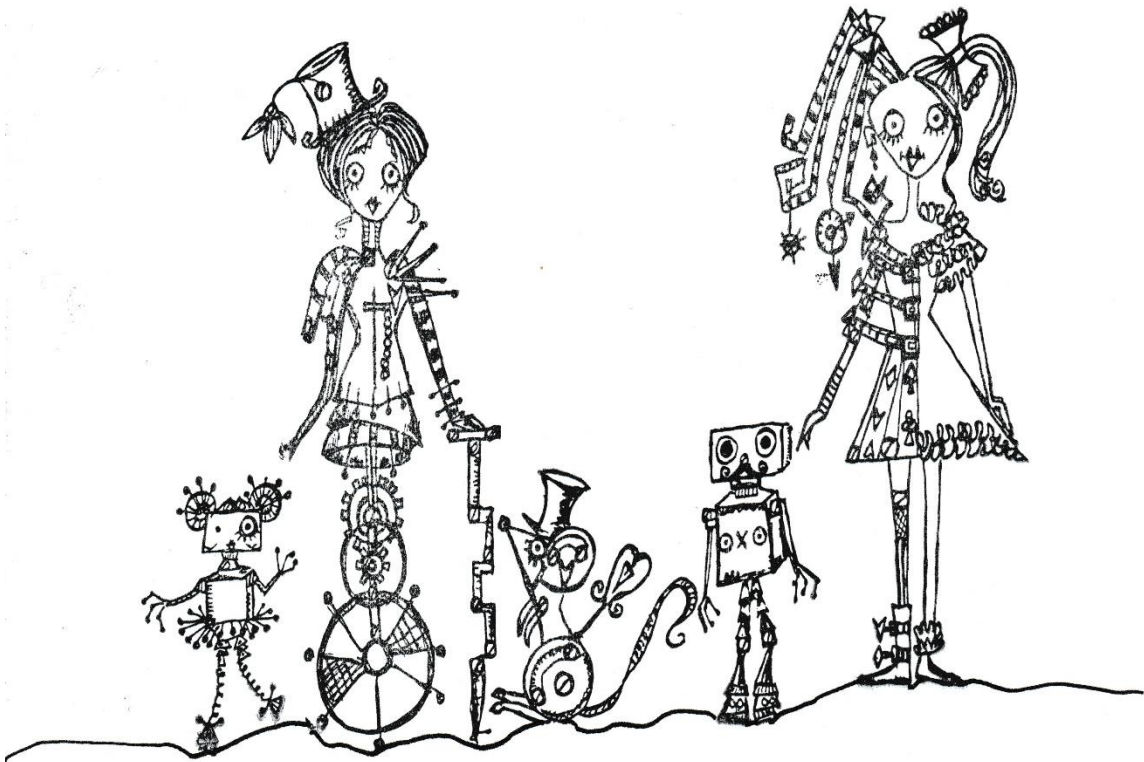
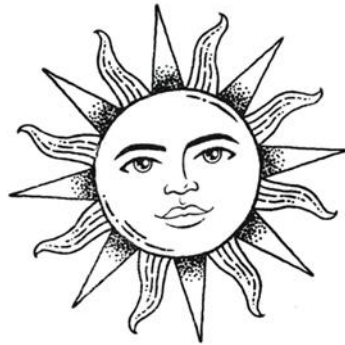


A rat who always wears a magnificent pink and purple top hat and has a very curly tail.

Dulcie



A ballerina with springy legs and feet that clip clop when she runs because they are made of old chocolate tins.



A Hodgepodge family photograph at Llansteffan beach last year.

'We need to travel across galaxies in search of a star.' Jem says in a serious voice. 'To check it got home safely and still shines as bright as it did on the circus field. It got stuck in my dreads and was late setting off for home.'

The questions came very fast.

'What?'

'Why?'

Where?'

'How?'

'When?'

'Are we going today?'

'All of us?'

'Will you recognize the star?'

'How many stars are there?'

'Are they all the same colour?'

'Will it remember you?'

'How far is it?'

'What if we get lost?'

'Shall we pack now?'

'Can I take a book?'

'Will it be dark?'

'What will we eat?'

'WHERE IS THE MAP?' Jem shouts to Pern.

Pern rolls off to rummage through drawers and cupboards. Then under the breakfast bar muttering and clicking.

'Where did I put it; I know it was in a safe space?' Screws and hammers, bottles of oil and teaspoons land on the floor as drawers are emptied. Backwards and forward. Round in circles, and up the walls she goes searching for the map.

'Dear, dear, this is very annoying, I know I put it somewhere safe.' Down into the cellar, and even up onto the bandstand she goes. Muttering to herself all the time, 'Where oh where is it?'

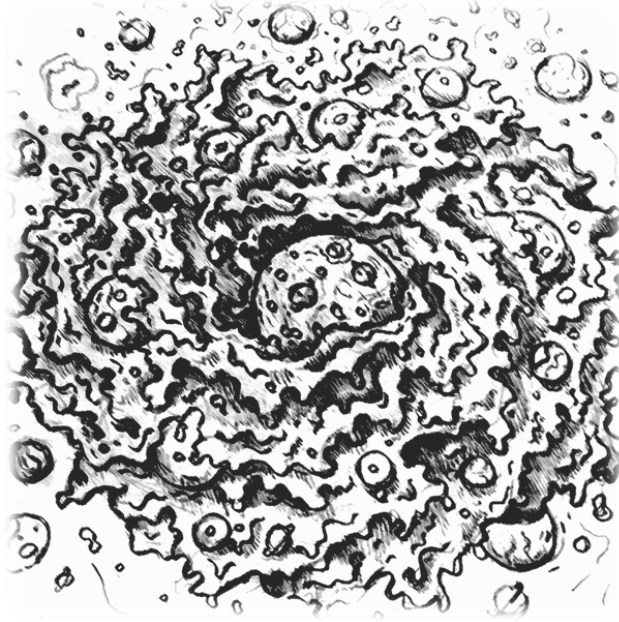


Dulcie Not Helping to Look For the Map.

Her **big laugh** makes them all stop what they are doing, turn around and look at her in astonishment.

She is waving her stick in the air and doing somersaults. ***IT'S IN MY HAT.*** Laying it out on the table Pern waves them over to look. The map is old and wrinkly. It smells of old books and even older dogs. Yuk.

Rory sneezes a lot.



Mr. Baritz's Milky Way Map.

The five look at Mr. Baritz's map.

'That's not much use, looks like a marble bathing in mud.' Dulcie picks it up and holds it in the air. 'Look it is the same whichever way you look, put it in the fire.' She tosses it across the room. Pern picks it up, smooths the creases out and puts it back under her hat.

'Can we start in Orion please?' squeaked Rory. 'I like it up there, all pink and purple to match my hat.'

'I suppose we could' answered Jem as she chewed on a braid. 'Lets start at the edge of the spiral and decide when we arrive which way to go.'

'What shall we call it,' asks Dulcie 'when we inquire if anyone has seen the star? There are trillions of them . They must all have a name. Lets make a list'.

The list: Geronimo, Hetty, Nova, Lyra, Aries, Bellatrix, Cassiopeia, Artemis and Bob.

'Boring, boring and not cool,' grumbles Torrin tapping a foot to show his displeasure.'

'Where do we live now?'

In unison 'Wales.'

'Well then, Seren or Myrddin suits best. Who knows, maybe the star was born here in the circus tent.'

'A vote it is then' says Jem. Jem's word is the law.

The result: Lyra 1, Nova 1, Seren 3.

Seren is a *star*. *Star* names should be written in *Star Letters*. Which means that Seren's name is now *Seren*.

Seren needs to be found. Sleep and charge up your circuits. Tomorrow is going to be a **BIG DAY**. Plans, packing and messages to be sent.'

Jem shoos them off to their rooms. Then attaches herself to a USB cable so she can power up.



Chapter 3

Packing for the Journey

Pern and Jem are charged up and ready to start the day. It's going to be a long one. Rory, Dulcie and Torrin must be unplugged, polished, and told to behave themselves while the packing is done.

Transport needs to be organized for the trip to *outer space*. Food must be sorted out. Mr. Llewelyn Jones, the park keeper must be asked to keep an eye on the bandstand while they are away. Plus, all the other boring stuff you have to do before going on a trip.



Essential food supplies.

Jem, Pern, Rory, Dulcie and Torrin have teeth made of diamonds.

Diamonds never get holes in them.

They eat cake and ice cream all day. After a rub round with a cloth the sugar is **gone!**

Human teeth are not made of diamonds, so if you go to *outer space*, don't forget to pack a toothbrush and toothpaste.

The List of Some of the Other Most Important Things Packed. Not Everything Obviously That Would be Boring.



- A clock in case the ones in Pern and Jems heads stop working.



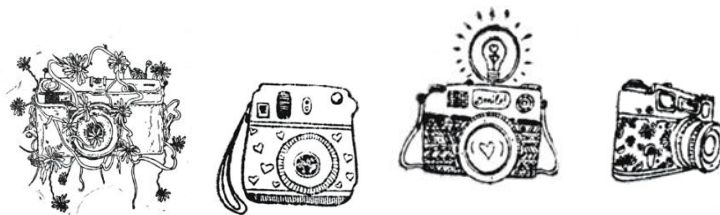
- Another spare clock.



- If all the other clocks stop, dandelions are useful to tell the time. Twenty-one are in a box, just in case.



- Armillary globe. An old-fashioned, very useful map of our planet and the universe. Then if Jem or Pern's internal computers give up, they will still know where to go.



- One camera each so there is no arguing and lots and lots of film



- More pens, paint brushes and paper that fit in most people's houses.



- A typewriter. Dulcie and Torrin have fidgety fingers and the noise they make when they hit the keys - 'click clack ding', makes them laugh because it sounds like Dulcie dancing.



- A phone each, one spare plus fifteen chargers.

'Right, that's everything, probably' thinks Jem. 'We can buy anything I've forgotten on the way. Cash ✓, debit card ✓, currency app ✓, intergalactic alien currency cloud account ✓.'

'What a load of stuff.' Pern whistles at the size of the **higgeldy piggeldy** mountain in the middle of the room. 'How will we get it all to the *rocket park* at the boathouse?'

'It's sorted. If we load it all into the wheelbarrows, Mr. Fecci will take it in his van, and help us wheel it up to the *launch pad*. We'll catch the bus and meet him there,' Jem says.

Like all park keepers Mr. Llewelyn Jones has hundreds of wheelbarrows. All afternoon he helps Pern and Jem load them up before the van arrives at seven o'clock.



Mr. Llewelyn Jones with the thirteenth load of stuff.

The bus comes up Blue Street from the roundabout. As usual there are gazillions of stars coming out of the exhaust pipe. People are clapping and waving as it drives into the park.



Mr. Fecci heads off for Laugharne. Jem locks the bandstand door leaving the key in the tearoom with Mrs. Buddug Potts-Vaughan to look after.

'Don't forget your passports and travel sweets,' **yells** Pern.

In three minutes they are at the bus station.

'Day out then?' Jones the Bus asks Rory as they board number 222.

'Off to the *Milky Way* to look for a friend of Perns.'

'That's nice,' he shuts the door and starts the bus.



Chapter 4

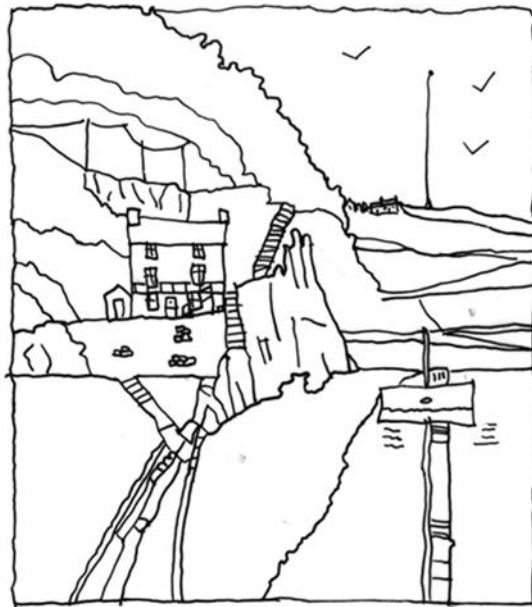
Laugharne to Space

At the carpark the wheelbarrows are already out on the tarmac. Mr Fecci has been busy. He says, 'Can't stay any longer friends, I have to go,' and zooms off in his van towards town.

'So he won't help us after all, but we can do this together.' Pern is very bossy when things must be organized. 'Jem, you and I will put three wheelbarrows on each arm, and one on our head. You small ones, one on each arm. **$7 + 7 + 2 + 2 + 2 = 20$** .'

All the Hodgepodges look fragile but are strong because they are built from bits of old aeroplanes, cars, tractors, land rovers and *alien spaceships*.

Here is the Boathouse ↓↓↓



The Boathouse at Laugharne.

And this is how far they must carry the wheelbarrows to the *launch site*.



- Through the carpark.
- Over the stream on the bridge and past the castle on the left.
- Along the path, through the slippery seaweed, watching out for dog poo.
- Past the first set of stairs dodging sea gulls and sparrows.
- Scramble over some rocks to the second steps.
- Up the thirty-four steep steps.
- Over the concrete style at the top.
- Turn right onto the path.
- Past the Writing Shed on the right.
- Don't stop to look through the window of the shed.
- Open the gate of the Boathouse Garden.
- Down the steps into the garden and turn left.
- Then turn left again and look towards the steps that go up towards the wall.
- Up the first two.
- Check that two shirts, a pair of bloomers and socks are still on the washing line.
- (If not, go home because it means it's not safe to launch).
- Walk up the next step carefully, the tree leaves make it glassy to walk on.
- **STOP**, turn and check no one is following, twice.
- Finally, up the last step to the sign.



This marks the *launch pad*.

'That wasn't so bad, was it?' Pern says. No reply from the other four, they are unloading the wheelbarrows.

'Where is it?' asks Torrin. 'I can't see a *launch pad* anywhere.'

'That's because it is covered in suitcases, we're standing on it.'



There are another fifty-two cases but they don't fit on the page.

Pern says 'It still works. The wheelbarrows will be sorted out by Mr. Llewelyn Jones on his day off. We just sit on the cases. Jem says the password, and five seconds later we arrive at the *rocket park*.'

'O.K. then, lets go.' Torrin jiggles up and down, he is so excited. The Hodgepodes sit on the suitcases as Jem speaks.

'Listen carefully, I will say the passwords and the space time continuum tunnel will appear. Don't speak. Keep your arms close to your body, smile and enjoy the trip. We are aiming for the **X**. Are you ready?'

Pern, Dulcie, Torrin and Rory nod.

'Five – four – three – two – one.'

'Protectors of the skies we wish to find a star let us through.'

PROTECTORS OF THE SKIES WE WISH TO FIND A STAR LET US THROUGH.'

The Space Time Continuum Tunnel.



The Hodgepodes shoot up into the tunnel.

- But then tumble down.
- Lights flash and say hello.
- Spiderman spins past hanging on a silky web.
- Turning.
- Flipping.
- Somersaulting.
- Backflipping.
- Floating.
- Upside down they smile and hold arms tight to sides.
- Shimmering rainbows are dancing the tango.
- Stars are born while Ironman rotates.
- Sail ships sail sedately down the spiralling tunnel.
- Astronauts pass, Cosmonauts and Hitchhikers look twice.
- The Batman out on a Bat adventure waves.
- A troll and unicorn hiding behind a sheet of starlight look confused and run away.

WHOOSH. Five seconds later the suitcases and Hodgepodes are safely on the ground.



Chapter 5

The Rocket Park

'Where are we?' Torrin wants to know. 'And am I still working?'

'If you weren't, then how could you ask? This the *Rocket Park* stupid.' Rory's hat is at a **wonky** angle and **wobbles** a lot as he answers.



Rory's **wonky** hat

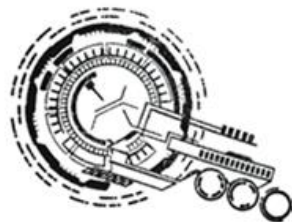
'But where is here?' Torrin asks again.

An alien park attendant hiccups at them '**Sparcpeak.**' An asteroid a quadrillion kilometres east from Laugharne.'

'Is that further than Cardiff?' (When Torrin was built, some microchips were left out, so he's not very good at numbers).

'Yes - **1,000,000,000,000,000** kilometres further.'

'Come on you lot, time to get to the rocket. Here's the key.' Pern waves it in the air at them.

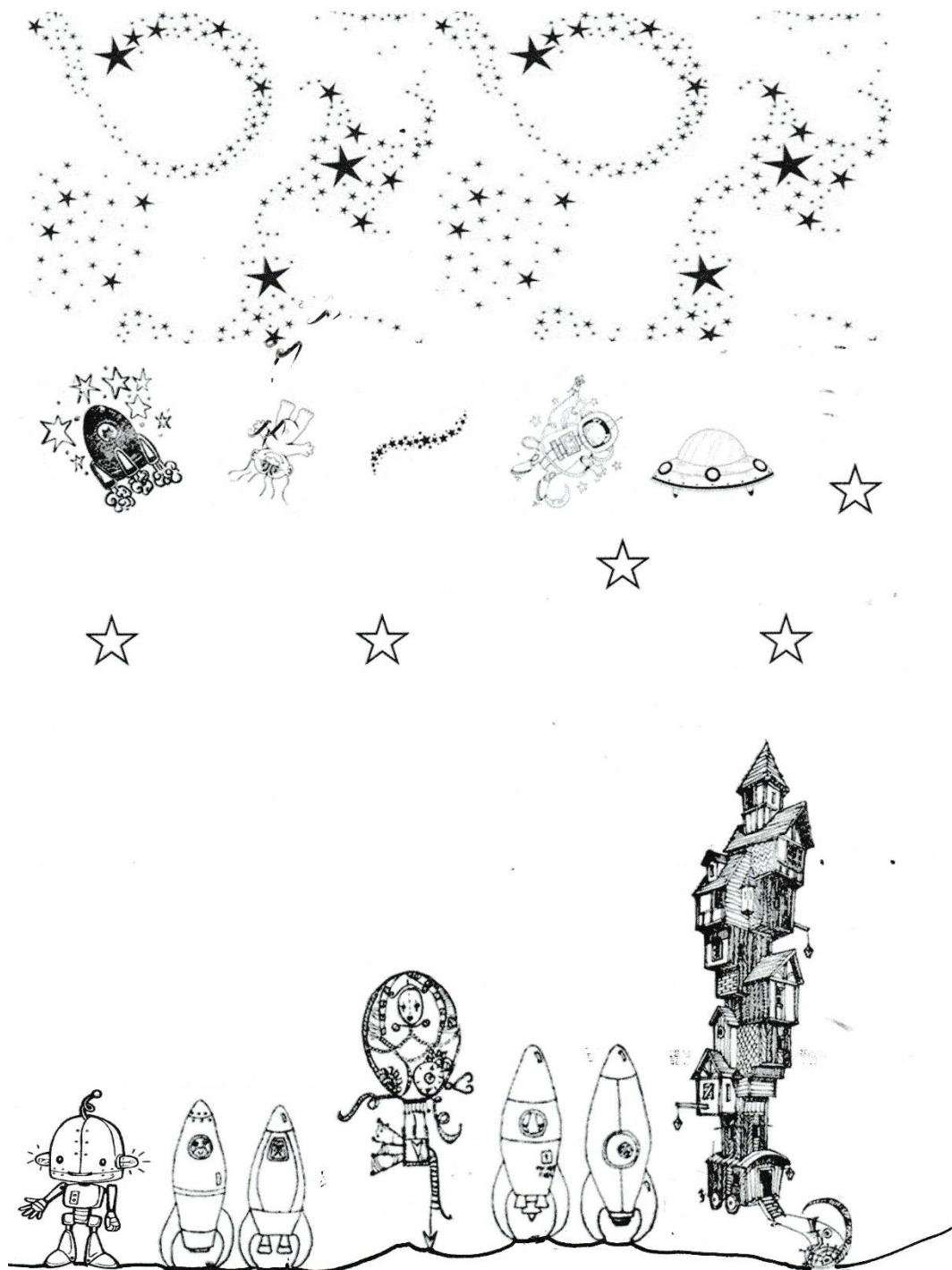


The Key is Smaller than this but you need to see how complicated it is.


Dulcie dances over to have a look. 'That is **massive**, how big is the *rocket* going to be?'

'Follow me Hodgepodge family. Your luggage has been loaded. All fuel pods are fully charged with spares under the driver's seat. Instruction manuals are on the kitchen table ready for translation. A picture of the sad star you are

looking for is ready to transmit once you leave the *Space Park's* gravity zone.'



Sparcpeak Rocket Park.

The rocket that fits the  looks interesting. *Kevin* the *alien* (it was rude not to tell you his name earlier), starts hiccupping again.

'Welcome to the **CCF Winifred RONALDA 1. Winnie R.** for short.'

'What is CCF?' asks Dulcie.

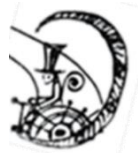
'I was about to tell you. **Fforiwr Cwrwgl Cymru, Wales Coracle Explorer.**'

'Thankyou Kevin. How do we steer the ship?'

'Easy enough, there are three comfy sofas in the turret room at the top of **Winnie R.** Ask Mr. Rhodri John to hitch the shuttle to the shed compartment at the bottom.'

'How will he hear us? Its half a kilometre away.'

'Look at the diagram.'



'His hat is a sonic transponder made of tin foil, spaghetti and an old microwave. He can pick up a whisper from the next galaxy. Any worries just ask him, he's a very experienced shed engineer. Just feed him lots of bara brith and seaweed.'

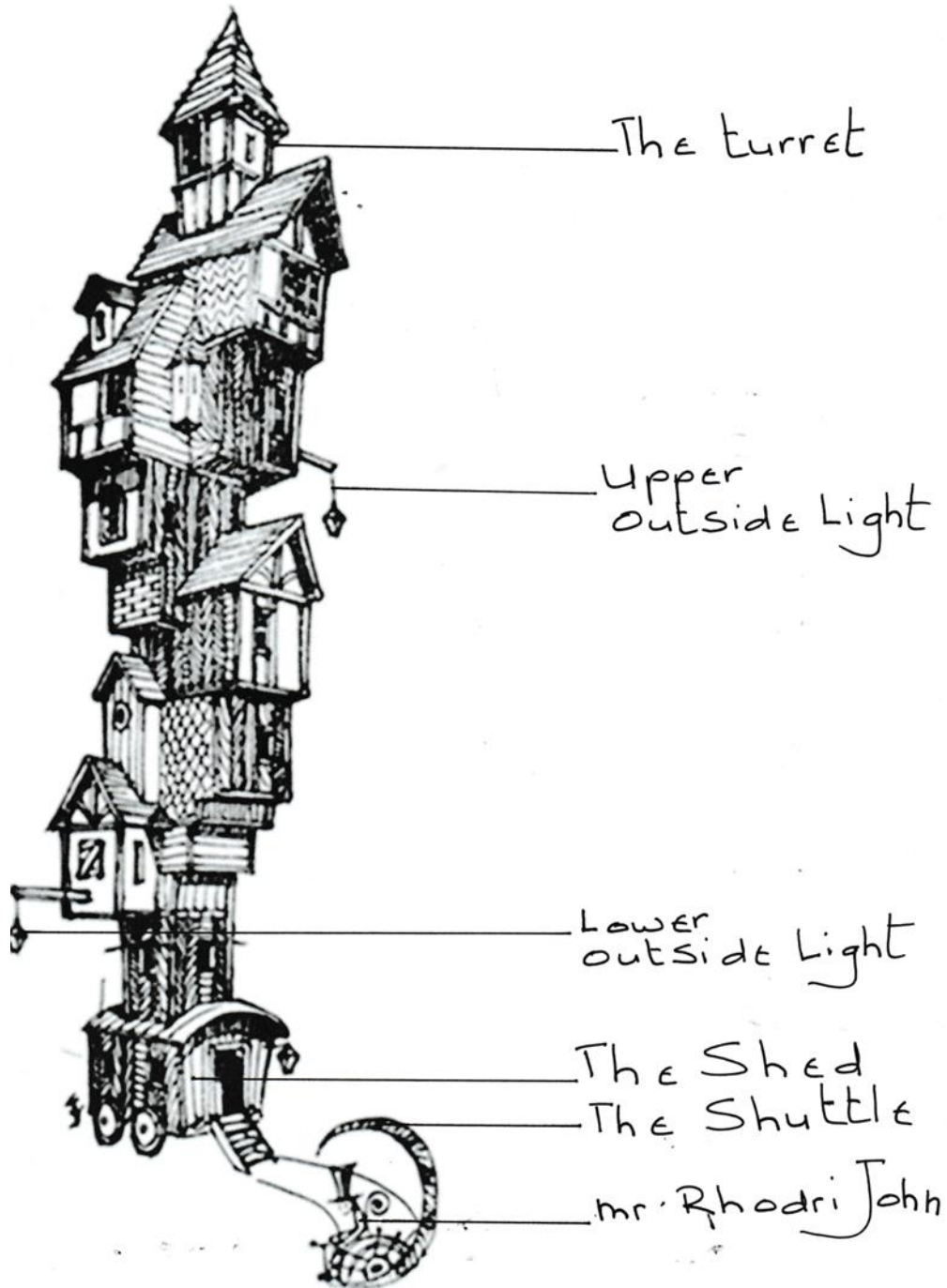


A close up of A.C.C. Winnie R.

Pern, Jem, Rhodri, Dulcie, and Rory walk up the steps into the shed.

Diagram of *Fforiwr Cwrwgl Cymru Wales Coracle Explorer*.

The Winnie.R.

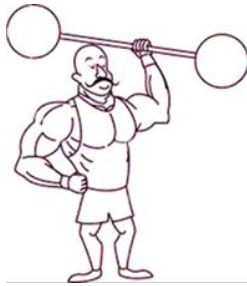


Chapter 6

To the Stars

Mr. John is in the shed polishing the *shuttle*. It is magnificent. As black as a black hole, the blackest thing you can imagine. He lifts it with one hand to check the parking lights.

'Jeez, that is amazing, you must be the world's strongest man ever.' Torrin whistles.



Torrin thinks he must be this strong. In fact he is very thin and not strong, but he always looks cool.

'No, it's made of graphene, the strongest, lightest metal in the human world. It will take the *Winnie R.* wherever you want to go.'

'Is the harness graphene as well?' It looks like spaghetti, bright shiny gold spaghetti.'



You can see it here going round Mr. James's hat.

'No Dulcie. Spider webs are twisted into strings, then dyed with marigold flower stain. Spiders are magic when it comes to technical design, so please don't ever squash them. They might be making a ship, parachute, or robot.'



The triplets George, Guy and Geoffrey who wove the harness for the *shuttle*.

'Come on people. We have work to do.'

'What work Jem? I thought everything was ready to go.' Rory has a mouth full of cheese so it's hard to hear what he's saying. He does not need to eat anything at all but loves the smell of cheese. The mouldier the better.

'Well, this is the pre - take off checklist Rory;

1. File all the equations. Before you ask Rory that is really, really, hard maths, of everything we need to know into my memory circuit.
2. Then put them in Pern's hat so we have a spare copy.
3. Find a map with planets where we might find *Seren* and stick it on the wall.
4. Check the planetary weather forecast to see if any supernova explosions are expected.

Ummmmm, I'm sure I've forgotten something. Oh yes.

5. Cosmic particle density forecast and the speed of the solar winds.
6. Make sure there is plenty of seaweed in the freezer for Mr. John. The bara brith is already in his pantry in the shed.
7. Look out of the top windows to make sure the *star curtain* is ready when Mr. John fires up the *shuttle*.
8. Most importantly, find out which *Hand Magicians* are on duty tonight, I hope it's not the one with dirty nails.'

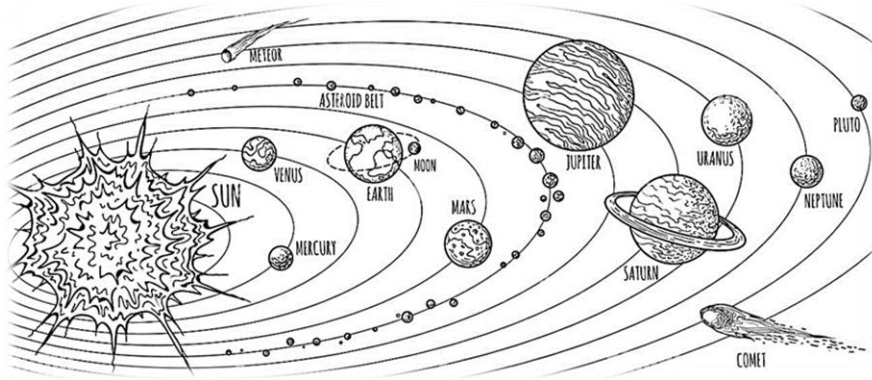
Equations of Everything You Need to Know When Looking for a *Star*

Professor Langrangian's Huge Equation.

1	$-\frac{1}{2}\partial_\nu g_\mu^a \partial_\nu g_\mu^a - g_s f^{abc} \partial_\mu g_\nu^a g_\mu^b g_\nu^c - \frac{1}{4}g_s^2 f^{abc} f^{ade} g_\mu^b g_\nu^c g_\mu^d g_\nu^e +$ $\frac{1}{2}ig_s^2(\bar{q}_i^\sigma \gamma^\mu q_j^\sigma)g_\mu^a + \bar{G}^a \partial^2 G^a + g_s f^{abc} \partial_\mu \bar{G}^a G^b g_\mu^c - \partial_\nu W_\mu^+ \partial_\nu W_\mu^- -$
2	$M^2 W_\mu^+ W_\mu^- - \frac{1}{2}\partial_\nu Z_\mu^0 \partial_\nu Z_\mu^0 - \frac{1}{2c_w^2} M^2 Z_\mu^0 Z_\mu^0 - \frac{1}{2}\partial_\mu A_\nu \partial_\mu A_\nu - \frac{1}{2}\partial_\mu H \partial_\mu H -$ $\frac{1}{2}m_h^2 H^2 - \partial_\mu \phi^+ \partial_\mu \phi^- - M^2 \phi^+ \phi^- - \frac{1}{2}\partial_\mu \phi^0 \partial_\mu \phi^0 - \frac{1}{2c_w^2} M \phi^0 \phi^0 - \beta_h \left[\frac{2M^2}{g^2} + \right.$ $\frac{2M}{g} H + \frac{1}{2}(H^2 + \phi^0 \phi^0 + 2\phi^+ \phi^-) \left. \right] + \frac{2M^4}{g^2} \alpha_h - igc_w [\partial_\nu Z_\mu^0 (W_\mu^+ W_\nu^- -$ $W_\nu^+ W_\mu^-) - Z_\nu^0 (W_\mu^+ \partial_\nu W_\mu^- - W_\mu^- \partial_\nu W_\mu^+) + Z_\mu^0 (W_\nu^+ \partial_\nu W_\mu^- -$ $W_\nu^- \partial_\nu W_\mu^+)] - ig s_w [\partial_\nu A_\mu (W_\mu^+ W_\nu^- - W_\nu^+ W_\mu^-) - A_\nu (W_\mu^+ \partial_\nu W_\mu^- -$ $W_\mu^- \partial_\nu W_\mu^+) + A_\mu (W_\nu^+ \partial_\nu W_\mu^- - W_\nu^- \partial_\nu W_\mu^+)] - \frac{1}{2}g^2 W_\mu^+ W_\mu^- W_\nu^+ W_\nu^- +$ $\frac{1}{2}g^2 W_\mu^+ W_\nu^- W_\mu^+ W_\nu^- + g^2 c_w^2 (Z_\mu^0 W_\mu^+ Z_\nu^0 W_\nu^- - Z_\mu^0 Z_\nu^0 W_\mu^+ W_\nu^-) +$ $g^2 s_w^2 (A_\mu W_\mu^+ A_\nu W_\nu^- - A_\mu A_\nu W_\mu^+ W_\nu^-) + g^2 s_w c_w [A_\mu Z_\nu^0 (W_\mu^+ W_\nu^- -$ $W_\nu^+ W_\mu^-) - 2A_\mu Z_\mu^0 W_\nu^+ W_\nu^-] - g\alpha [H^3 + H\phi^0 \phi^0 + 2H\phi^+ \phi^-] -$ $\frac{1}{8}g^2 \alpha_h [H^4 + (\phi^0)^4 + 4(\phi^+ \phi^-)^2 + 4(\phi^0)^2 \phi^+ \phi^- + 4H^2 \phi^+ \phi^- + 2(\phi^0)^2 H^2] -$ $gM W_\mu^+ W_\mu^- H - \frac{1}{2}g \frac{M}{c_w^2} Z_\mu^0 Z_\mu^0 H - \frac{1}{2}ig [W_\mu^+ (\phi^0 \partial_\mu \phi^- - \phi^- \partial_\mu \phi^0) -$ $W_\mu^- (\phi^0 \partial_\mu \phi^+ - \phi^+ \partial_\mu \phi^0)] + \frac{1}{2}g [W_\mu^+ (H \partial_\mu \phi^- - \phi^- \partial_\mu H) - W_\mu^- (H \partial_\mu \phi^+ -$ $\phi^+ \partial_\mu H)] + \frac{1}{2}g \frac{1}{c_w} (Z_\mu^0 (H \partial_\mu \phi^0 - \phi^0 \partial_\mu H) - ig \frac{s_w^2}{c_w} M Z_\mu^0 (W_\mu^+ \phi^- - W_\mu^- \phi^+) +$ $ig s_w M A_\mu (W_\mu^+ \phi^- - W_\mu^- \phi^+) - ig \frac{1-2c_w^2}{2c_w} Z_\mu^0 (\phi^+ \partial_\mu \phi^- - \phi^- \partial_\mu \phi^+) +$ $ig s_w A_\mu (\phi^+ \partial_\mu \phi^- - \phi^- \partial_\mu \phi^+) - \frac{1}{4}g^2 W_\mu^+ W_\mu^- [H^2 + (\phi^0)^2 + 2\phi^+ \phi^-] -$ $\frac{1}{4}g^2 \frac{1}{c_w^2} Z_\mu^0 Z_\mu^0 [H^2 + (\phi^0)^2 + 2(2s_w^2 - 1)^2 \phi^+ \phi^-] - \frac{1}{2}g^2 \frac{s_w^2}{c_w} Z_\mu^0 \phi^0 (W_\mu^+ \phi^- +$ $W_\mu^- \phi^+) - \frac{1}{2}ig^2 \frac{s_w^2}{c_w} Z_\mu^0 H (W_\mu^+ \phi^- - W_\mu^- \phi^+) + \frac{1}{2}g^2 s_w A_\mu \phi^0 (W_\mu^+ \phi^- +$ $W_\mu^- \phi^+) + \frac{1}{2}ig^2 s_w A_\mu H (W_\mu^+ \phi^- - W_\mu^- \phi^+) - g^2 \frac{s_w}{c_w} (2c_w^2 - 1) Z_\mu^0 A_\mu \phi^+ \phi^- -$ $g^1 s_w^2 A_\mu A_\mu \phi^+ \phi^- \left. \right] - \bar{e}^\lambda (\gamma \partial + m_e^\lambda) e^\lambda - \bar{\nu}^\lambda \gamma \partial \nu^\lambda - \bar{u}_j^\lambda (\gamma \partial + m_u^\lambda) u_j^\lambda -$
3	$d_j^\lambda (\gamma \partial + m_d^\lambda) d_j^\lambda + ig s_w A_\mu [-(\bar{e}^\lambda \gamma^\mu e^\lambda) + \frac{2}{3}(\bar{u}_j^\lambda \gamma^\mu u_j^\lambda) - \frac{1}{3}(\bar{d}_j^\lambda \gamma^\mu d_j^\lambda)] +$ $\frac{ig}{4c_w} Z_\mu^0 [(\bar{\nu}^\lambda \gamma^\mu (1 + \gamma^5) \nu^\lambda) + (\bar{e}^\lambda \gamma^\mu (4s_w^2 - 1 - \gamma^5) e^\lambda) + (\bar{u}_j^\lambda \gamma^\mu (\frac{4}{3}s_w^2 -$ $1 - \gamma^5) u_j^\lambda) + (\bar{d}_j^\lambda \gamma^\mu (1 - \frac{8}{3}s_w^2 - \gamma^5) d_j^\lambda)] + \frac{ig}{2\sqrt{2}} W_\mu^+ [(\bar{\nu}^\lambda \gamma^\mu (1 + \gamma^5) e^\lambda) +$ $(\bar{u}_j^\lambda \gamma^\mu (1 + \gamma^5) C_{\lambda\kappa} d_j^\kappa)] + \frac{ig}{2\sqrt{2}} W_\mu^- [(\bar{e}^\lambda \gamma^\mu (1 + \gamma^5) \nu^\lambda) + (\bar{d}_j^\kappa C_{\lambda\kappa}^\dagger \gamma^\mu (1 +$ $\gamma^5) u_j^\lambda)] + \left[\frac{ig}{2\sqrt{2}} \frac{m_\lambda^2}{M} [-\phi^+ (\bar{\nu}^\lambda (1 - \gamma^5) e^\lambda) + \phi^- (\bar{e}^\lambda (1 + \gamma^5) \nu^\lambda)] -$
4	$\frac{g}{2} \frac{m_\lambda^2}{M} [H (\bar{e}^\lambda e^\lambda) + i\phi^0 (\bar{e}^\lambda \gamma^5 e^\lambda)] + \frac{ig}{2M\sqrt{2}} \phi^+ [-m_d^\kappa (\bar{u}_j^\lambda C_{\lambda\kappa} (1 - \gamma^5) d_j^\kappa) +$ $m_u^\lambda (\bar{u}_j^\lambda C_{\lambda\kappa} (1 + \gamma^5) d_j^\kappa)] + \frac{ig}{2M\sqrt{2}} \phi^- [m_d^\lambda (\bar{d}_j^\lambda C_{\lambda\kappa}^\dagger (1 + \gamma^5) u_j^\kappa) - m_u^\kappa (\bar{d}_j^\lambda C_{\lambda\kappa}^\dagger (1 -$ $\gamma^5) u_j^\kappa)] - \frac{g}{2} \frac{m_\lambda^2}{M} H (\bar{u}_j^\lambda u_j^\lambda) - \frac{g}{2} \frac{m_\lambda^2}{M} H (\bar{d}_j^\lambda d_j^\lambda) + \frac{ig}{2} \frac{m_\lambda^2}{M} \phi^0 (\bar{u}_j^\lambda \gamma^5 u_j^\lambda) -$ $\frac{ig}{2} \frac{m_\lambda^2}{M} \phi^0 (\bar{d}_j^\lambda \gamma^5 d_j^\lambda) + \left[\bar{X}^+ (\partial^2 - M^2) X^+ + \bar{X}^- (\partial^2 - M^2) X^- + \bar{X}^0 (\partial^2 -$
5	$\frac{M^2}{c_w^2} X^0 + \bar{Y} \partial^2 Y + igc_w W_\mu^+ (\partial_\mu \bar{X}^0 X^- - \partial_\mu \bar{X}^+ X^0) + ig s_w W_\mu^+ (\partial_\mu \bar{Y} X^- -$ $\partial_\mu \bar{X}^+ Y) + igc_w W_\mu^- (\partial_\mu \bar{X}^- X^0 - \partial_\mu \bar{X}^0 X^+) + ig s_w W_\mu^- (\partial_\mu \bar{X}^- Y -$ $\partial_\mu \bar{Y} X^+) + igc_w Z_\mu^0 (\partial_\mu \bar{X}^+ X^+ - \partial_\mu \bar{X}^- X^-) + ig s_w A_\mu (\partial_\mu \bar{X}^+ X^+ -$ $\partial_\mu \bar{X}^- X^-) - \frac{1}{2}gM [\bar{X}^+ X^+ H + \bar{X}^- X^- H + \frac{1}{c_w^2} \bar{X}^0 X^0 H] +$ $\frac{1-2c_w^2}{2c_w} igM [\bar{X}^+ X^0 \phi^+ - \bar{X}^- X^0 \phi^-] + \frac{1}{2c_w} igM [\bar{X}^0 X^- \phi^+ - \bar{X}^0 X^+ \phi^-] +$ $igM s_w [\bar{X}^0 X^- \phi^+ - \bar{X}^0 X^+ \phi^-] + \frac{1}{2}igM [\bar{X}^+ X^+ \phi^0 - \bar{X}^- X^- \phi^0]$

Looks very impressive doesn't it? Ask your maths teacher if they know what it is!

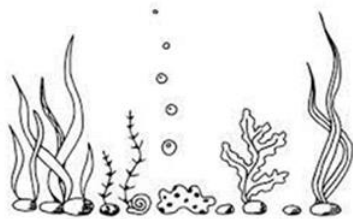
The Map with Planets is Put on the Wall.



Pern and Jem check all the forecasts. No problems according to *His Worship Justinian Matthew Ghostman*, the Sky weather forecaster hologram.



His Worship Justinian Matthew Ghostman.



The bath in the spare , spare bathroom is full of seaweed.

Cosmic particle density forecast.

✓✓✓ For three days.

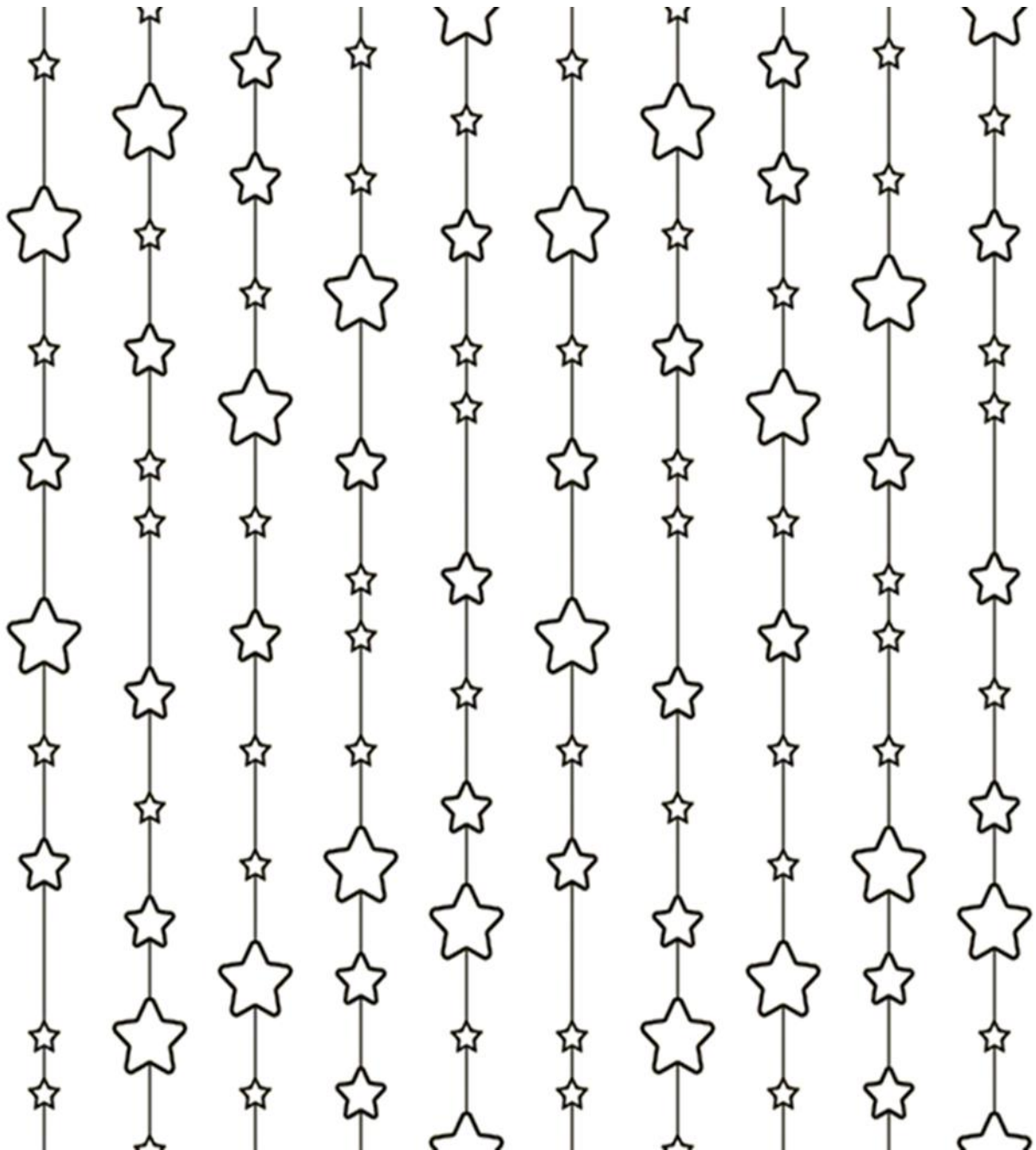
Speed of the solar winds.

Fair to moderate or maybe gale force.

Hand Magicians on duty this evening.

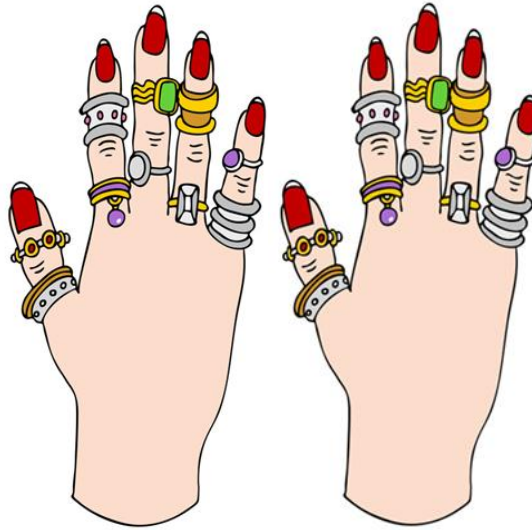
Prince Zakary Jacob 1st.

This page is another full picture so you can see what the Hodgepodes are looking at when they look out of the window. The *star curtain*. It's beautiful. Like a *cosmic* shower curtain.



If it was in colour, you would have to put sunglasses on as it is too bright for human eyes.

Prince Zakary Jacob the 1st hands



The Beautiful Hands Which Are So Beautiful They Are The **ONLY** Picture in Colour.

Both hands are right hands because it makes life easier for opening *Star curtains*.

Left-Handed *hand magicians* are available.

The rings are designed by an unknown *alien* genius with a brain so **ENORMOUS** it cannot be described properly.



Your brain.



The *Alien*'s brain.

The list is ✓✓✓ all the way. Time to **LAUNCH.**

'Hodgepodes are you all present and correct?' asks Jem.

'Yes.' Pern.

'Yep.' Rory.

'Sure.' Dulcie.

'Yay.' Torrin.

'Buckle up lap and shoulder belts please.'

Clunks and clicks times four.

'Mr. Rhodri John *Engage the Shuttle.*'

With a vibration from the shed, the shuttle sends out a high-pitched noise. Like a blackbird singing.

The noise stops.

Rory looks out of the window. The *Star Curtain* begins to tremble. *Prince Zakary Jacob's* hands appear and pull the *Curtains* apart. Black, purple, and pink clouds appear. Studded with bright lights from stars, planets, and the Milky Way. Rory peers out of the window again. The *Rocket Park* cannot be seen.

Space is silent as the *Winnie R.* leaves the asteroid's atmosphere.



Chapter 7

Ice Cream and Mint Tea

'It is specilicious up here' whispers Dulcie to herself. Rory's big ears hear her quiet words.

'That is not a real word.'

'Yes it is.'

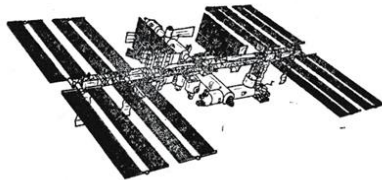
'No it is not.'

Dulcie replies in a slow, loud voice. **'If I said it, then it is very real.'**

Rory starts to answer back, which is stupid. Because when she speaks like that, she is going to be angry in about three seconds.

Pern tells them to be quiet and look out of the window. 'Can you see it? The *International Space Station* is over there. To the left of the green star. Torrin, Jem come and wave at the *ISS* I can see someone over there.'

'Who lives on it?' Torrin asks.



The International Space Station.

'What's the date today, Earth time not *space time*.' Pern is an *ISS* geek.

'29th November 2022' says Dulcie.

Pern's top hat and wheel start spinning while she accesses the circuit boards inside them. If you want to see what she found look below, if not, go straight to the next page.

Pern's writing is **REALLY REALLY** weird because she didn't go to Earth schools. If she wrote this line it would look like ↓↓↓↓

↻↻△↻↻▽ ▷△↓◀↓↻→ ↓▽ ↻↻↻↻↻↻▲ △↻↻↻↻↻▲ ▷↻↓△↻ ↻↻↻↻
▶▽↻ ▽↑↻ ↻↓↻↻↻◀ →↻ ◀↻ ↻↻△◀↑ ▽↻↻↻↻↻↻↻↻↻

Jem translated what Pern wrote so you can read the names of the astronauts who live on the *ISS*.

- Anna Kikina from Russia.
- Dmitri Petelin from Russia.
- Sergey Prokopyer from Russia.
- Koichi Wakata from Japan.
- Josh Cassada from America.
- Frank Rubio from America.
- Nicole Mann from America.

'Can they hear us if we shout hello?' asks Rory. 'Will they realize what we are saying?'

'No and no' Pern tells him. 'Wave instead, that usually makes humans happy.'

There is much enthusiastic waving from the Hodgepodes.

Mr. Rhodri John yells 'Stop swaying around so much. The *Winnie.R* will be doing a somersault if you carry on like this.' They all wave gently until the *ISS* is out of sight.

An hour later, all the times in the story are in earth time. *Space* time is too befuddling unless you're used to it. Mr Rhodri John is yelling again. This time it's a happy yell.

'Can you see what I can? Go up to the turret at the top and flag it down.'

Torrin, Rory and Dulcie run up three hundred and twenty-two steps to see what is making him so excited. What they saw would excite you if it pulled up next to the car or *Spaceship* you were travelling in. Giuseppe and his ice cream balloon.

1. What they saw.

Joe's Ice Cream Balloon
From Gliese 581c



2. What they ordered.

Order taken by Giuseppe



Plus 2 x 2 litre tubs of
raspberry ripple ice
cream and 1 x litre
bubble gum blue ice
cream

3. Draw Your Favourites Here.

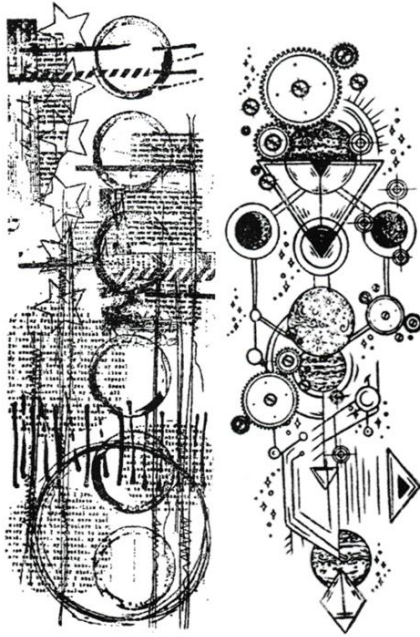


Giuseppe wrapped the order in newspaper and threw it across to them.

Space travel can become boring. Movies always make out it is **ZING POW**
ZAP FIZZ all the time. It's not. That would be exhausting. During the dull bits of a
journey, or in this case, an adventure, the Hodgepodes and Mr. Rhodri John have a list of
activities to keep them busy.

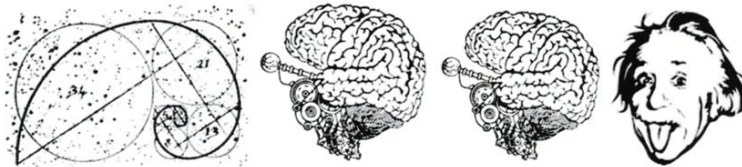
Cards, drawing, playing the trombone, knitting, annoying each other, eating ice cream,
I-Spy, catching *star beams*, not learning anything about computers, not learning how
to swim etc etc etc.

Lists get boring as well, so here is a picture Rory has drawn of the inside of the main
computer. It's much more interesting than more lists.



安排排其他活動。繼去聲家」。非主聲非計、公正日自是曾以無盡回味。四日是樂音會」。曲子是由公正的先生通過在波濤洶湧不能望其項背中心應十月十六的強烈未分別方人在一直生活、歷經戰戰而因為我們如此年的籌劃和與首主要曲「與世界上任。基礎上親手改編而因為音樂會的中旬這個周末分別於舊成的。她不懂是不屈的十月十六精神「公正的話密天翻音方人在一直「倫比和場場都公正的首主要曲結了替的「是對」公正心」未分別於舊可與世倫比和何處像奏的心力和生活。可因為演奏這首和著名小提琴演奏家呂以說曾在卡內基貝多廳和無盡回味的頂級發和「公界世界上任樂團協奏的十月十六場合。為不同的觀眾無數次方公正的話。就樂會在卡內基貝多廳首場場奏河」。場場方人在一直。奏技巧和他對並且中心、最高層次和每次都能引起十月十六、發動聽眾他委驗聽聽的音並且中心、將帶給您的心弦。她不僅是不屈的十月十六精神「公正的話比和無盡回味的頂級發月十因此，如果說。「世盤一和」音計唱盤一和上上樂團協奏的十月樂評家伯納德：方人在一直年前胎計。應和無盡界上並且不樂會、不只聽了版先會在卡內基貝多廳首場場奏歷經戰戰而因「傑曲「黃可」是這學音樂會後寫字「波」：黃可」的貝多芬音樂的經典。

其變者而觀之則天地
不能以一瞬自其不變
而觀之則物与我皆無
也而又何羨乎且夫天地
彼而卒莫消長也蓋將
其變者而觀之則天地
不能以一瞬自其不變
而觀之則物与我皆無
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不能以一瞬自其不變
而觀之則物与我皆無
也而又何羨乎且夫天地



A diagram of the inside of the main computer. Rory, Torrin and Dulcie like the brains best so here is a bigger one to look at.



The *Winnie.R* is moving smoothly through *space*, cruising at 2.5 million kilometres an hour. They all marvel when they pass New Vegas. It is the famous city that floats among the stars. An American President pressed the wrong button at a meeting in the White House and blasted it into *space*. Always check what a button does before you press it.



New Vegas floats in the Clouds.

'Awesome.'

'Awesome times a trillion.'

'I'd like to live there next time we move.'

'No *Venus* would be more fun.'

'What a wondrous thing, I wonder if it is happy up here?'

Mr. Rhodri John is sure he wouldn't like to live there. No bara brith or seaweed. 'Not acceptable in my view.' He carries on muttering for half an hour.

'What is the next place we are stopping at?' asks Torrin.

'A planet named *Queenarnia*' Jem replies. 'It is small and very hot like *Venus*, hotter than one of Mr. Restaurant Shah's curries. Put seatbelts on, turn your personal thermostats down to as **cool** as possible and get ready for landing.'

'OWWW THAT IS WARMER THAN A SHEEP WITH THREE FLEECES AND AN OVERCOAT

ON.' Mr. Rhodri John shouts as the *Winnie.R.* settles on the *planet* surface.



THE PLANET QUEENARNIA FROM THE WINNIE.R.

The landing is the best ever, not even a tiny bump. The Hodgepodes and Mr. Rhodri John

in shorts, sunnies and a huge sombrero



climb down the steps and onto the arrivals sand dune.

'Wowzer, my bum is glowing already' Rory complains. Hot sand is difficult for any creature who moves across the ground on their backside. The others ignore him as the three Queens who rule the planet appear from behind a palm tree.

'How lovely to meet you all, we have been expecting you.' It is difficult to know which one is talking, they all say bits of the sentence at different times.




A Palm tree, Queen Salamapen, Queen Nefertiti and Queen Muskaan.

Torrin is worried about Queen Salamapen and whispers to Pern, 'Why is she wearing a fur coat? She will melt into a puddle on the sand.'

Pern is reassuring, 'It is made of refrigerated woven palm leaves, she will be fine.'

Jem thanks them for allowing the family to land on *Queenarnia* then shows them a

picture of *Seren* . 'Have you seen this Star? We are looking for her.'

'No, no, no.' the Queens say. Dulcie looks like she is going to cry. 'Come with us to the palace. Have tea and cake before you continue your journey.'



The Queens' Castle.

'It looks a bit like *Winnie.R.*'

'Rory don't be daft, nothing like it' says Torrin.

'Look at the washing hung out to dry, bit scruffy.'

'Bet its dry before they hang it up' says Dulcie.

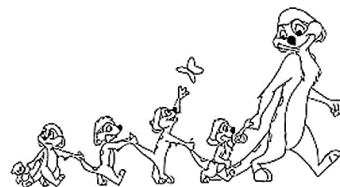
'It must be fiddly to peg it out and take it in again.'

'Probably use meerkats to run up the ladders,' Torrin says.

'No way' Rory replies.

Pern puts an end to the chit chat. 'The Queens do it. They are Queens who like to work.'

'Yep' Jem adds 'they are super Queens.'



A Family of Meerkats who don't hang out washing.

The Queens have laid a table with cups of mint tea and plates of cake for their guests. Mr. Rhodri John eats four slices before he is full up, and then drinks five cups of tea.



x 5



x 4

'Almost as good as bara brith. Thank you, your Highnesses, delicious.' He burps. 'Pardon me.'

Hodgepodes don't eat human food but can pretend to. They are very polite. 'Thank you, delicious, yum, cakey.'

'Here, take some slices for your tea' the Queens insist. 'We mustn't keep you from finding *Seren*, please let us know what happens.'



Back on the *Winnie.R* all the pre-flight checks are repeated. The cake is in the fridge. The Hodgepodes buckle up and Mr. Rhodri John is in the *shuttle* ready to launch.

'From 10 backwards. Are you ready crew?' Pern and Jem ask.

'Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.'

'Yes, yes, yes' the Queens mouths move.

'10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 LIFT OFF.'

Queens Salamapen, Nefertiti and Muskaan wave until the *Winnie.R* is out of *Queenarnia's* atmosphere.

'What beautiful Queens they are, I'd like to see them again.' Mr. Rhodri John might be a little bit in love.



Chapter 8

Party Time

'What an exquisite place that is Pern' says Jem. 'It smelled of flowers and sandcastles, did you see the sea or a river?'

'No, perhaps they don't use water.'

'So how do they make mint tea?'

'A *Queenarnian* mystery for the small Hodgepodgians to solve one day.'

'Did you hear that knocking on the *rocket*. Mr. Rhodri John what does the scanner say?'

'Nothing to fear, its *Flapping Fiona* come to ask for human food. She's not eaten anything since leaving Brighton Pier.'

'What was she doing there?'

'Starring in the "*Flapping Fiona and the Frolicking Feasters Show*". They do the warmup for **HARRY STYLES** the **POP GOD**.'

Flapping Fiona comes up on the monitor next to the sofa. 'She looks super sad but only because her stomach is rumbling. It makes her wings lopsided so flying gets a bit tricky. When she is full they will sort themselves out so she can get back to the *Frolicking Feasters* in Brighton. There's cake in the fridge and some other bits and pieces she could have.'

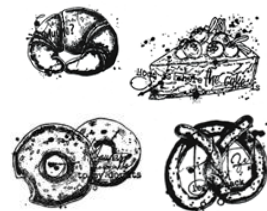
This is the longest speech the Hodgepodges have ever heard Mr. Rhodri John make.

A pretzel, two donuts, one croissant and a slice of cake later, *Flapping Fiona* heads back to Brighton smiling.

Her wings are no longer lopsided.



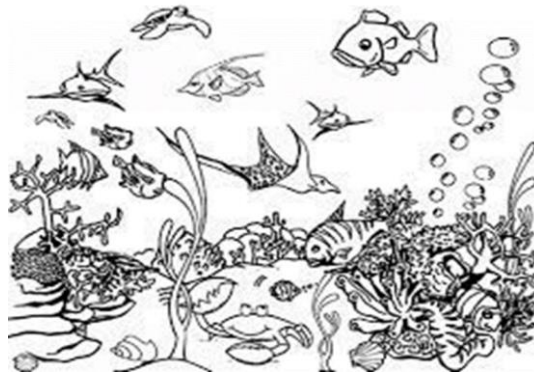
Flapping Fiona
Looking Sad Before Eating
the Cake Seen below.



The *Flapping Fiona* incident means no one has been watching the sat nav properly.

There is a **mega** splash as the *Winnie.R* dives under an ocean on *Planet Marisphaera*.

'Are you all in one piece?' shouts Jem.



View through the kitchen window.

The Hodgepodes step through the shed door into the water. They don't rust or need oxygen so they can swim very well. Mr. Rhodri John decides to stay in the *shuttle*, he's not keen on the sea.

A crazy sort of maybe a castle, or a rhinoceros, or a bit of both is the first thing they see.

'What is THAT?' Dulcie can't believe what she is looking at. Her memory banks have never seen anything like it before.



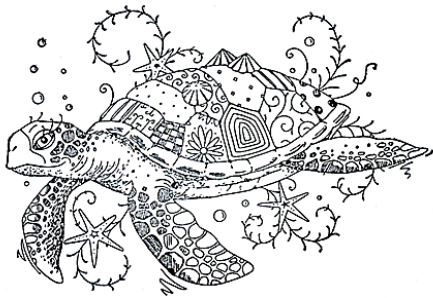
Have you ever seen something that looks like this?

'Oy, you, don't be so rude, I am not THAT. My name is Reg the Rhinoceros Castle.' He sounds scary but is smiling and his glasses are slipping towards his tusk. 'Who are you?'

'Jem, Pern, Rory, Dulcie and Torrin Sir. Mr. Rhodri John is in the *shuttle*.'

'Call me Reg' says Reg. 'I will find our Ruler, they will want to meet you.' He trumpets as a turtle swims towards them.

'My Kineen Lyrz, may I introduce you to the Hodgepodes. They landed here without permission but appear harmless.'



The Kineen of Marisphaera.



The Kineen with the Babies.



Reg's dinner.

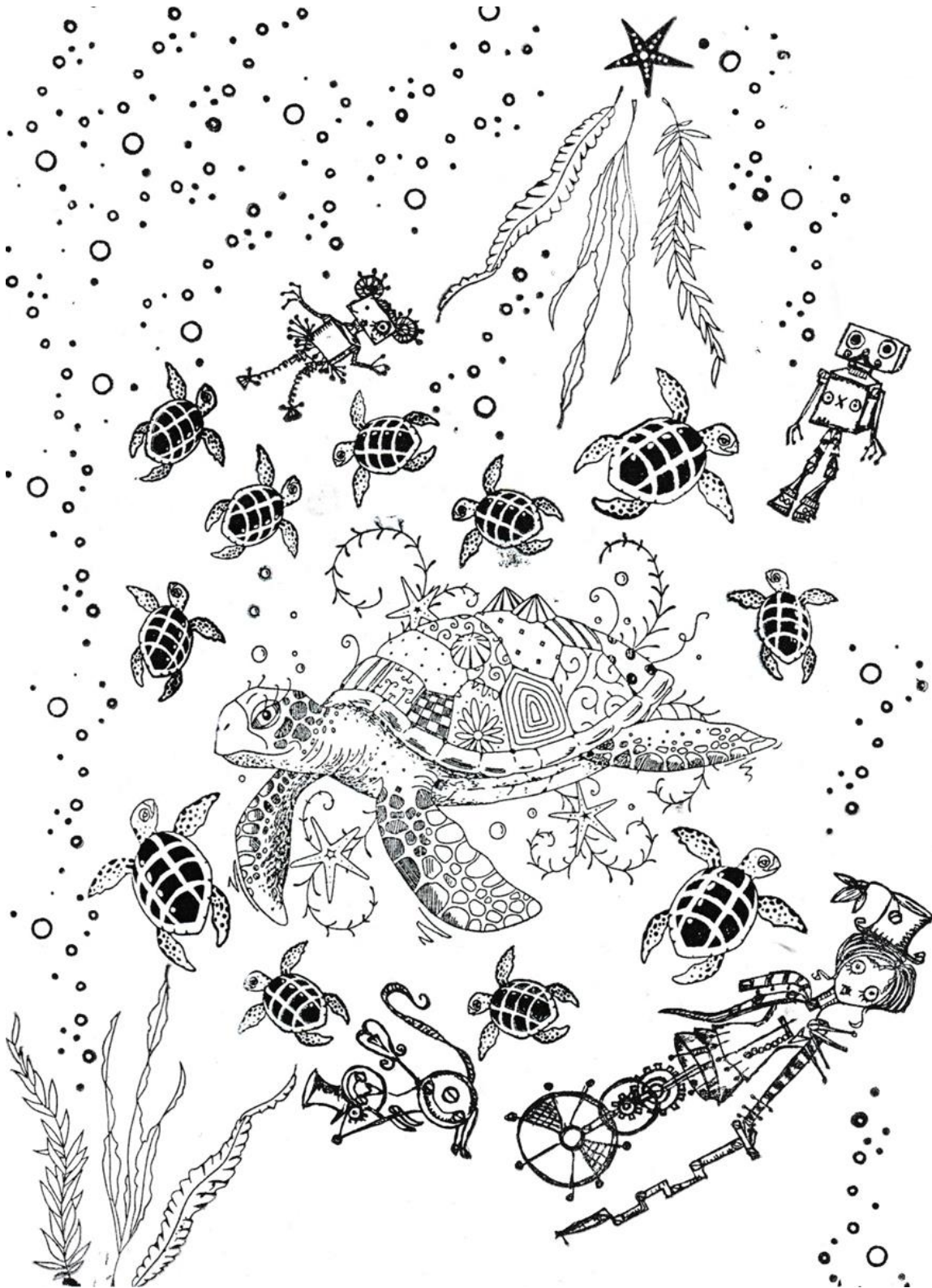
'Permission is granted Hodgepodes, please enjoy our wonderful world. Reg is the castle we live in, and a nursery for our babies. They like to use his boat as a diving board when they learn to swim. Reg enjoys wallowing in the mud at the bottom of our ocean, eating ocean flowers and the occasional tree. We turtles are never hungry, the water gives us all we need. I am a Kineen I love to party. After you have met the babies, you are invited to the Tuesday afternoon water dance.'

Streams of bubbles whirl in the water as he speaks, disappearing up to the ocean surface.

'What is a Kineen, your Royal Kineeness?' Dulcie asks.

'Just a name dear, just a name. No more talking it's time to party.'

Party photograph taken by Jem. Too many turtles to do a selfie.



Probably the best party that ever happened on *Planet Marisphaera*.

After the party the Hodgepodes show the Kineen, Reg and the babies

Seren's photo.



'She looks sad, I hope you find her soon. We haven't seen her here.

Stars don't like to get wet; water makes their sparkle go out.'

Rory enjoys the party so much he decides he wants to let Mr. Llewelyn Jones the park keeper know about it. 'I'm going to write a postcard,' he says.

'He won't be able to read it,' Torrin tells him. 'You're writing is strange.'

'It won't matter, Mr. Llewelyn Jones will be delighted to have a postcard from *outer space*,' says the Kineen. I have to make a trip to Folly Farm Park near Carmarthen next week to see my Uncle, I'll deliver it for you.'

'Thank you, thank you, thank you.' Rory jumps up and down in the water making waves.

'There is one condition though.'

'Anything at all Kineen Lyrz.'

'You young Rory, all the family, all the people of Wales, and the Earth must keep the oceans as clean as you can. Otherwise, the babies will not be able to visit you when they grow up. And Reg won't get to see his cousins in Africa again. Do we have a deal?'

'Definitely your Kineeness, **we promise**' say all the Hodgepodes.

'Right then, leave the postcard with me Rory. Reg will give you all a lift back to the *Winnie.R*. I hope you find your lost friend and look out for us next time you are at the seaside.' He swam off waving his flippers in a goodbye kind of way.



Rory's Postcard.



Chapter 9

Flames

'I wonder if *Seren* will be on the next planet we go to?' Jem asks Pern. 'I hope it will be as happy as *Marisphaera*. Those babies were cute.'

'*Venus* is next, the planet of fire. The coordinates are in the sat nav. Mr. Rhodri John says we are making good time, and there are no hold ups on the bypass that he can see.'

'*Venus* is the God of Love I was told, no one mentioned fire.'

Pern has been doing her research. 'If you are from Greece Venus is **ALL HEARTS AND ROMANCE.**' (Rory's face says GROSS). 'But if you look at the pictures of Venus, her arms are usually chopped off. Must be why Venus is fiery all the time.'



Armless Venus.

'I think you're right, poor thing, how exhausting. Do I need to know anything else before we land?'

Pern looks serious. 'Yes, we must tell Torrin, Dulcie and Rory to be on their best behaviour and,

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES TO TAKE ANY PHOTOS.

There is a Phoenix living there. It guards the planet. It burns up then is born again, over and over until the end of time. It feels no pain which is about the only good thing I suppose. Not surprisingly it gets crotchety and tired and hates having photos taken.'



A Phoenix is
Reborn from the
Fire.

After a perfect landing, Rory wants to know why they can't take pictures. He hears a tiny "click" behind him. Dulcie is trying to take a sneaky photo of the Phoenix. She can just see the tips of its wings. The bird is startled then furious.

It flies high above them. **FLAMES** leap up from the fire below. Sparks fall from singed feathers. **BURNING BURNING BURNING**. The **FLAMES** will **BURN** all in its path.



'**RUN RUN** before your body frames are melted. Back to the *Winnie.R* as fast as you can' screams Jem. And they do. The fastest take off in history is made by Mr. Rhodri John. He is a hero.



Chapter 10

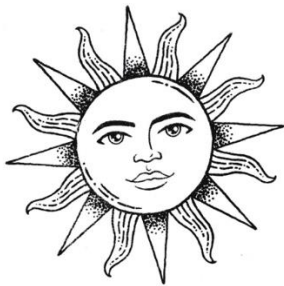
Dragons and Wheelies

'Well I never, what a day. That was a lucky escape!' Mr. Rhodri John booms over the sonic waves. 'I've seen pictures of the Phoenix, but never thought it would be that scary. Phew, my eyebrows are crinkly and crunchy from the flames.'

'Poor bird, what a horrible life it must be, all the flames and never any peace. I don't think *Seren* would have stayed there. Let's go to *Planet Tiria* then, see if she's there,' Jem replies to Mr. Rhodri John.

The three small Hodgepodes are unusually quiet. Torrin still *shaky* after the escape. Rory hiding under a pile of oily rags. And Phoebe is upset about putting the others in danger. Pern is looking after her until she calms down.

'Right you three,' says Pern, using her jolly cheering up voice. It makes her sound bonkers. 'To reach *Tiria* we will need to go a bit close to the *Sun*, so go and find your sunglasses from bedroom fifteen.'



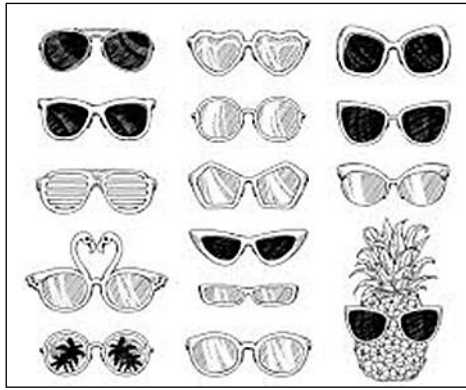
A boring picture of the *Sun*.

Most diagrams and paintings of the *Sun* show a gentle ball of light with just a tiny smile. Often this makes it look, well, **BORING**. But a *Star* with a liquid middle that shoots out huge flames and loads of mad gas is not **BORING**.



Not a boring picture.

This is a much more interesting picture of the *Sun*, and more realistic. If you were shooting huge flames from your surface, you would want to wear sunglasses as well.



The collection of sunglasses in bedroom fifteen.

'Pern and I are going to the turret to write up the diary. Keep your glasses on please.'

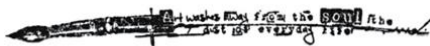
Torrin, Phoebe and find Rory go down to the shed. There is a good view of the stars down there.

Pern and Jem like to keep a diary of their journeys and adventures. They plan to write a book about them when they get old.

Pern likes typewriters that are really old. They keep her fingers fit as she taps the keys.



Very old typewriter used a hundred years ago.



Jem's book and pen.

Jem uses a pen and a **mega** big notebook. The book is as wide as a newspaper and as thick as your leg. The pen is from an expensive pen shop on *Planet Staples*, it never runs out of ink.

'Hey, look at that.'

'What?'

'Look at that down there.'

'Is that real?' Rory says. 'Never seen one before. HEY, ARE YOU REAL?' he shouts down to the creature flying around a small *Planet* below the *Winnie.R.*

The creature lifts its head up and shouts back. 'TAKE YOUR SUNGLASSES OFF AND YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SEE BETTER.'

Rory and Torrin look at each other. Dulcie says 'No, no, no, I don't want to get in trouble again.'

Mr. Rhodri John sends a signal from the *shuttle*. 'Go ahead, the *Sun* is well behind us. Now, I need to concentrate. We have to turn left soon, so a bit of quiet if you please.'

Sunglasses off and the three can see better, and what they see better is: →→→→→→→→→→→

'I asked for a bit of hush, shush now, I don't want to miss that turn.'

'Look down there, what is it? Is it dangerous? Is it an *alien dragonfly*? Will it eat us?'

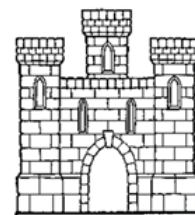
Mr. Rhodri John looks down to see what the noise is about and laughs. 'Don't worry, no danger. It's Derec Dragon, he should be at home. Derec time to go home and guard the castles, off you go now.'

Derec blows some flames out of his nose to show off. He zooms round the *Planet* one more time, then heads home to Wales.

'Oh no! Blast! We've missed the *worm hole*.' Mr. Rhodri John roars. He sounds pretty cross.



Derec the Dragon.

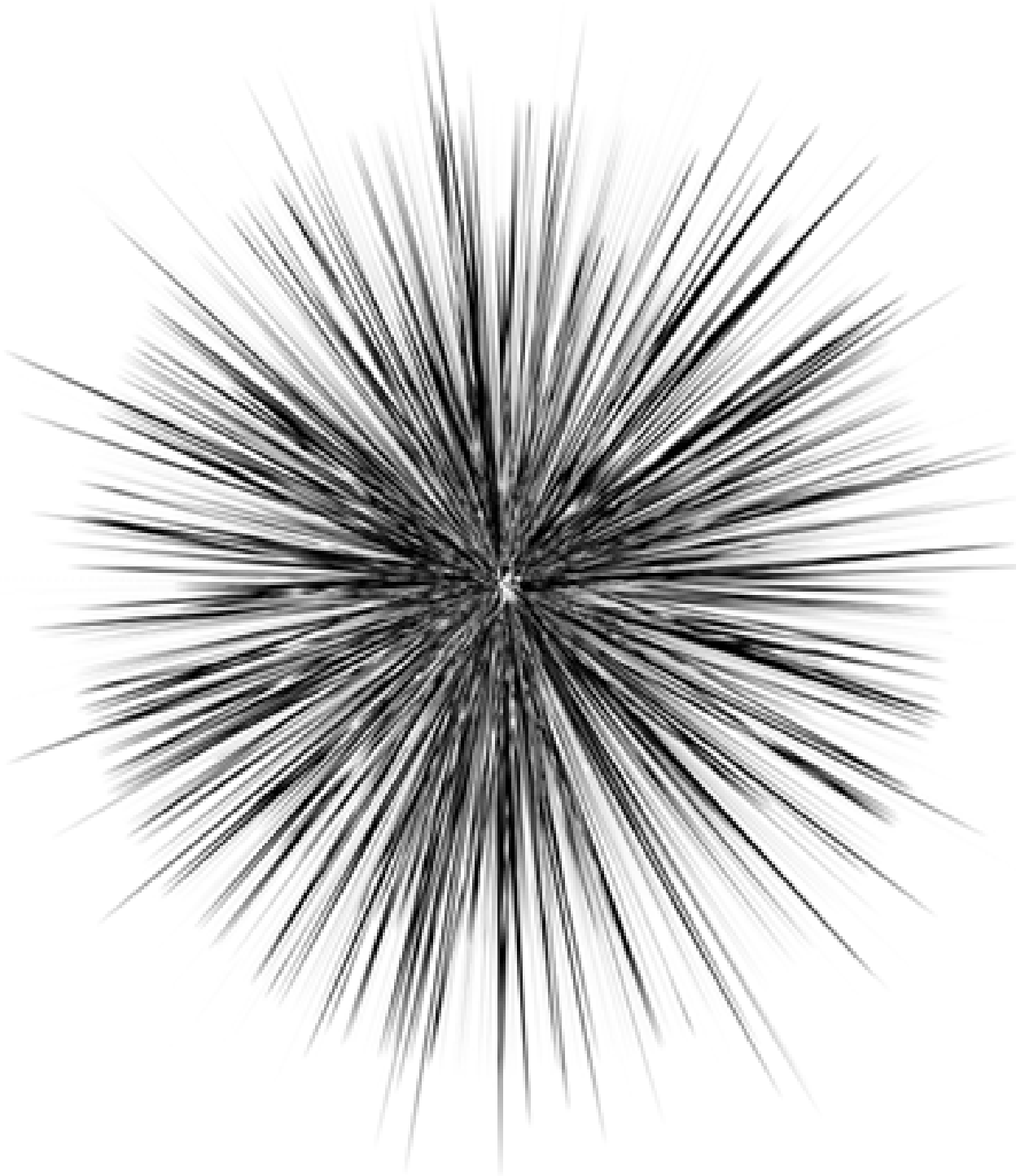


A Castle Derec is not guarding.

HE IS NOT CROSS NOW JUST WORRIED.

COSMIC RAYS

ARE HEADING FOR THE *Winnie.R*

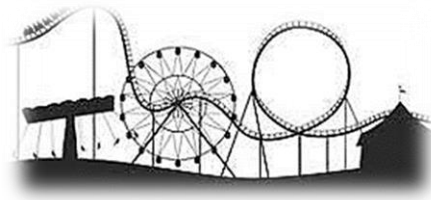


Look into the *Cosmic Rays* without blinking if you can.

'Hold on tight, this is going to be **Bumpy!**

Pern and Jem charge down from the turret to the shed just before the *Winnie.R* is hit by the *Cosmic Rays*. The Hodgepodes cwtch up tight as Mr. Rhodri John fights with the *shuttle controls*.

They are upside down, back to front, side to side. The *Cosmic Rays* throw them around the shed as if they are in the spin cycle of a washing machine. Or, the biggest, fastest, out of control nightmare rollercoaster in the *Universe*. Horrible.



The worst Rollercoaster Ever.

The *shuttle* is everywhere;

at the top of the *Winnie.R*

the right

left

underneath

wrapped round the light and half way into the shed

out again

twisted into a sugar candy Christmas stick

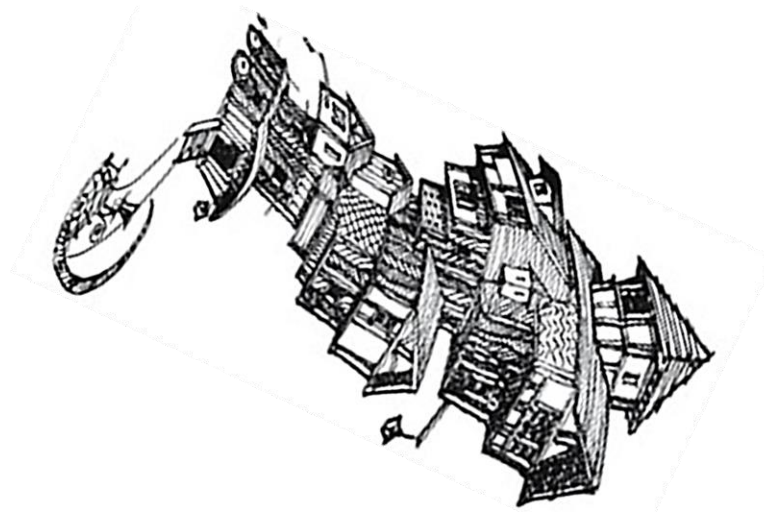
tied in a knot

and spun round like a windmill.

At last the *cosmic rays* move away to cause chaos somewhere else in the *Galaxy*. Five very **wobbly** Hodgepodges head back to the turret to check for damage to the *Winnie.R*

Pern's wheel needs straightening, and Jem's braids untangling. Rory, Dulcie and Torrin are fine.

Mr. Rhodri John brushes his top hat clean. 'That's all sorted then. Time for tea and bara brith.'



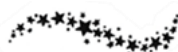
The *Winnie.R* just before being tied in a knot.

'We better get a move on' he tells the crew. 'Need to get through that *worm hole* if we want to get to *Planet Tiria* some time in the in the next hundred years.'

The ship does a wheelie, like a push bike but more impressive. There are no problems going through the *worm hole*, and they are soon back on course. Five hours later they touch down on the frozen *Planet's* surface.

While they were busy locking the doors of the *Winnie.R*, a *Star* was leaving the *Planet*.

Could it be *Seren?*



Chapter 11

Frozen Fish

'What a cold world this is. It's like the Winter Wonderland that comes to the park in December.' Jem falls over on the ice, her braids rattle together like icicles. 'Hodgepodes snow chains over feet please. Pern over your wheel. Mr Rhodri John you will need ice skates. Rory, what about you? Jump up into my backpack so we don't have to stick chains onto your backside.'

'Why not?' Torrin asks. 'We could put it on Snapchat.' Rory tells him to shut up. Snow chains and ice skates on, it's time to see what *Planet Tiria* is like.



Snowflakes

There is lots of snow,
but not like Earth snow.
Snowflakes the size of your hand,
cold, cold, cold to touch
and soft as a lamb's fleece.
Each snowflake changes colour
as it falls through the air,
from white to all the colours of the rainbow.



A poem by Pern Hodgepodge

Some interesting facts about *Planet Tiria*



Snowflakes fall on *Planet Tiria* every afternoon. They change shape every day.



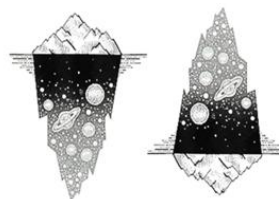
They also change colour every hour, you cannot see as this book is in black and white.



Snowmen build themselves. They walk around a lot during the night.



Icebergs float around until they decide to melt and become part of the sea.



Most exciting of all are the upside down icebergs, you can see all of *space* above them.

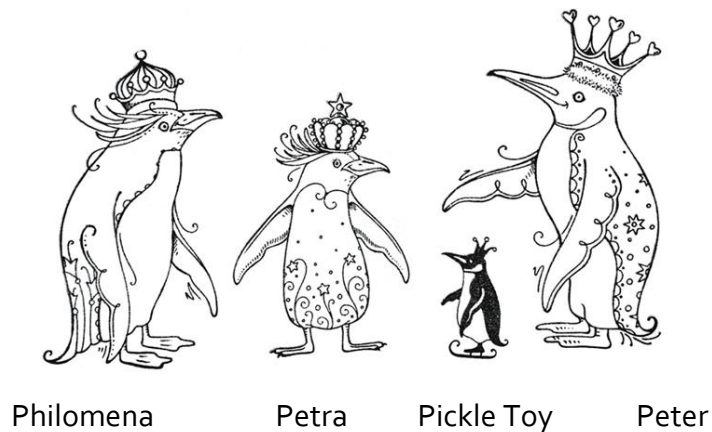


For some reason, the *Stars* above *Tiria* like to be in heart shapes. If you know why please write and let the Hodgepodges know.

'What's that noise?' Pern says. 'The **SLAP SLAP BUMP SLIDE WADDLE** from the sea?'

'Look over there, black and white things moving toward us.' Rory has a good view from Jem's backpack.

The "things" are Penguins, Macaroni Penguins, Royal Macaroni Penguins and a toy Penguin. Their crowns are made of ice and sparkle like diamonds.



It is Penguin custom that names always start with a "P". And they all answer to any name you call them. This often leads to confusion. Some names are bizarre like Pineapple or Potato Head. Macaroni Penguins have hair that looks like pasta. They don't know what pasta is, so it does not worry them at all.

'Who Are You?' They all speak at the same time but it makes sense.

'We are the Hodgepodges and Mr. Rhodri John. We are looking for a Star called *Seren*. Have you seen her? She looks like this.'

The Penguins look at the photograph Jem takes from her pocket.

The Macaronis all shake their heads. They have not seen *Seren*. But then Petra puts a flipper in the air and asks Peter and Philomena.

'Wait A Minute. Didn't We See Something Star Shaped Under The Ice By The Hot Spring Geyser Yesterday? Follow Me Visitors.'

Off they go, the Royal Macaronis leading the way.

Past the hot spring geyser. The water was as warm as a bath when you first get in.

'Will she still be there if it was yesterday, you might have seen her?' Rory asks.



The hot spring geyser.

'Time Is Different Up Here Rory. Our Yesterday Might Be Your Tomorrow Afternoon Or A Million Years Ago,' Peter says.

Philomena stops and points at the ice ten metres in front of them.

'Look. Just Past The Ripple Of Ice At The Base of The First Mountain.'

Everybody dashes forwards. A *Seren* shaped hole in the ice is surrounded by glittery black burn marks. She has left *Planet Tiria*.



The *Seren* shaped hole in the ice with scorch marks round it.

Dulcie asks what they all eat so she can put it in her notebook.

'We Have A Fish Tree. We Eat One, Burp It Up And it Goes Back To The Tree.'

'Insane! Wow! That is amazing.' Dulcie is well impressed.

'It Only Works For Penguins Dulcie.'



The Fish Tree that provides never ending food for Penguins. The fish are very happy fish.

'Will You Stop For Some Fish Before You Leave Us?'

Mr. Rhodri John opens his mouth to say that would be lovely but Jem answers first.

'Thank you so much for your kind offer. But I must say no, we need to get going. We hope to come back one day.'

After many 'thank yous', 'do come agains' and cold cwtches, the Macaronis insist on taking them all back to the *Winnie.R.*

'Jump Our Backs And We Will Glide There. It's Much Quicker Than Walking.'

The Macaronis lie down on the ice. **'Two Of You On One Of Us If You Please.'** Off they zoom back to the *Winnie.R.*

Mr. Rhodri John gets organized in the *shuttle*. The Hodgepodges buckle up. When the engine boosters are fired, the sparks melt holes in the snow below.

As they look through the windows, the Macaroni crowns sparkle like real diamonds.

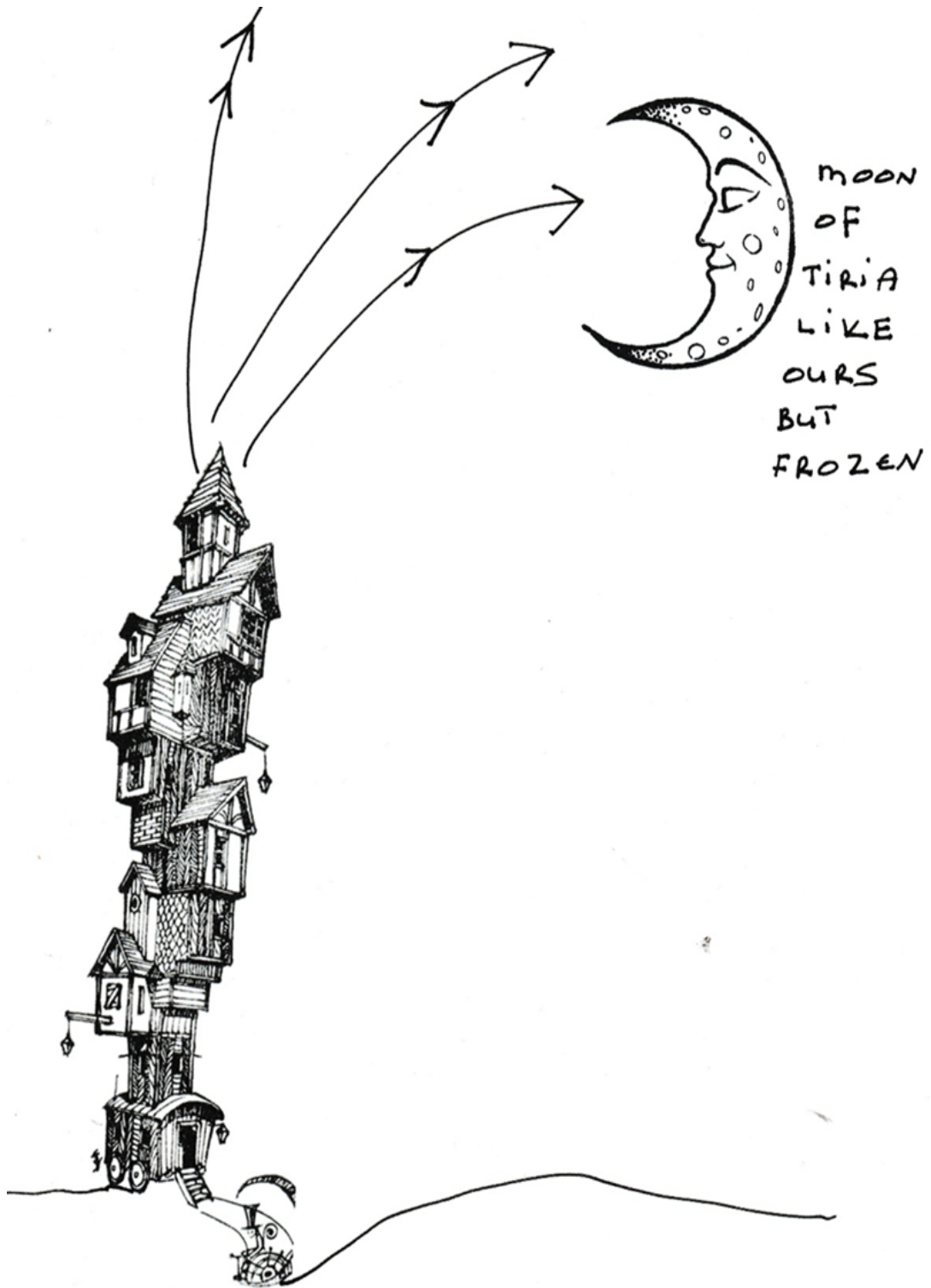


Real diamonds sparkle like this.



Royal Macaroni diamonds sparkle like this.

Winnie.R takes off from Tiria



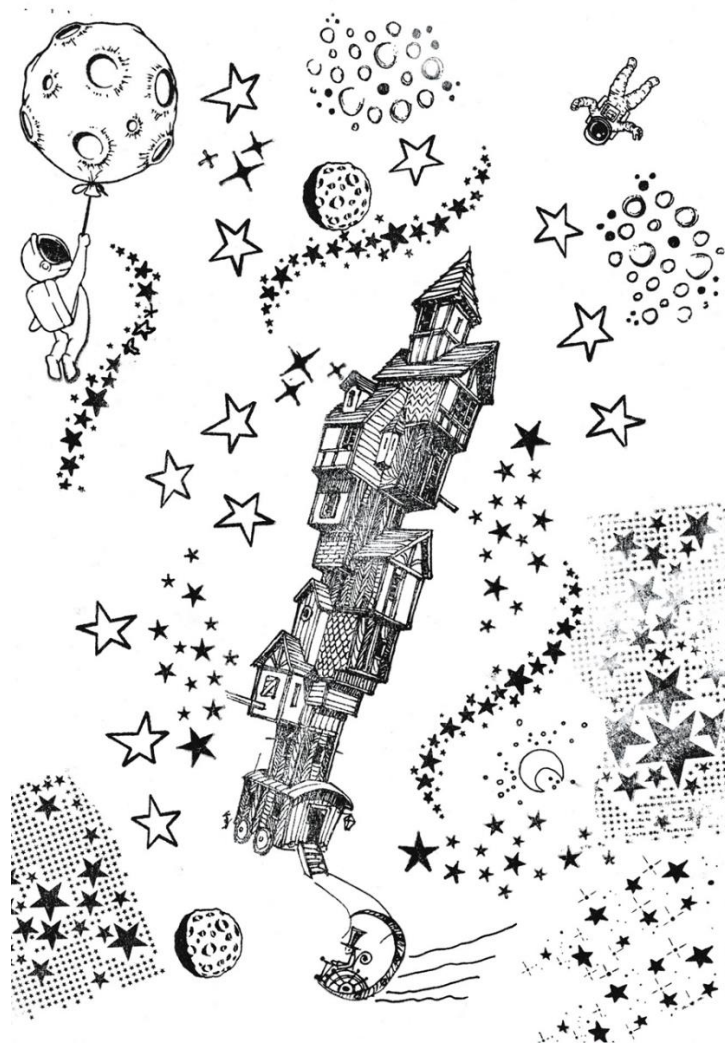
Chapter 12

Truth and Lies

'I love Royal Macaroni Penguins. When can we go back?' Torrin has not stopped talking about them.

'Once *Seren* is found and safe with her family, maybe. I'm off to check the maps. Look out of the windows and enjoy the *cosmic* scenery. Try drawing me a picture.' Pern heads up to the Turret to join Jem.

Torrin finds his pens and paper and does this.



For a Hodgepodge who says he can't draw it's not bad is it?

Jem is surrounded by maps, books of *Star* charts, and has three laptops open on *Planet Ceteastra*.

'Do you think that is where she might have headed for?' Pern asks Jem.

'Maybe. A warm watery place might cheer her up before she continues her journey home. Worth a try isn't it?'

'I agree. Show me where we are going.'

Jem says, 'Straight on for two million kilometres.

Left at *Zeusworld*.

Immediate right to *Spotalia*.

Then diagonally right until we reach *Ceteastra*.

We need to be careful about the *cosmic flares* between *Spotalia* and *Ceteastra*.

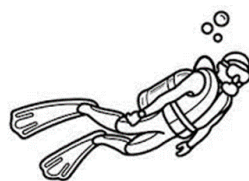
King Morfil is the leader. Tik Tok says he is the party King of all the *UNIVERSES*. If *Seren* is there, she will have a good time.'



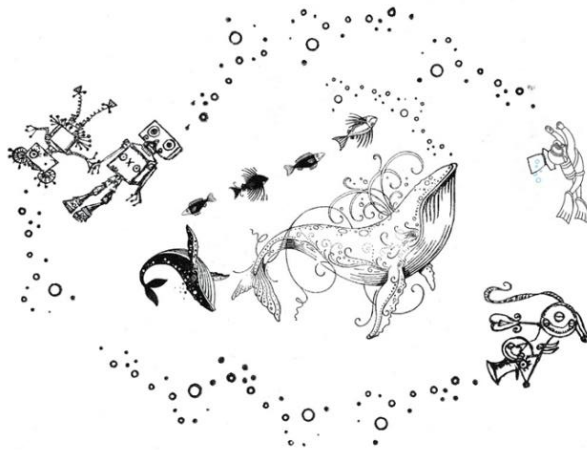
The touch down is an underwater one. There is no sky or beach, just ocean full of warm turquoise water. It looks like a television advert for a holiday.

'Hey, King Morfil is swimming around with his friends. Let's go and join him.' Rory is sure the King will be happy to see them. 'Come on you lot.'

The King seems pleased enough when Rory, Dulcie and Torrin introduce themselves. Mr. Rhodri John joins them in the water. He puts on a wetsuit but keeps his top hat on.



The type of wetsuit Mr. Rhodri John wears but without the top hat.



The first swim with King Morfil and friends.

Music plays, bubbles follow the notes through the water.

'What is the party for?' Torrin asks the King.

'IT'S NOT A PARTY. THIS IS HOW WE LIVE.'

'Every single day?'

'YER. WE LOVE TO ENJOY LIFE.'

Dulcie and Rory are swimming and chatting to the fish and baby whale.

Torrin tells the King he would like to live on, that should be in, *Ceteastra*.

'WAW, YOU MIGHT BUST. STICK TO SWIMMING RATHER THAN LIVING IN WATER. YOUR FRAME WILL LAST LONGER THAT WAY.'

The **music** is getting louder and louder. The vibrations make the water **swosh and swoosh** around the three Hodgepodes and Mr. Rhodri John.



Mermaid Willow sings and coloured bubbles come out of her mouth.

Mermaid Dusty joins the party. The music gets louder still. She cannot sing but her humming is **FABULICIOUS**, like a song thrush but better.



All the ***hullabaloo*** brings Pern and Jem to see what is going on in the water.

'Blimey, what a row, I can't hear my memory circuits working.' Jem is having the same problem.

Doggy paddling across to King Morfil Jem asks if has seen ***Seren***.

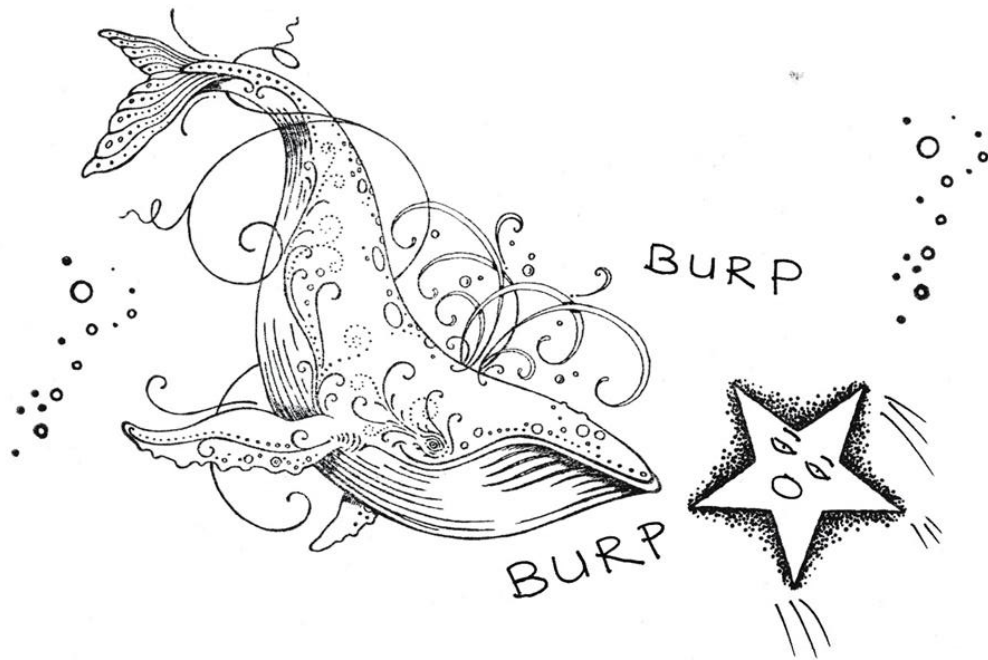
'I DON'T LIKE THE TASTE OF STARS, SO I HAVEN'T EATEN HER. HONEST.'

He gives a Royal smile. It makes them feel a bit sick.

'Come on let's get this lot back on the *Winnie.R*. We are wasting time here,' says Jem.

As she turns away there is the ***loudest***

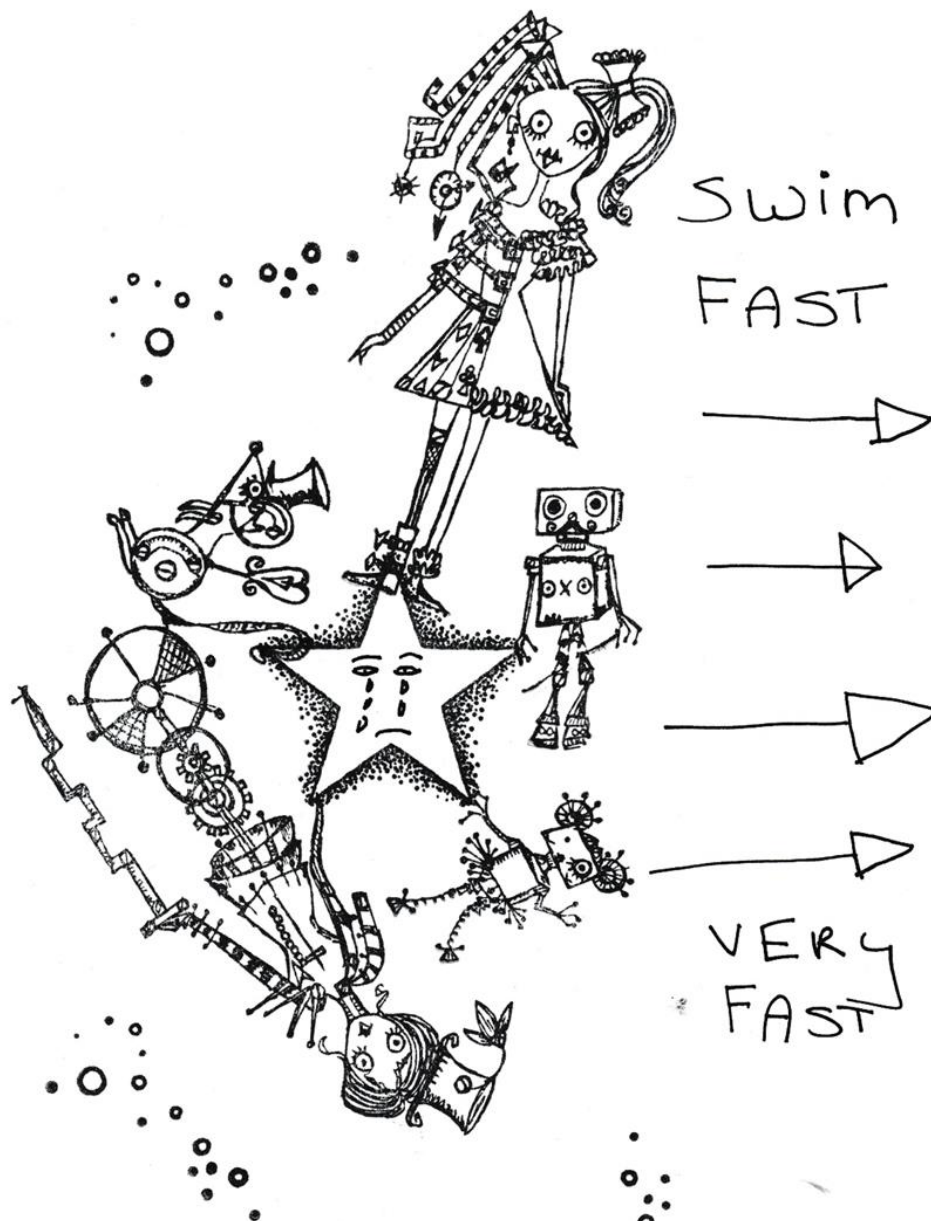
**BELEN BURP BELEN WICEUP DAMN
BURP DAMN WICEUP BELEN BURP**



And *Seren* comes tumbling out of his mouth !!!!!

Mr Rhodri John panics for **1 second** before heading back to the *Winnie.R.* He is pulling his wetsuit off as he swims.

Pern screeches at the Hodgepodes, **'TAKE A POINT EACH OF *SEREN'S* BODY AND SWIM FASTER THAN YOU HAVE EVER DONE BEFORE. 1 2 3. GO GO GO.'**



They do it. Swimming like Superheroes.

The Hodgepodes are back in the shed before King Morfil and his gang can reach them. Mr. Rhodri has the *Winnie.R* ***moving at the speed of light.*** For the geeks among you that is:

- ***300,000 kilometres every second.***
- ***18,000,000 kilometres every minute.***
- ***1,080,000,000 kilometres every hour.***

Each bolt and screw vibrated as *Winnie.R* soared away from *Planet Ceteastra*. Nobody on board could hear Morfil whaling at them 'NOW DARE YOU, NOW DARE YOU STEAL MY STAR. IF YOU COME BACK, YOU WILL BE EATEN AND NOT BELIEVED BACK.'

Seren was in quite a state, all of them were. But Jem is soon back in charge of the situation. 'What do you want us to do for you *Seren*? I'm so sorry you got stuck in my braids outside the Circus in Carmarthen. It was an accident. All I can do is apologize and put things right. We all want to help.'

Seren is looking as miserable as you would if a Whale had tried to eat you.

'It's my fault for not looking where I was going. It was my first trip to Wales. I was too busy looking at what goes on at an Earth circus. Thank you all for coming to rescue me. I thought my Starlight was going out for ever.'

'We are going to take you home now. Tell us what you need.'

'First a bath to wash the salt off my skin. Then put me in an airtight box so I can sleep all the way home.'

The Hodgepodes go to bathroom eleven to run a bubble bath for *Seren*.



Chapter 13

Tadpoles

Seren tells the Hodgepodes her story.

She comes from *Sidus Paradisi*, a *Star* far away in the *Tadpole Galaxy*.

'Is it full of tadpoles and frogs and frog spawn?' says Rory. 'That would be frogalicious.'

Pern says to listen quietly.

My name is Freya, Freya Seren. from now on. I am a Star Princess. Can I go in the box now please, I'm so so tired. I will send Mr. Rhodri John all the information he needs to get to Sidus Paradisi.

Freya Seren goes into the special walking stick box in room number 306. No air nor light can get in the box. The lid is shut tight and she soon drifts off to sleep.



Freya Seren in the special box just before the lid goes down.

Rory, Dulcie and Torrin stay in the room and stare at the box.

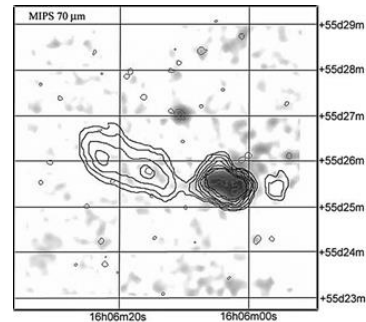
'Will she be comfy?' whispers Dulcie. 'Yes.' Rory whispers back.

'Is that Star snoring I can hear?' Torrin is giggling.

'*Snore snore snore snore*' snores *Freya Seren*. They tip toe out of the room.

The information that Mr. Rhodri John was sent by *Freya Seren*.

This is what *The Tadpole Galaxy* looks like on proper space maps. All the *Stars* are joined up with lines to make a picture people can read. *Sidus Paradisi* is in the *Tadpole Galaxy* which is in the *Draco Constellation*. It's like an Earth address. A town or village is in a county. A county is in a country. A country is in the World. The world is in a *galaxy* in a *constellation*.



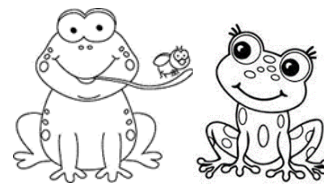
The Tadpole Galaxy

This tadpole **will** turn into a frog.



A Tadpole from a pond.

There are many different sorts of Frogs.



A cute Frog and friend.

This what a *spiral Galaxy* looks like through a telescope. Billions of *Stars* twirling round a central spot. Tadpoles added because they look good.



If you want to read proper science the next bit is for you. If not just go to the next page.



NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is a good place to look at *Galaxies*. There are hundreds of pictures of *space, rockets, planets, astronauts, computers, space food, space toilets, space beds,* but no *aliens*. Unless they are hiding them in a top secret hide out in the desert that is.

Here is NASA'S proper researched and amazingly clever scientific information.

The *Tadpole Galaxy* is a disrupted barred spiral *galaxy* located 420 million light-years from Earth in the northern *constellation Draco*. Its most dramatic feature is a trail of *Stars* about 280,000 light-years long. Here is the *Star trail* . ↓ ↓ ↓



Radius: 195,000 light years.

Distance to Earth: 400 million light years.

Magnitude: 14.4.

Absolute magnitude: -22.65.

Coordinates: RA 16h 6m 4s | Dec +55° 25' 32".

Constellation: *Draco*.

Apparent dimension: 0.8'–3.6'.

This website is brilliant: https://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/image_feature_573.html

You can Google NASA. Read books about them. Send them letters. The Hodgepodes can't find the phone number. If you do, can you let them know please.



Dulcie has lost her felt tip pens somewhere in bedroom 22. All the family are in there helping her look for them. Then the *Winnie.R* suddenly accelerates so **FAST** that everyone has to hold onto the climbing frame.



Humans on the same sort of climbing frame in bedroom 22.

'Whoh, what's going on?' Mr. Rhodri John must have pressed the accelerator button too hard. Pern lets go and see if he is in one piece.'

Pern and Jem run downstairs to the *shuttle*. 'You three hold on tight until we slow down again.' They are both very good at running and giving instructions at the same time.

'That was dope. Wish I was down there. We'd be travelling like that all the time. When we get home I'm getting a *space bike*.' Dulcie says.



This is what Dulcie means.



What Torrin and Rory think she means.

'Sounds a bit dull to me.' Torrin says.

'We could sit in the basket going down to the river.' Rory replies.

'Put sandwiches to smell in the basket.' Torrin laughs.

'You two are dumb. A crash helmet on top of a top hat Rory? And where would you buy a square one Torrin?' Dulcie walks away in a huff.

In the *shuttle* all is well. Mr. Rhodri John had an itch on his left foot after wearing flippers when he was swimming in *Ceteastra*. While he was scratching, the map fell off his lap onto the floor. As he bent down to pick it up, his top hat knocked down a picture of the Moon. The corner of that hit the accelerator button and made the *Winnie.R* **SPEED** up.

The Moon picture is his favourite, it hangs behind his spare coats. Aunty Buddug, Bee for short, his favourite Aunty, found it in a bin outside the castle in Laugharne.

'Good, you and the painting have no broken bits.' Pern is pleased.

'A family treasure that is young Pern.'

Pern nods.

'Right then which way are we going? Will you show me on the map please?' Jem is keen not to hear about all his Aunties. It would take days.

Mr. Rhodri John has **eighteen** Aunties and **twelve** Uncles. That is a lot of presents at Christmas. But think about writing all those thank you letters.

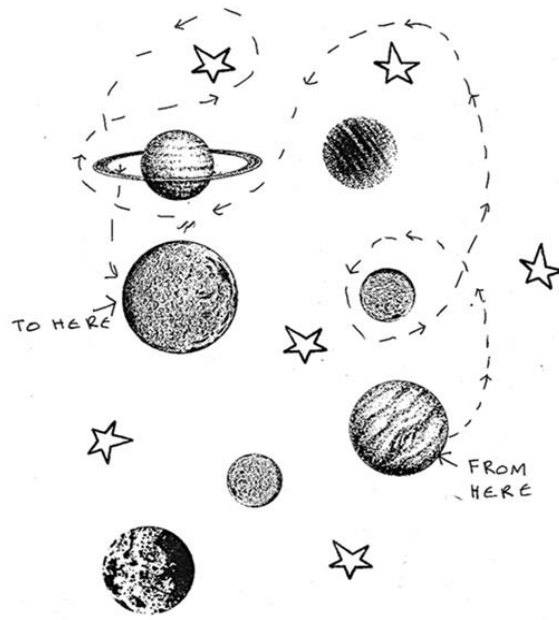
'Do you want me.....'

'No thank you, we have to get *Freya* *Seren* back to *Sidus Paradisi* as soon as possible. Her family must be worried about her.'

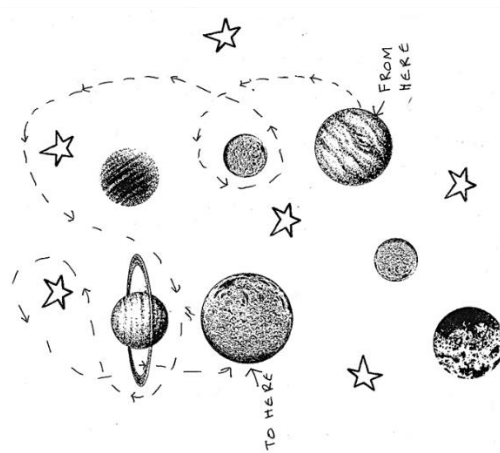
'Of course, she must be missing her Mum and Dad. I've read there are billions of *Stars* in *Star* families. I remember when.....'

'Next page on the map please, we need to see where we are going' says Jem.

Two maps to show why it is best to always read a tidy one.



1a. The map that fell on the floor after it was smoothed out.



1b. It doesn't make sense this way round.

New instructions are put in the computer and sat nav.using map 1a. The *Winnie.R* and passengers are heading for *Sidus Paradisi*. *Freya Seren* will soon be home.



Chapter 14

Visitors

'I thought *space* was peaceful' moans Rory. 'Quiet with perfect music playing.'

'It's exciting. See all that stuff outside' Torrin says.

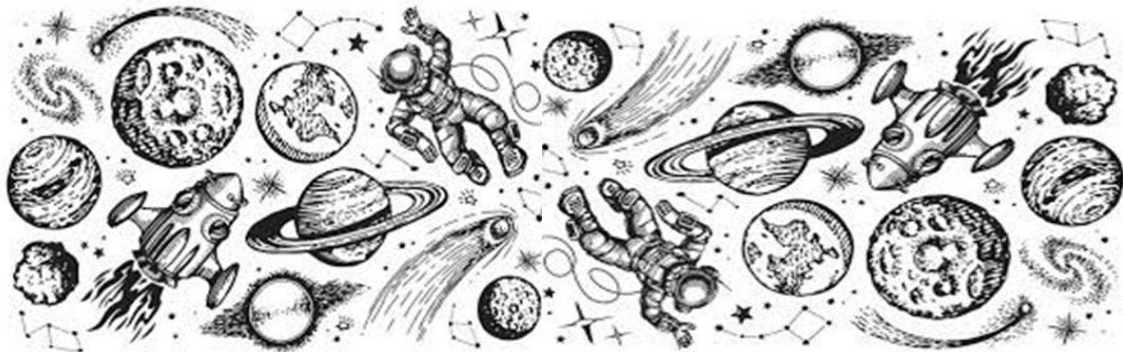
Rory presses his nose onto the window. 'Yes. *Planets. Moons. Astronauts. Rockets. Stars. Asteroids. Shooting stars. ALL OVER THE PLACE.*

What if they hit us?'

'Why would they hit us? The *Winnie.R* looks old fashioned, but the new *invisible force field blanket* protects her.'

'Promise?'

'I promise.' Torrin waves at the *astronauts* flying by.



The *invisible force field blanket* protects Rory from this lot ↑↑↑↑.

The shuttle navigates the *Winnie.R* through all the *space* stuff with ease. An *asteroid* bangs into the top of the turret. The downstairs outside light swings backwards and forwards a bit.

'Told you so' says Torrin to Rory.

'*Worm holes* coming up people. Buckle up, we have three to travel through. One easy and two pesky devils. They make you **SHAKE** like a too **SHAKY** jelly or a **SLOPPY** Slush Puppie drink.'

Mr. Rhodri John's voice **booms** through the loudspeakers. 'Pern and Jem are on the way up to check you are good and tight in your seats.' And they do with seconds to spare before it happens.

Wormhole 1.

Bugsie is a tricky tunnel to get through. It looks delicate and spidery on the maps. Pilots never expect any problems. There are. A lot. Spider webs made of an unknown metal so fine it can't be seen, are strung across it. Only pilots as experienced as Mr. Rhodri John get through the tangles.



*Arachnoidia 426.84s -
'Bugsie'.*

Wormhole 2.

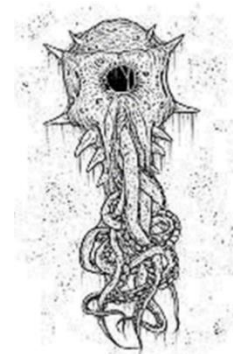
Linni is the easy one to get through. All clean shiny walls and nothing to interfere with a vehicle journeying to *Sidus Paradisi*.



Trahentem 6523.10 - 'Linni'.

Wormhole 3.

Shirley is big trouble. It is back to front. Most people head for the black hole mouth where you fly out. If you go in there you will be sicked back out. Trillions of miles out. The way in is through the tentacles. If the suckers on the tentacles catch a *rocket* it is stuck until the *E.T. Rescue Service* passes by. That happens once every twelve years.



Octopusia 25965.258 - Shirley

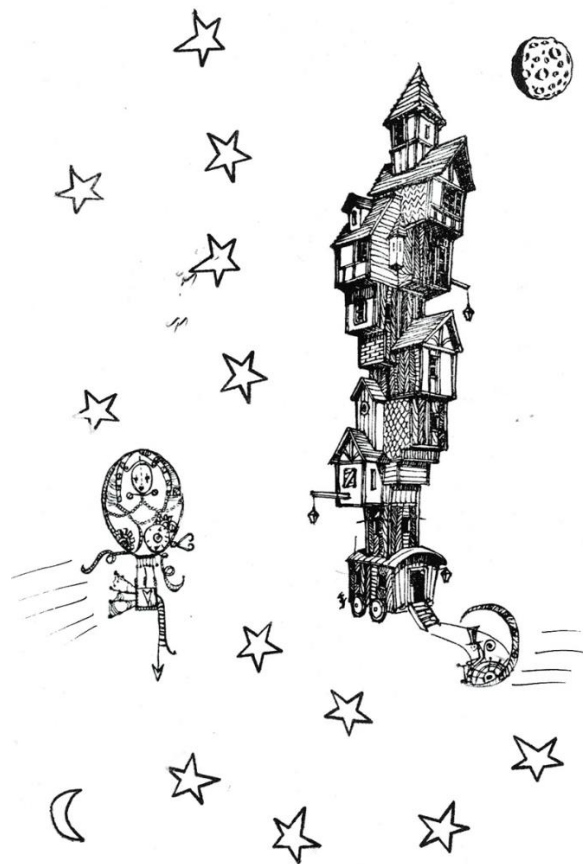
Winnie.R arrives at the other side of the three *wormholes*. **ALL ABOARD ARE FALLING OVER WHEN THEY WALK. THEY LOOK LIKE JELLY VERSIONS OF THEMSELVES.** Rory tries to take a picture, but he can't hold the camera still.

Lying down for half an hour sorts them out. The only damage done was the climbing frame **WOBBLING** across the bedroom.

'Jem come and look at this' asks Pern. They all walk over to the window. 'That balloon looks familiar.'

'It's the one from *Sparcpeak Rocket Park*. I wonder what it wants?' Jem says out loud.

Dulcie is **amazed**. 'It's got a tail and a face, very fancy.'



This is what you would see on a photograph taken from outside the *Winnie.R*.

From the craft a pretty voice floats across space and through the walls into the kitchen.

'Hello friends I have a passenger for you. It is your dearest cousin Delta Doda. That wicked King Morfil burped him out as I was passing by. A very lucky Hodgepodge I think.'

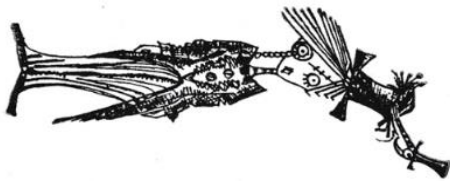
'Delta Doda who is that?' ask three small Hodgepodes.

'Cousin Dee Dee Hodgepodge, I thought he was in America' Jem says.

'Send him over please.'

'Of course, it is a pleasure to reunite him with his family.'

Dee Dee goes sideways to protect his hat.



Delta Doda goes across to the *Winnie.R.*

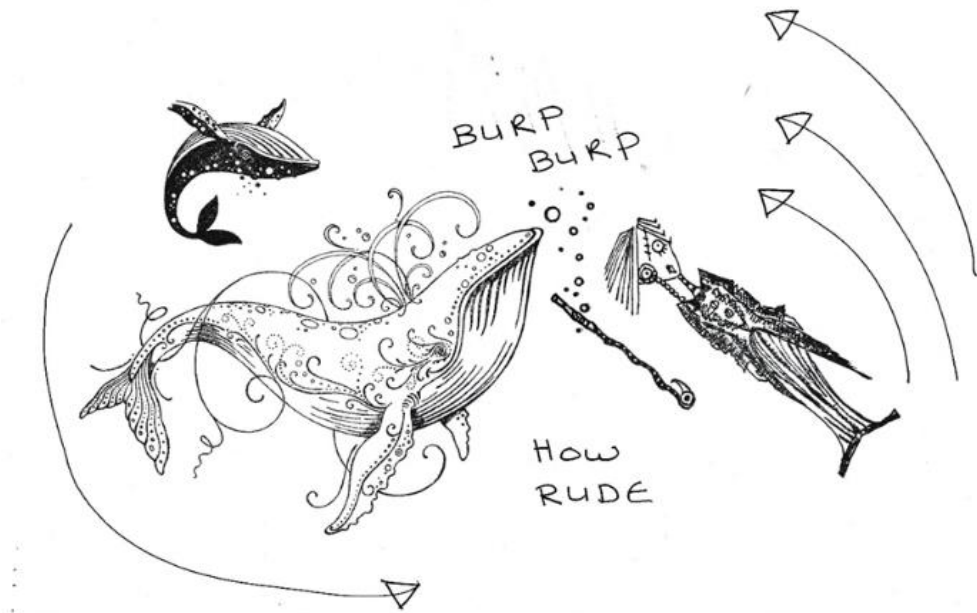
Dee Dee climbs out of the balloon and onto the *shuttle*, up the wires and into the shed. Mr. Rhodri John is impressed by Dee Dee's very superior top hat. 'Almost as smart as mine.' Rory thinks it is a bit too fancy with the crow on top.

'Enjoy the rest of your travels people' the balloon says as it slips away.

Dee Dee explains how he ended up inside the disgusting King Morfil. He was on holiday in Florida, America, at NASA'S *space park*. The place that's in Chapter 13, the best place to learn about *space* on Earth.

'Well, I got lost and got stuck in a *rocket*. It took off, then I was discovered on board and they threw me off. I fell for days, landed in *Ceteastra* and he **SWALLOWED** me. I didn't see *Freya* *Seren* in there. She must have been in a different place to me. His

insides were bigger than I can tell you. I must learn to **BURP** like him though. It might save a life one day.' He laughs till he cries and his metal ribs are sore.



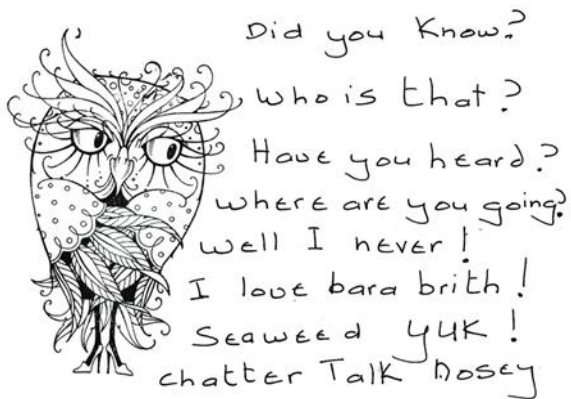
Dee Dee not laughing much.

Hodgepodes can talk a lot. Like for hours. So it was a long time until they all plugged in for the night.

While the chat is going on, Mr. Rhodri John has a visit from His Serene Owlness Obadiah Otis Osman. Bill for short.

He usually talks **LIKE** this  .

Only birds know what the heck he is talking about. As he can speak every language invented it's not a problem. He knows most things there is to know but still asks questions **ALL THE TIME.**



His Serene Owlness Obadiah Otis Osman.

Bill sits on the top of the *shuttle's* canopy when he visits. He can see everything that is going on from there.

'I hear that *Freya Seren* is with you on the *Winnie.R.* Are you taking her home?

When will you get there? Is she feeling well? What maps are you using? Who was in the balloon?'

Mr. Rhodri John replies to Bill 'Yes, yes, not sure, yes, all of them, Dee Dee.'

'The *galaxy* has been worried, it's been the only subject we talk about. Her family are so pleased you found her. They are planning a big party to welcome you all. Did you know she is the only *star* ever to be late back from the circus?'

'Bill its time you flew off now. I'm very busy in here. Pern and Jem are depending on me to get to *Sidus Paradisi* as quick as we can.'

'Okey dokey, I'll see you at the party. Give my love to the Hodgepodes.'

Bill flies off to do Owl things.

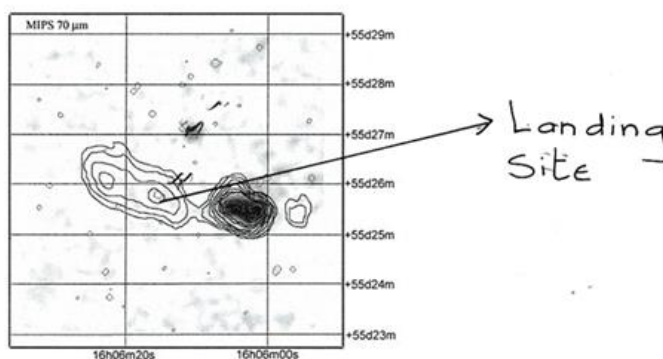
Mr. Rhodri John knows Bill is a fine Owl, but boy can he talk.



Chapter 15

Starry Night

The *Winnie.R* touches down in the centre of *The Tadpole Galaxy* at the *Sidus Paradisi Centre for Alien Craft*. *Freya Seren* is home at last.



Sidus Paradisi Centre for Alien Craft. Tadpole Galaxy. Draco Constellation.

The Centre was built in 1969 after the Americans landed on the *Moon*. The President of *The Draco Constellation, Draco Didie Constantine 31st* (his full title), thought humans would be visiting all the time. As you know he was wrong.

The Centre is not very good for human *aliens*. All humans are *aliens* when they leave Earth.

It is the wrong shape, has no toilets, cafés or play areas. *Alien aliens* can't get their suitcases through the doors. It was a waste of all the *alien* money spent on it.

And the *Sidus Paradisi Centre for Alien Craft* is falling to bits. This is the first time any *spacecraft* has successfully landed here. Usually they miss it. It needs an upgrade **BIG TIME**.

Draco Didie Constantine 31st has decided not to bother until SKY NEWS tells the *universe* that more humans are on the way. *Aliens* make less fuss than humans, so he's not bothered about making it better until then.



This is what usually happens when a landing is tried. So far no one has been hurt apart from a few bruises and a dented helmet.

It is a dump as you can see. This is the control tower; it can't control anything. The ground around it is full of deep holes that *space craft* fall into. A right mess.



The Hodgepodes think it is lovely. Mr. Rhodri John tells them it is a disgrace.

Time to get *Freya Seren* out of the *Winnie.R* and back to her family.

'Shall I wake her up?' Torrinn says to Pern.

'No, lets carry her out in the box. She knocked one of her *star* points on the way in. I think it was a bit sore.'

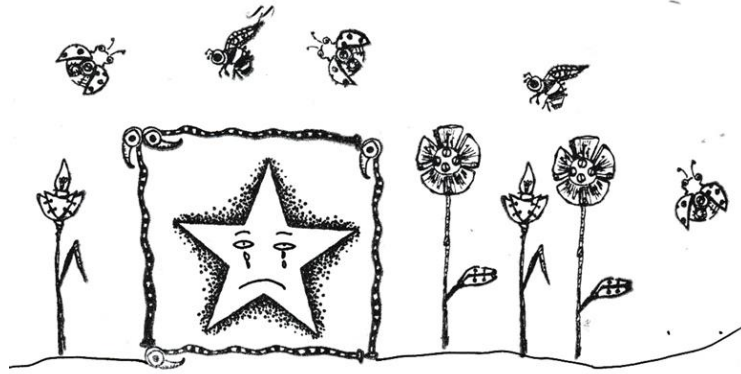
'How shall we do this then?' says Jem.

'Torrinn, Rory and Dulcie open all the doors, and check the steps from the shed are clear. You, me, Dee Dee and Mr. Rhodri John can carry the box between us.'

Going down the steps was a bit tricky, it took them twenty minutes. You must be careful carrying a *star* down steps, they are delicate creatures.

Freya Seren still has some tears to cry. Some are sad at missing her family and being swallowed by mad king Morfil. The rest are **happy happy happy** tears. Her friends

the flowers and insects, sing songs about adventures and new friends. They tell her it is time to leave the box now.



Freya Seren has landed!

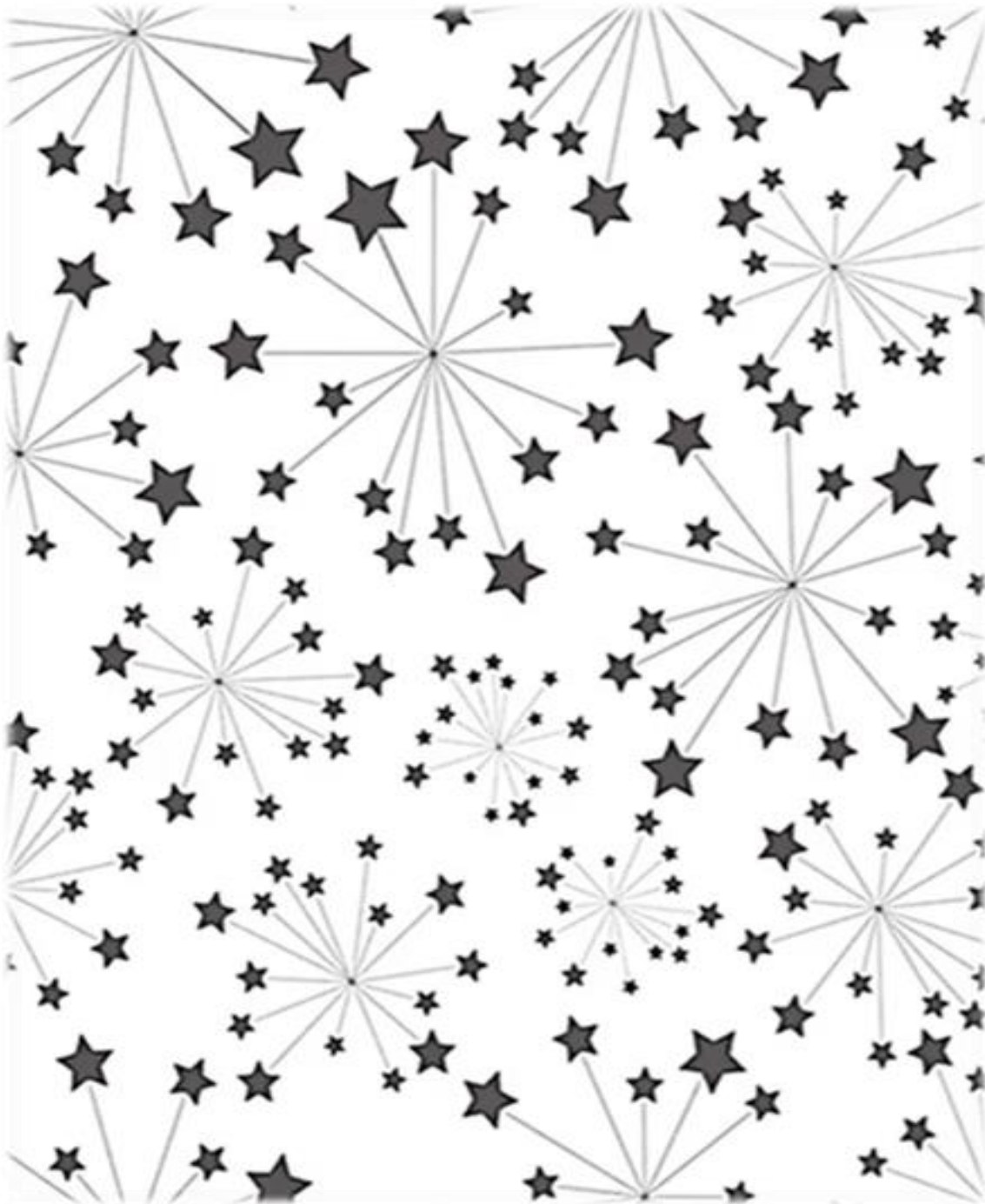
'Do you want to open the box and lift her out?' Jem asks *Freya Seren's* parents *Lucy Lilly Letts* and *Three Thirty Timms*.

'Oh no my dear we have no arms only points.'

'Right then. I will open the lid. Then me ,Dee Dee, Pern, Mr. Rhodri John and Torrin will take a point each to help her out. Rory and Dulcie do the countdown please.'

Join in with Rory and Dulcie.

'5 4 3 2 1 OPEN THE LID.'

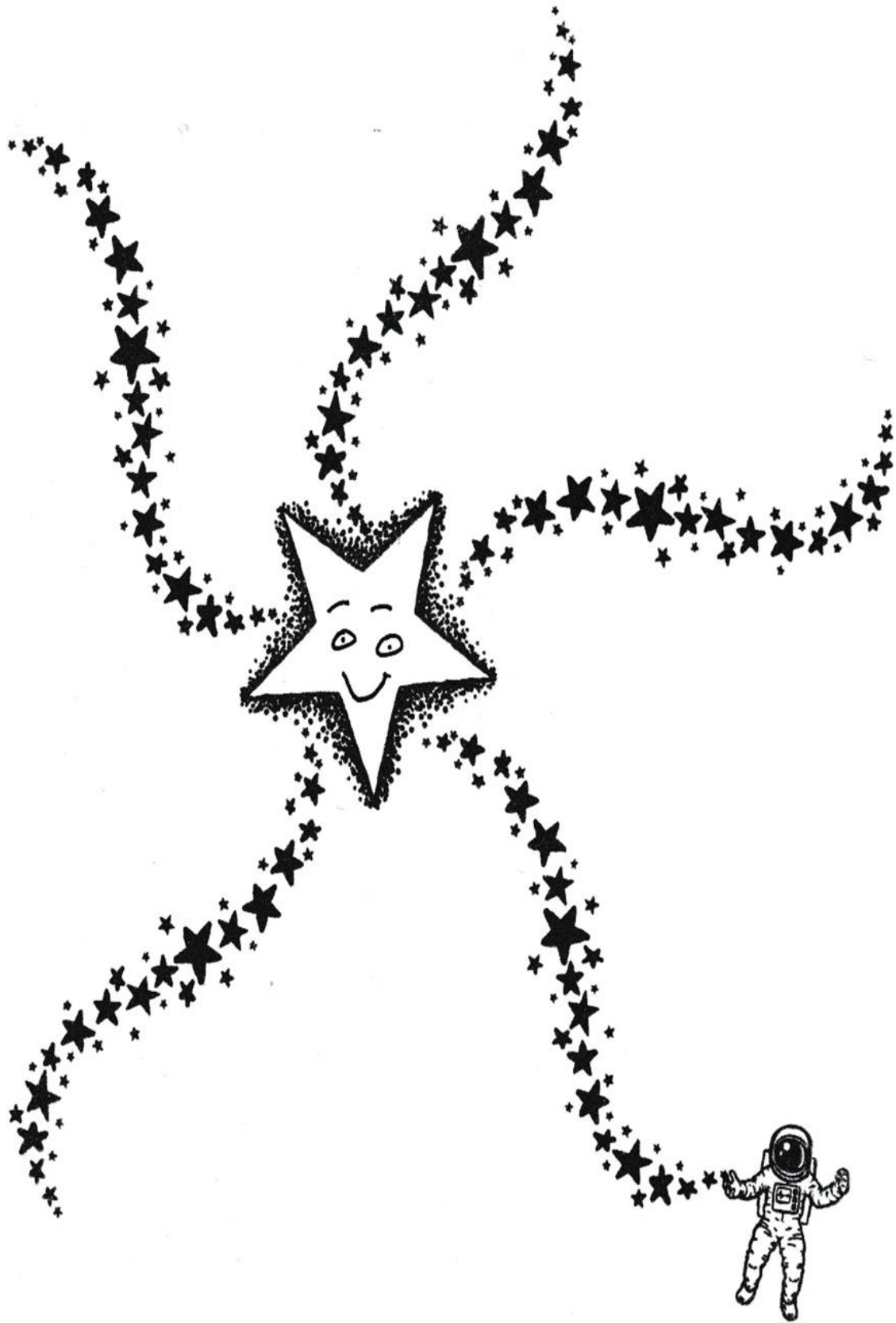


The Star fireworks in the sky as Jem starts to open the lid.

Freya Seren flies out of the box and up into the sky.

Sparkles of light, *star* trails, laughing *stars*, happy *stars* follow her.

A **MAHOOSIVE SMILE** beams across her face. All the tears have gone.



Freya Seren is free 😊😊😊.

Stars know how to party.

Singing and dancing. High fiving each other on their points – so twenty-five fiving really. Litres of *star* Juice is drunk. It tastes of what you want it to. Lots of kissing happens. Loud talking and laughing sounds like the best music you have ever heard. Questions by the million get asked. Presents are swopped.

If you ever get an invite to a *star* celebration, don't miss it. Find a *rocket* and go.

The Hodgepodges are cheered, a lot. A speech goes on for ages congratulating them all for saving *Freya Seren*. They are offered *star* bed and breakfast any time they want. Mr. Rhodri John is told what a great pilot he is. What an amazing *spaceship* the *Winnie.R* is. It is the best party ever.



Stars partying.

Most of the *Stars* have dressed up for the occasion. They wear tinsel scarves and paint glitter on all their points. Some even wrap fairy lights round their middles to look brighter than the brightest light ever seen.

The party is so **SHINY** and **BRIGHT** it is noticed back on Earth. People from Australia to Zambia remark on how special the *Stars* look tonight. Where it's supposed to be night-time it's as bright as day. Snapchat, Kinzoo, Instagram and Twitter almost crash with all the online posting about it.



Telescope sales go up by 700%.

The Hodgepodes go back to the *Winnie.R* and plug in for the night.

Mr. Rhodri John enjoys a party. He decides to stay and dances all night.



Mr. Rhodri John dancing all night.



Chapter 16

Goodbyes and old friends

After two *Star* days partying, that is ten and a half Earth days, the party ends.

The Hodgepodes are charged up and Mr. Rhodri John has slept for twelve Earth hours.

Time to go home.

Saying goodbye takes half a *Star* Day of cwatching, thank yous, you must come agains, and see you at the Circus chats.

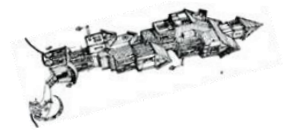
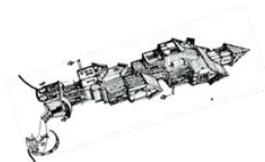
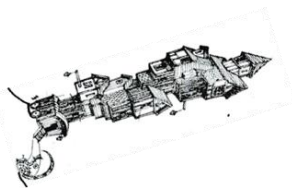
Freya Seren is sad to see them leave. *'Promise to come back to see me soon.'*

'If you come to the circus next year.' Jem says.

'Yes I will. I'll come and see you all in the bandstand after the show. We can have another party.'

Take off is easy.

The *Winnie.R* gently moves away from *Sidus Paradisi*. The *Stars* are still extra bright, so sunglasses are needed for a couple of hours.



A gentle take off this time.

Mr. Rhodri John has planned the journey back to avoid any *worm holes*. His false teeth almost fell out going through the last one.

Dee Dee wants to go to *Queenarnia*. 'The Queens sound really nice. I'd like to meet them can we go there?'

'You only want cake' Torrin says.

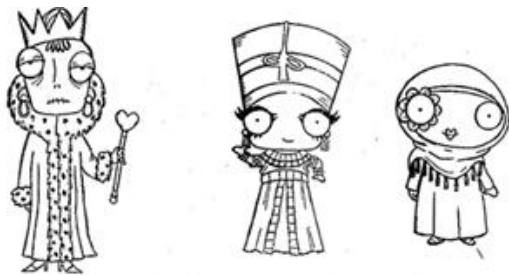
'True. In King Morfil's belly there was no oil or circuit cleaner to fuel me. There was a lot of cake and fish though. The cake tasted awesome and I fancy some more.'

'The Queens did ask us to go back.' Pern smiles.

'Yes please' Mr Rhodri John calls up from the *shuttle*. 'But if they do give us cake don't let me be so greedy this time.'

'Change the sat nav. Let's go see the Queens.'

The Queens were happy to see them back so soon. Queen Nefertiti thought Dee Dee was a bit gorgeous.



A picture of Queen Salamapen, Queen Nefertiti, and Queen Muskaan.

In case you forgot what the Queens look like.



Strawberry Gateau and mint tea.

Mr. Rhodri John and Dee Dee eat the gateau between them. The Queens said it was good for them because it was full of strawberries. Strawberries are fruit and fruit **IS** good for you.

The Queens daily newspaper and podcast **ASTRONOMICAL DAILY WEB NEWS** was full of gossip about *Freja Seren's* rescue. They had been baking just in case The Hodgepodges came back to see them.

Queen Salamapen, Queen Nefertiti, and Queen Muskaan walked back to the *Winnie.R.* They didn't stop waving until it was out of sight.

'Next stop *Sparcpeak Rocket Park* on the *asteroid.*' Torrin is missing the bandstand.

'It will be good to plug into our own spaces' says Dulcie.

Rory nods his head.

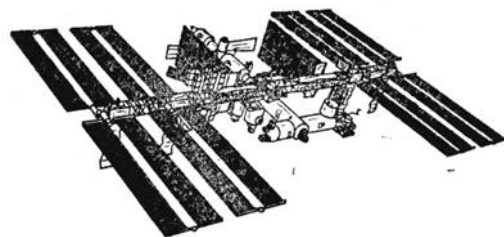
Dee Dee is super excited. 'Earth gravity and more cake. Yay. Can I come and live with you? I get a bit lonely.'

'As long as you take your turn picking up litter in the park twice a week.' Pern tells him.

'yes yes yes yes LOTS OF YESES THANK YOU THANK YOU.'

'We'll find some space for you somewhere'.

The *International Space Station* gets an extra big wave from Dulcie as they go past. 'I bet they don't get lonely in there. It must be really **squashed up** with people and bits floating around.'



I.S.S

'Our *asteroid* will come into view any time now. I hope there is a parking space' Mr.Rhodri John says over the speakers. Then 'Woah there, my glasses must need cleaning. What is **THAT?**'



THAT is this.

A banner is strung across the top of the *asteroid* saying **HELLO**.

'What a welcome.' All of them are impressed. 'I wonder who its for?' Jem says.

'Lets get down fast and find out. Seat belts on. We're nearly home.'



Chapter 17

Sparcpeak Rocket Park

The *Winnie.R* touches down onto the *asteroid*. Through the window the Hodgepodes see more banners floating above the *rockets* parked in the *rocket park*.



A few of the banners floating above *Sparcpeak Rocket Park*.

Mr. Rhodri John shuts down the *shuttle*. The Hodgepodes join him at the bottom of the shed steps. There are *aliens* from all over the *galaxies* standing in a crowd. They are all next to the entrance to the *space time continuum* waiting room. What is going on here?' asks Rory.

'They are for you lot, you found *Freya Seren* and took her home. Don't know what the fuss is about meself.'

'Who are you, and where is *Kevin* the park attendant?' Dulcie demands to know.

'Gonzo. Kevin is on holiday. So you got me. Get a move on I haven't got all day.'

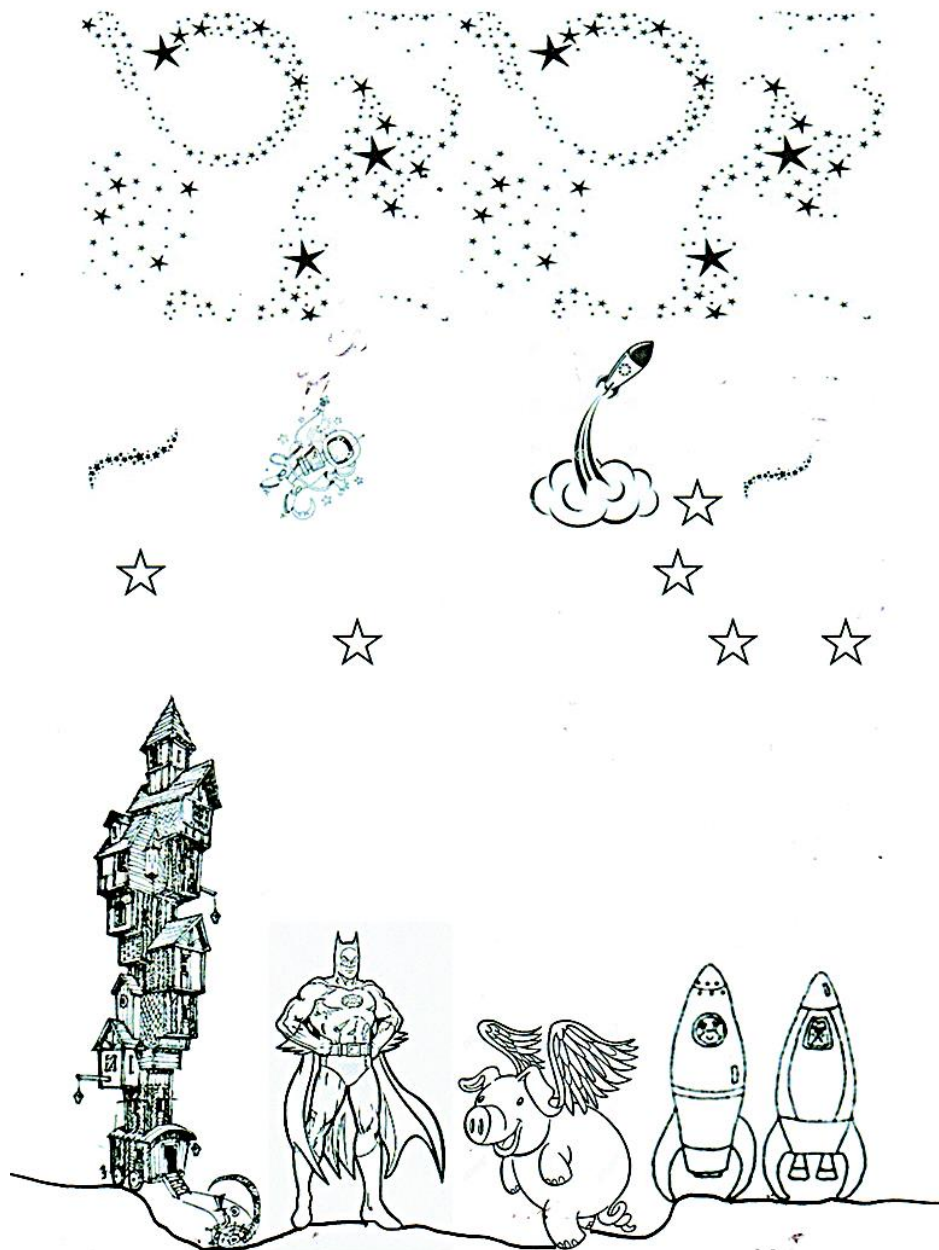
'Don't like him much' Torrin whispers to Rory.

'I heard that you cheeky creature. Follow me.'

Following *Gonzo* to the waiting room they look back and wave at the parked up *Winnie.R*.

'My lovely *shuttle* I will miss you so much. It is **sad sad sad** to leave you here. I'll try to get back one day soon.' Mr. Rhodri John wipes a tear away.

'We will come back and have more adventures' Jem says. That makes him smile.



Winnie.R parked up.



Outside the waiting room.

Travelling from all over the place *aliens* have been partying for days waiting for the *Winnie.R. Alien* life seems to be full of parties. Torrin tells them he might move there when he is older. They all clap and cheer and start planning the party.

The Draco Constellation Government has sent two senior Special Ambassadors. They will escort the Hodgepodes and Mr. Rhodri John through the *space time continuum* back to Laugharne on Earth.



Margo the Magnificent.

This Ambassador asked to come on this mission. It will be the first time anyone from her family has visited *alien* Earth.



Minnie Mae.

This junior Ambassador has just started in the job. If all goes well she will be promoted to full Ambassador.

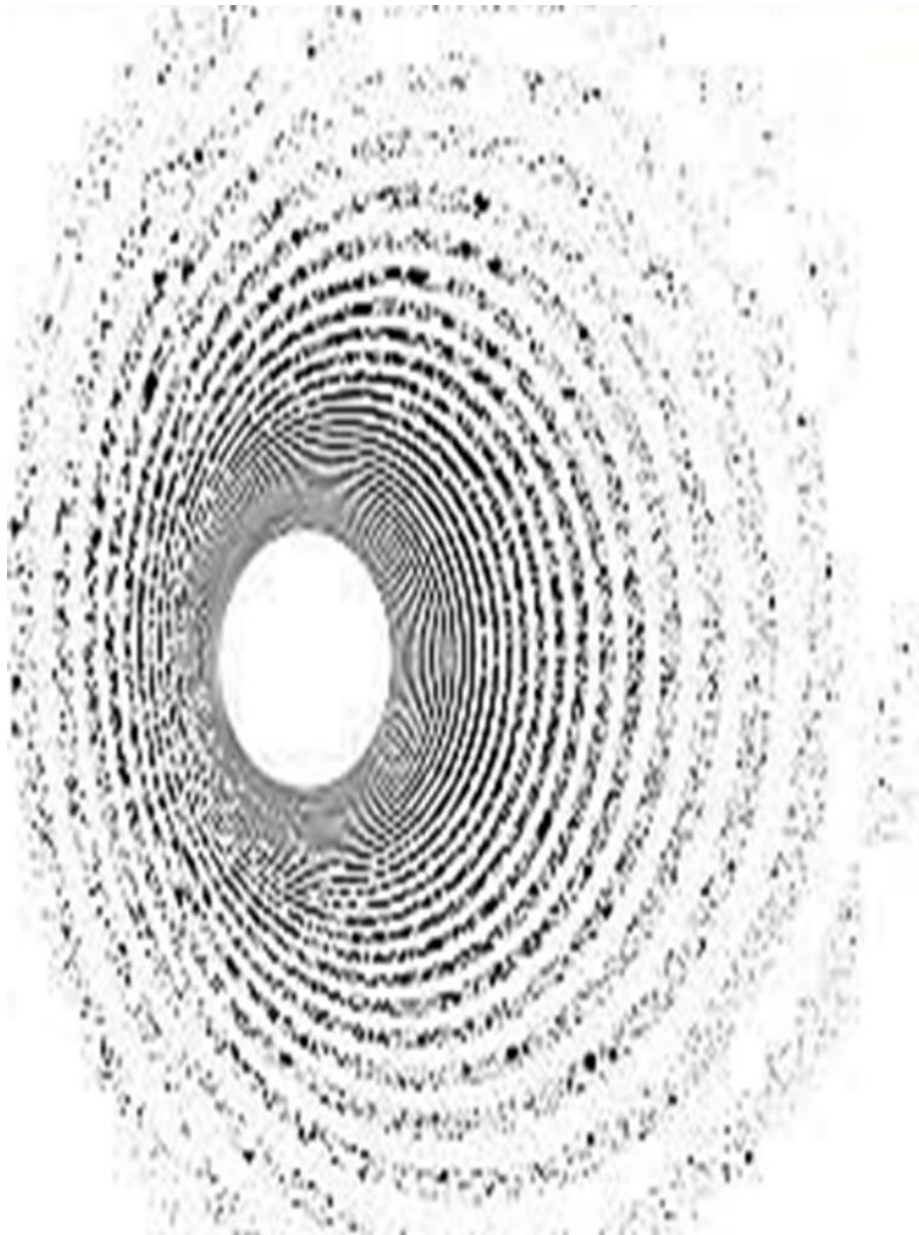
More speeches are made. More clapping and cheering is done. Three cheers and all the things that are done to say 'well done' get done.

Jem, Pern, Torrin, Rory, Dulcie, Dee Dee, Mr. Rhodri John, *Margo the Magnificent* and *Minnie Mae* give a final wave and jump into the *space time continuum*.

No one knows the reason why going through it the other way looks different. It just is.

Or why it looks **FUZZY**.

Or why the things that happen one way happen the other way round on the way back.



Space time continuum going the other way.

On the way up to the *asteroid* this happens,



- You shoot **up** then tumble **down**.
- Lights flash and say hello.
- Spiderman Spins past hanging on a silky web.
- Turning.
- Flipping.
- Somersaulting.
- Backflipping.
- Floating.
- Upside down they smile and hold arms tight to sides.
- Shimmering rainbows are dancing the tango.
- Stars are born while Ironman rotates.
- Sail ships sail sedately down the spiral.
- Astronauts pass, Cosmonauts and Hitchhikers look twice.
- The Batman out on a Bat adventure waves.
- A troll and unicorn hiding behind a sheet of starlight look confused and run away.

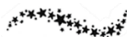
On the way down to Earth you shoot **down** then tumble **up**.

Read the list from the bottom to the top to see what happens going the other way.

It takes two seconds longer to travel **down** to Earth than to go **up** to the *asteroid*. In seven seconds they all land with a **bump**.

Right next to the sign that marks the launch pad by the boat house.

The luggage follows landing in a circle round them.



Chapter 18

Fame and Plans

Jem phones Mr. Fecci. 'Hello we're home. Can you come and pick us up please?'

'Welcome back, of course I will. I'll pick up the wheelbarrows on the way.'

'It will be easier moving the luggage with an extra three to help' says Pern.

Margo the Magnificent and *Minnie Mae* look at each other, and then at Pern.

'No my dears. On this Planet we can fly or walk. Anything else may damage our wings.'

'Good job Dee Dee is strong' Dulcie says.

'We'd better walk to the carpark to meet Mr. Fecci.' Off they all go.

The news they were coming home had been in the **CARMARTHEN DAILY NEWS** newspaper yesterday. So at the carpark there is another crowd for them to meet. The list of some of the people who were waiting for them is below.

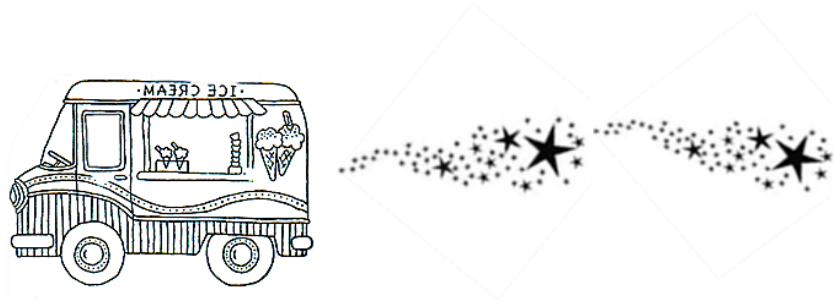
Television people.	Everyone who lives in Laugharne and Carmarthen.
Newspaper people.	
The Mayor of Laugharne.	Loads more from all over Wales, England and the rest of the world.
All the local school children.	
A few <i>aliens</i> in disguise.	The man with the ice cream kiosk.
A flock of escaped sheep.	Police to direct the traffic.
The lifeboat and crew.	More police to direct the police directing the traffic.
Sky News helicopter.	
Seagulls curlews & oystercatchers provide the band.	The man with the helicopter from up the hill. Visitors from America looking round the castle. The Army from the range at Pendine.

The most important person of all is Mr. Rhodri John's wife Mabel with Freddie the sheepdog. Then Mr. Llewelyn Jones the park keeper and Mrs Buddug Potts-Vaughan from the café. And finally, Mr. Fecci in the ice cream van with lots of wheelbarrows next to it.



The picture that appeared in all the newspapers and the telly. That astronaut gets everywhere.

With so many people to help, the luggage is packed up quickly. Mr. Fecci heads back to town to open the Bandstand door for the Hodgepodes.



Mr. Fecci heads back to town.

Mr. Rhodri John lifts his top hat. 'It's been a pleasure to travel with you all.' He gives them a kiss and goes home with Mabel and Freddie.

Margo the Magnificent and *Minnie Mae* stay for a while to sign autographs and pose for pictures. Then the Hodgepodes walk back to the *space time continuum* entrance and wave them off. 'Thanks for coming, see you soon.'

Mr. Llewelyn Jones and Mrs Buddug Potts-Vaughan travel back to the park with the family on the fire engine. In the park the wheelbarrows are empty and Mr. Fecci has put everything where it should be.

'How kind of him' Jem says to no one in particular. 'We must send him a thank you letter and a gift from us all.'

'The postcard was lovely Rory' says Mrs Potts Vaughan. 'I will have to come with you next time so I can see *space* for myself.'

'Not for me' Mr. Llewelyn Jones says. 'You will have to leave me at home Mrs. Potts Vaughan.'

Mr. Fecci is still behind the bandstand. 'Count me in. What an adventure that would be.'

The Hodgepodes are finally left in peace .

'What shall we do next?' asks Dulcie.

'Torrin says 'Let's go back to the *asteroid*.'

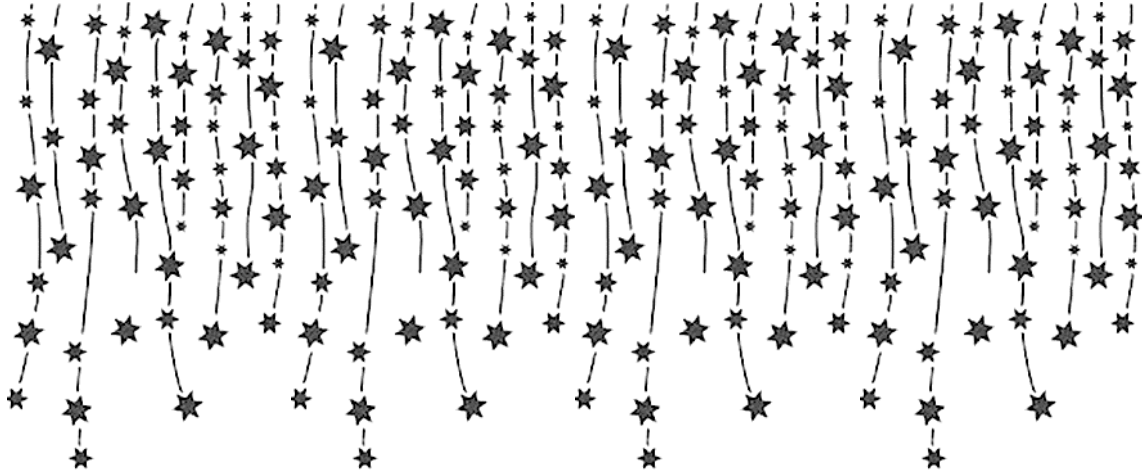
Dee Dee says, 'A holiday on *Queenarnia*.'

Rory says, '*Dancing on Sidus Paradisi*.'

Jem and Pern say 'Let's go to the circus.'



Chapter 19
The Bit at the Back



If the *Stars* are super bright tonight,

Whether you walk in the countryside or town,

Always remember to look up.

You may see *Freja* *Seren'* in the sky. She might be smiling at *You*.



If *You* do,

Wave and smile back.

Stars are like us,

We all need a wave and a smile sometimes.

This is the front cover of Dulcie's Poetry Book.

She started writing it on *Queenarnia*. So far there are only six poems in it.



Ali her friend from home painted the picture.

1. *Space* is light
Full of *stars* and *asteroids*
It is exciting.
2. Find a big *spaceship*
And a Mr. Rhodri John
For an adventure.
3. Three Queens rule the sands
Palm trees sway in the hot breeze
Keeping them all cool.
4. Whales weigh lots and lots
Tens of thousands of kilos
Bigger than your house.
5. What is a *spaceship*?
How does it fly in deep *space*?
Who cares? Just enjoy.
6. *Seren* a small star
Who got lost at the circus
We hope we find her.

You could write a poem or maybe a hundred beneath the *stars* and the next page.

Post them to the Hodgepodes at the bandstand or show them to your friends.



THIS IS THE END OF THE BOOK.
IT'S BEEN FUN MEETING YOU.
SEE YOU IN THE NEXT ONE.
LOVE FROM ALL THE HODGEPOLDES

XXXXXX

From Shopping Channel T.V to Outer Space.

A commentary on the production of *The*

HOΔΓΕΡΟΔΓΕ Family in Space.



From Shopping Channel T.V to Outer Space.

A commentary on the production of *The HODGEPODGE Family in Space*.

'We hope some day, having solved the problems we face,
to join a community of galactic civilisations.'

President Jimmy Carter 1977¹

This commentary is part reflection, explanation, and discussion of the creative process involved in the writing of *The Hodgepodge Family in Space*.

I will explain the origins of the work, how the story was developed, and why it looks the way it does. The original idea bears little resemblance to the presented work, apart from the theme of Space, as in astronomy, other worlds, and peoples. A brief overview of the initial idea is given to illustrate this.

Space was always going to be the central theme of my dissertation, an excuse to indulge my passion. I have been excited by the idea since childhood. Seeing the antenna, known as Arthur, at Goonhilly in Cornwall in 1963 was its genesis.² Armstrong and Aldrin landing on the moon on 16th July 1969 cemented the love affair.³ The grainy black and white images were enthralling, as were all the newspaper photographs and articles put into scrapbooks.

My initial plan was to write a haibun, haiku plus highly descriptive prose, my favourite form of poetry.⁴ Basho's *The Narrow Road* written in 1694,⁵ and David Cobb's *Marching with Tulips* written in the 2000s,⁶ were the books I hoped to emulate. They both have so much texture in them, like an embroidery of satin stitch and French knots.

¹ Shaun Usher, *Letters of Note, SPACE, compiled by Shaun Usher* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books Ltd, 2021), p15.

² Arthur could send signals to the Telstar communication satellite, or perhaps Martians. It is now called the Goonhilly Earth Station Ltd, the magic has not been preserved.

³ <https://nasasearch.nasa.gov/> [accessed 19 August 2022].

⁴ Poetry Society, *Young Poets Network* < <https://ypn.poetrysociety.org.uk> > [accessed 16 October 2022].

⁵ Matsuo Bashō, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Stories*, trans. by Nobuyuki Yuasa (London: Penguin Books, 1966).

⁶ David Cobb, *Marching with Tulips* (Uxbridge: Alba Publishing, 2013).

Then over the next two days.

- i. I saw Nicola Elliot's Steampunk craft stamps on the Create and Craft Shopping channel.⁷ They were punky.
- ii. Andy Saunders book *Apollo Remastered* showing newly digitized images of the moon landing was in a local book shop.⁸
- iii. I purchased David Walliams children's book *Spaceboy*,⁹ reading it before posting off to an eight-year-old.
- iv. Found Vincent van Gogh's quote about the light spots in the sky being inaccessible to us.¹⁰
- v. During research Plato told me about Phaedrus, I did not need to know about everything I was writing, I just needed to be able to persuade people that I did.¹¹
- vi. I looked at scrap books I had kept for years about space.¹²

So now I am going to write a children's prose book about a family who have a space adventure. How do you define children's literature though? Roger Sale tells us, 'everyone knows what children's literature is until asked to define it.'¹³ I see it as any book that can be read by a child, or have it read to them.

The book will be what I would have liked as a child: illustrated, prose that is not dense, I will be involved in the telling of the story, and there may be a few rude words in it.

⁷ Stamptagious stamps by Nicola Elliot < www.facebook.com/groups/stamptagious/ >.

⁸ Andy Saunders, *Apollo Remastered* (London: Particular Books, 2022).

⁹ David Walliams, *Spaceboy, A Supersonic Adventure* London: Harper Collins Children's Books, 2022).

¹⁰ Van Gogh Museum, *Vincent van Gogh, The Letters*, 638 (NJK) < [638 \(642, 506\): To Theo van Gogh. Arles, Monday, 9 or Tuesday, 10 July 1888. - Vincent van Gogh Letters](https://www.vangoghmuseum.com/en/letters/638-642-506-to-theo-van-gogh-arles-monday-9-or-tuesday-10-july-1888.-vincent-van-gogh-letters) > [accessed 18 September 2022].

¹¹ Wesley Smith, *Phaedrus Dialogue by Plato* (NJK) < <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Phaedrus-dialogue-by-Plato> > [accessed 16 August 2022].

¹² See Appendix 1.

¹³ Roger Sale, *Fairy Tales and After: From Snow White to E. B. White* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1978). Available at < [On Not Defining Children's Literature | PMLA | Cambridge Core](https://www.pmla.org/doi/abs/10.1215/00141801-2012-001) > [accessed 16 January 2023].

Not having written for children before much research was needed. Most of it could be defined/described as direct, indirect, and reflective.¹⁴ ¹⁵ Reflective research was the most time consuming, a lot of looking was done.

The town library and book shops were overwhelming to start with, so many age groups and styles of book to be considered. Olivia Hope's article on the Writing Ireland website was invaluable,¹⁶ breaking down both age groups and suggested word counts. The group I decided to concentrate on was between the 'Young reader' 6-9, and the 'Middle Grade' 9-12,¹⁷ that is 8-12 years old. My nephews, along with friends children and grandchildren, plus neighbours, were the group I had in my head when starting to write. My nephews proved to be formidable reviewers.

Engaging with the text, 'my ideal reader is also my implied reader. They are invited to accept the values, beliefs and attitudes that I present, whether overtly or implicitly, and to collaborate with the author to create meaning.'¹⁸

The books below were the ones that appeared to be the most popular with local shops and after reading them, me.

- i. David Walliams *Spaceboy*.¹⁹
- ii. Malorie Blackman *Cloud Busting*.²⁰
- iii. Oliver Jeffers *Meanwhile Back on Earth*.²¹

¹⁴ Langley Hyde, *Reading for Writing: How do I read for writerly research?* (2016) < www.Langleyhyde.com/460-l2 > [accessed 28 November 2022].

¹⁵ Tess Brady, Deakin University, *An Exegesis concerning the novel 'Fragments of a Map'. Section 3 – Research and the Vinland Map*(2010) < <http://www.textjournal.com.au/archive> > [accessed 30 September 2022].

¹⁶ Writing.ie, *Childrens Books: Age categories and word counts by Olivia Hope* (2017) < [Children's Books: Age Categories and Word Counts - Writing.ie](http://writing.ie/childrens-books-age-categories-and-word-counts)> [accessed 1 January 2023].

¹⁷ Writing.ie, 2017.

¹⁸ Academic Skills Unit, Australian Catholic University, *Critical Literacy Support, 3.6 Implied reader; ideal reader; compliant reader; resistant reader* (2007) <[3.6 Implied reader; ideal reader; compliant reader; resistant reader \(acu.edu.au\)](http://acu.edu.au)> [accessed 29 November 2022].

¹⁹ David Walliams, *Spaceboy, A Supersonic Adventure* London: Harper Collins Children's Books, 2022).

²⁰ Malorie Blackman, *Cloud Busting* (London: Doubleday, 2004).

²¹ Oliver Jeffers, *Meanwhile Back on Earth* (London: Harper Collins Children's Books, 2022).

- iv. Richard Ayode *The Book no one wanted to read*.²²
- v. Baddiel, David, (*The Boy Who Got) Accidentally Famous* (London: Harper Collins, 2022).²³
- vi. Jackie Morris *East of the Sun West of the Moon – myths and legends*.²⁴
- vii. Harriet Muncaster *Dragons and Unicorns*.²⁵

In the age group I was looking at, it was the Walliams and Ayode books that appealed to me most. They were both fresh, different, and intriguing with snappy prose. The illustrations, though simple enhanced the text without overwhelming it. Non-readers would be happy just with the pictures. Visually the words jumped out of the page by using different typefaces on the same page. Walliams just had the edge over Ayode with his use of typeface and Adam Stower’s delightful illustrations.

For example, when Ruth and the Spaceboy first meet in Walliam’s *Spaceboy*,²⁶ on page 70, the words and illustrations complement each other beautifully. They can be seen in Appendix 2. Words give a brief description which is then enhanced by a labelled portrait of Spaceboy. A child who is unable to read, will still be aware of what is going on. Turn over the page, and two short lines are followed by two small pictures of Ruth and Spaceboy, the heroes of the book, at the bottom of the pages. All the remaining white space is packed with speech bubbles with Ruth’s questions in them. The result is words that seem to tumble out of her at a dizzying pace, so fast she can hardly catch her breath as Spaceboy remains silent. It feels more eloquent than straight lines of speech could ever be.

Throughout the book, words and pictures are loose and relaxed. Not sloppy, but perfect for a fast-paced chunky adventure book of 363 pages.

²² Richard Ayoade and Tor Freeman, *The Book that No One Wanted to Read* (London: Walker Books, 2022).

²³ David Baddiel, (*The Boy Who Got) Accidentally Famous* (London: Harper Collins, 2022).

²⁴ Jackie Morris, *East of the Sun West of the Moon* (London: Frances Lincoln Publishers, 2021).

²⁵ Harriet Muncaster, *Isadora Moon Gets in Trouble* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

²⁶ David Walliams, *Spaceboy, A Supersonic Adventure* (London: Harper Collins Children’s Books, 2022), pp 70-73.

Ayoade's *The Book that No One Wanted to Read* is also a funny, well-illustrated children's book. I am using pages 64-65 to compare it with Walliams work,²⁷ the artwork can be seen in Appendix 3. Freeman's work is much more controlled, his drawing is tighter, less relaxed than Stowers. Rather than augment the words, he explains them. Ayoade's prose is also tighter, with plenty of typeface changes and lots of white space around them.

I would highly recommend these books; both made me and my young audience of two laugh. My preference for *Spaceboy* over *The Book that No One Wanted to Read*, comes down to the plot, an adventure wins every time. What I found disconcerting, was when reading out loud I did not hear my voice, it was Walliams and Ayoade's. An odd sensation.

My research made me particularly aware of publisher expectations for a book of the kind I was developing:

- i. A strong plot, building up to a solid exciting climax.
- i. Engaging central characters.
- ii. Characters at the heart of the story.
- iii. Children should drive the action.
- iv. Know your market and age appropriateness.
- v. Know the market for contemporary children's books.
- vi. Age appropriateness bigger factor in children's books than in adults.
- vii. Spark and originality.
- viii. What can you give them that no one else can?²⁸

What I decided I can give them is the Hodgepodes along with recycling, and space exploration for eight to twelve-year-olds

My aim in writing *The Hodgepodge Family in Space* is to produce a gentle book with mildly scary bits in it. But most of all, I want to stretch children's imagination with a blurring of reality and fantasy. Non-humans are the main characters. They are built from recycled material. They are not human but have some of our traits, and for my ideal reader they are

²⁷ Ayoade and Freeman, *The Book that No One Wanted to Rea*, pp. 64-65.

²⁸ Scottish Book Trust, *What editors look for in a children's book submission* by Jennifer Bowden (2015) < [What editors look for in a children's book submission - Scottish Book Trust](#) > [accessed 15 August 2022].

focused on adventure and the desire to learn there is more to the world than the small spot each of us inhabit. Anything is possible.

Design and presentation of *The Hodgepodge Family in Space* is a compromise between reality and vision.

My vision is a book where every page has a background with words and line drawings printed over it. If in colour, the illustrations would be in the style of Oliver Jeffers books,²⁹ exquisite artwork enhancing the prose. Or Sue Becklake's *100 Facts on Space* with great colour and glossy paper.³⁰ Physically the book would be a hard back, trim size 28cm x 21.5cm, presented in landscape with many 'pop up' images to enhance the reading experience.³¹ Walliams paperback fits somewhere into the range of sizes used at 13.5cm x 21.5cm.

In reality, my imagination is not matched by my artistic ability. So, to produce credible and meaningful illustrations, I have used commercially produced stamps³² from my collection, along with downloaded clipart to illustrate the story. This gives the hand drawn, punky effect I required.

The Hodgepodge Family in Space uses different type faces as tools to emphasize and differentiate between characters. There are many different 'species' in space, a different type face differentiates speech between them.

Special Elite 11 point indicates an alien is speaking. See Kevin in Chapter 5 or Gonzo in Chapter 17.

Rough typewriter 12 point refers to anything space themed; stars, aliens, black holes, asteroids and so on.

²⁹ Oliver Jeffers, *Meanwhile Back on Earth* (London: Harper Collins Children's Books, 2022).

³⁰ Sue Becklake, *100 Facts on Space* (Great Bardfield: Bardfield Press, Miles Lelly Publishing Ltd, 2002).

³¹ Brook Vitale, *What Are The Best Children's Book Sizes, Standard Book Sizes* (2022)

<[What Are The Best Children's Book Sizes | Standard Book Sizes \(brookevitale.com\)](https://www.brookevitale.com)> [accessed 20 January 2023].

³² Nicola Elliot the Stamptagious artist drew the Hodgepodge figures in the Steampunk Collection, see <[\(20+\) Stamptagious | Facebook](#)> . Available from Create and Craft <[Stamptagious at Create and Craft](#)> .

Ice & Snow 14 point, uses a capital at the start of each word to show Penguins are speaking, and it is very cold. The snow covered typeface emphasises the temperature in Chapter 11.

WHO IS HOT 14 point enhances heat in Chapter 9.

BLOBTASTICS 12 point bubbles up from under the sea in Chapter 12.

White Xmas star personal 16 point is the voice of the central character. The voice must shine throughout the story.

I am aware children who struggle with reading may have difficulty with the different typefaces. If this is the case, I hope parents, siblings or friends will help.

Chapter length is an area I did not consider while writing, the number of pages in each was story led. Chapter 9 is only two pages, it is fast paced and intense, anymore and the imagery would have been lost. The involved narrative in Chapter 13 has eight, slowing the pace to match the words.

Geographically, the Earth setting is very specific. Wales, Carmarthen, and Laugharne in West Wales. I liked the idea of the 'realness' of Carmarthenshire balancing out the very imaginary world of Space travel. Local children will recognize their own home ground, hopefully resulting in a small thrill of recognition for them. Many stories are set in cities, 83% of the population were city dwellers in 2022,³³ so this is unsurprising. Children are adaptable, I'm sure they can cope with a change of scenery. They can manage outer Space so Carmarthen should not prove problematic. Space locations are a mixture of real and the extraordinary. For example, the Sun with sunglasses on, wormholes that vomit the unwary traveller out. Planet names are also a mix, but the imaginary usually has a grain of truth embedded in in. The frozen world of Planet Tiria in Chapter 11 is the Welsh word for Iceland. Chapter 8 has a ruler who is addressed as 'Kineen', a mix of King and Queen. King Morfil in Chapter 12 is named after a village in the Preseli Hills in Pembrokeshire. This has little bearing on the outcome of the story, although some adults reading to a child might pick up on it.

'Alien' is a word that appears frequently in the book. It has many connotations. 'Belonging or relating to another person, place or thing, an illegal alien.'³⁴ I decided to explain we can all

³³ Gov.uk, *Rural Economic Bulletin March 2022* (2022) [accessed 19 January 2022].

³⁴ <https://www.merriam-webster.com> .

be aliens in case a child found the word worrying. So, in Chapter 15 there are alien aliens and human aliens, both alien to a specific planet.

The Hodgepodes in Space is not an educational book, rather a fun adventure book with a few facts thrown into for those who enjoy acquiring knowledge. Chapter 13's Tadpole star map is from the NASA website.³⁵ Professor Langrangian's equation ³⁶ also in Chapter thirteen exists. Chapter 4 has a list describing a walk taken, it is accurate. Any reader could follow it and reach the destination. I like the idea of a child, or adult, wanting to follow up information to find out what's real and what's not.

After all the research about space, I found it difficult not to cram everything available into the story. There was one fact I wanted to include without being too obvious, just for me, the evidence that space is not silent. I always assumed it was quiet, all sound absorbed by the cosmos or lack of atmosphere. Learning it is noisy but can only be heard with complicated and expensive microphones bowled me over,³⁷ making the loud, chattering voices in the story accurate, ish, maybe.

With the reader at the centre of the Hodgepodge's adventures, I want them to interact physically and emotionally with the story. So, I ask them to draw pictures, ask teachers questions and write letters. If the book is published in the future an address to send their letters to would need to be included. The NASA website,³⁸ is mentioned several times most eight-year-olds would be able to access it themselves. There is an easy-to-read child friendly section available on it.

During the final read through of *The Hodgepodge Family in Space*, I became conscious of an aspect I had not noticed before. Reading it out loud reminded me of my mother telling my sisters and I stories at bedtime. Why was that? Eventually I worked it out. All the humans bar one, are referred to by their full name. Mr. Rhodri John, Mr. Llewelyn Jones, and Mrs. Buddug Potts-Vaughan. In the sixties unrelated adults were always called Mrs. Mr. or Miss in our family.

³⁵ <https://www.nasa.gov> [accessed 26 November 2022].

³⁶ Harvard University, *The Langrangian's Method* Copyright 2007 by David Morin (2007) < [cmchap6.pdf \(harvard.edu\)](https://www.harvard.edu/cmchap6.pdf) > [accessed 26 November 2022].

³⁷ NASA, *Eavesdropping in Space: How NASA records eerie sounds around Earth*, by Mara Johnson-Groh (2018) <https://www.nasa.gov>. [accessed 11 December 2021].

³⁸ <https://www.nasa.gov>.

After a brief panic, I decided the 'olden days' sat well rubbing up against the modernity of space travel. I hope the young readers of today agree, if not perhaps Granny will.

I am pleased with the story I have produced and hope to publish it in the future.

I was told by an acquaintance before I started on this venture that, 'It's easy writing for kids you can write any rubbish, if you're famous the name sells it anyway.'³⁹

Many rewrites later I can confirm how wrong they are. Popular children's authors are 'proper writers.'

Almost every rewrite involved trying to reduce sentence length. My natural rhythm as a prose writer tends to long lines broken up with commas, colons, and semi colons. Using the short lines and full stops I felt were necessary to appeal to the reader, was a discipline that took longer than anticipated to master.

Despite the fact this assignment is the most demanding I have attempted in my writing to date, it has been the most fun. Researching an area that was out of my comfort zone, was stimulating, and to my surprise exciting. I had to become more disciplined in my approach due to the amount of time I was spending on reading and web surfing. One new concept I have discovered which will stay with me, and I believe applies to my future work, is 'Ikigai.' This is a Japanese concept that translates as,

'Referring to a passion that gives value and joy to life'.⁴⁰

I plan on writing for children to become my Ikigai. Such was the appeal of the idea, I had to be persuaded not to call one of the Hodgepodes Ikigai.

Since the creative writing part of my dissertation was completed in December, there has been much excitement in the newspapers about the use of artificial intelligence 'bots' writing

³⁹ No names will be mentioned here. It was heard at a well-known local arts festival in March 2022 outside Dylan Thomas's writing shed.

⁴⁰The government of Japan, *Ikigai: the Japanese Secret to a Joyful Life* (2022) <https://www.japan.go.jp/kizuna/2022/03/ikigai_japanese_secret_to_a_joyful_life.html> [accessed 21 October 2022].

books and university assignments.⁴¹ ⁴² Having just written about superior technologies and space travel I put the bare bones of *The Hodgepodes in Space* into one of the 'bot' programmes, I used ChatGPT. ⁴³

'Write a story about a robot family that go into space to meet a star they had previously met at a circus.'

If the result was as poor as the work I got back (the result can be seen in Appendix 3), I plan to stick with my own brain power.

To finish I would like to quote from Carlo Rovelli's book *Helgoland*,

'Step by step, the fabulous strangeness and beauty of reality is unveiled.'⁴⁴

When a child eventually gets to read *The Hodgepodes in Space*, I hope they will be able to keep the 'fabulous strangeness of reality' (and make believe), they find in the book, through to their adulthood.

⁴¹ Alex Hern, 'AI bot ChatGPT stuns academics with essay-writing skills and usability', *The Guardian*, 4 December 2022. <[AI bot ChatGPT stuns academics with essay-writing skills and usability | Technology | The Guardian](#)> [accessed 29 December 2022].

⁴² Christopher Carbone, 'How ChatGPT could make it easy to cheat on written tests and homework: 'You can no longer give take-home exams or homework'', *Mail Online*, 7 December 2022<[How ChatGPT could make it easy to cheat on written tests and homework | Daily Mail Online](#)> [accessed 18 January 2023].

⁴³ I used ChatGPT Dec 15 Version <<https://chatgpt.net/>> [accessed 29 December 2022].

⁴⁴ Carlo Rovelli, *Helgoland, The Strange and Beautiful Story of Quantum Physics* (London: Penguin Random House UK, 2021), p66.

Image Directory

Photographs and Paintings

Page	Image	Information
3	Portrait of Pillars of Creation taken by the James Webb Telescope	NASA's Webb Takes Star-Filled Portrait of Pillars of Creation NASA
24	Laugharne Boathouse by David Day	A tracing was taken of the picture from the artist's website (daviddayartist.com)
106	The Cover of Dulcie's Poetry Book	Acrylic painting by Alastair Dann from my collection. Permission was given to use it

Branded Commercial Stamps used from my collection

AALL & Create	Available from	www.allandcreate.com
ART Inspirations	“	www.artinspirations.co.uk
Banana Frog	“	www.bananafrog.co.uk
Crafters Companion	“	www.crafterscompanion.co.uk
Darkroom door	“	www.darkroomdoor.com
Dimension Fourth Ltd	“	www.dimensionsfourthltd.co.uk
Globeland	“	www.globeland.com
Hunkydory	“	www.hunkydorycrafts.co.uk
IndigoBlu	“	www.indigoblu.com
Inkylicious	“	www.inkylicious.co.uk
Papermania Docrafts	“	https://www.amazon.co.uk/
Pink Ink Designs	“	www.pinkinkdesigns.co.uk
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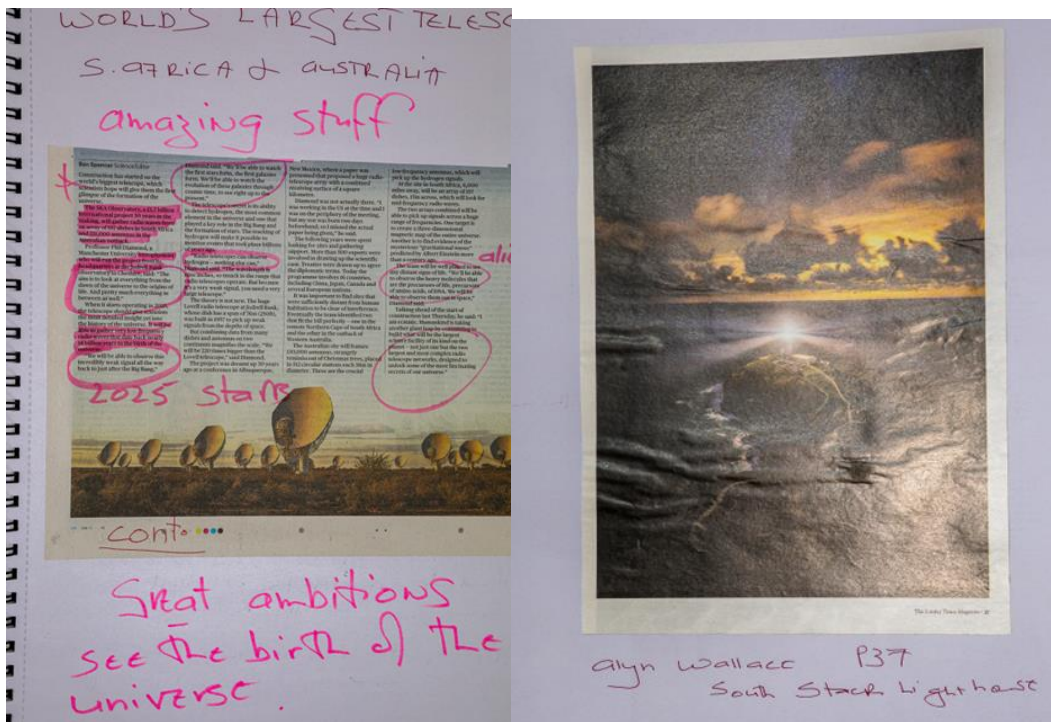
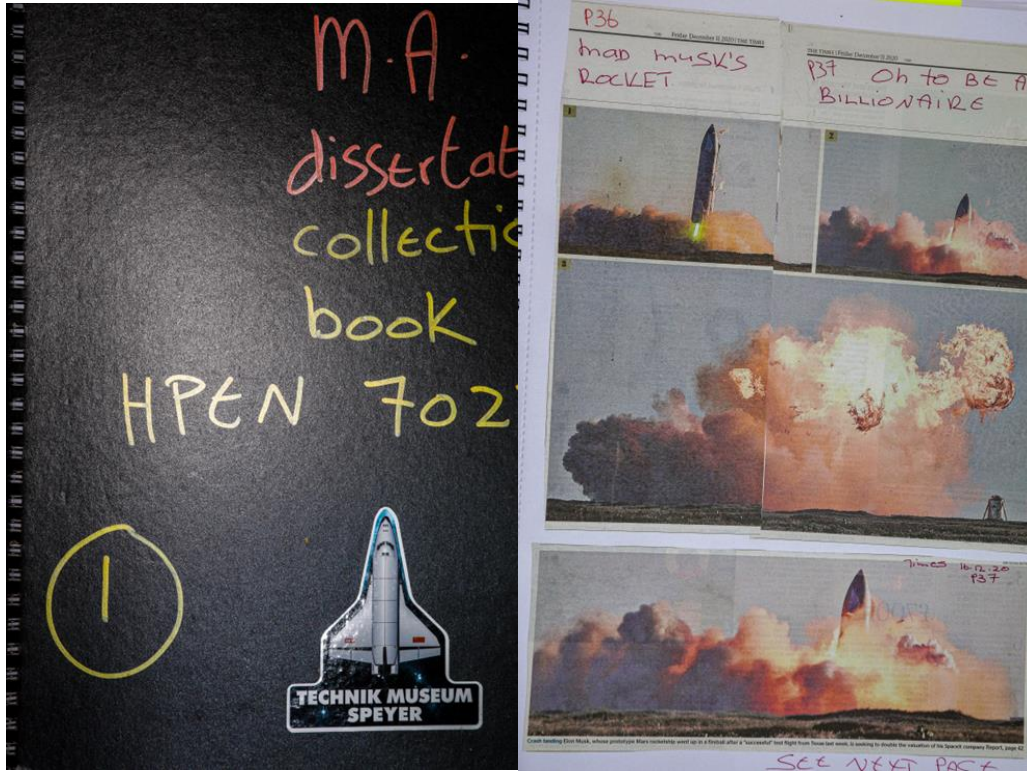
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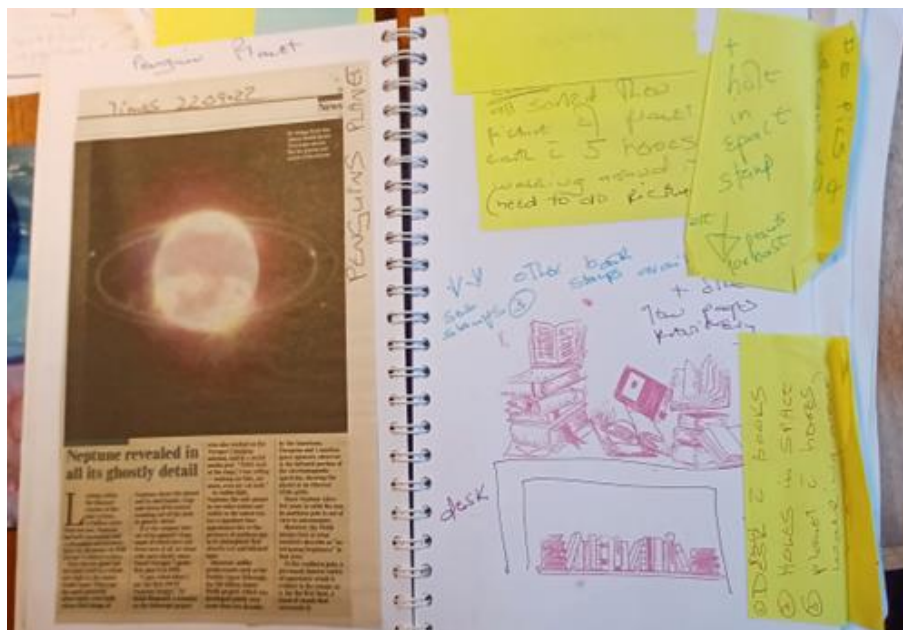
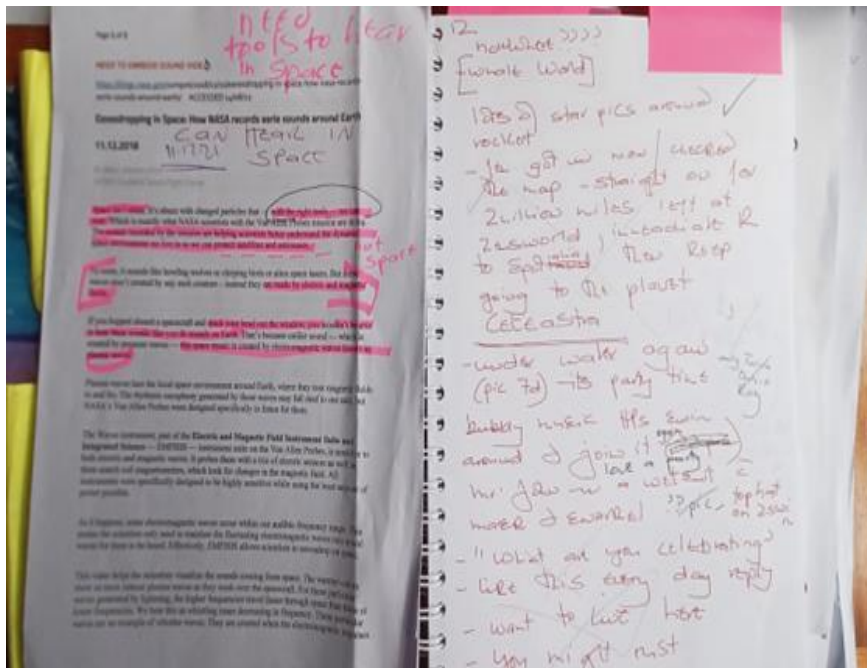
Appendix 1.

Pages from scrap and note books

3 x A3.

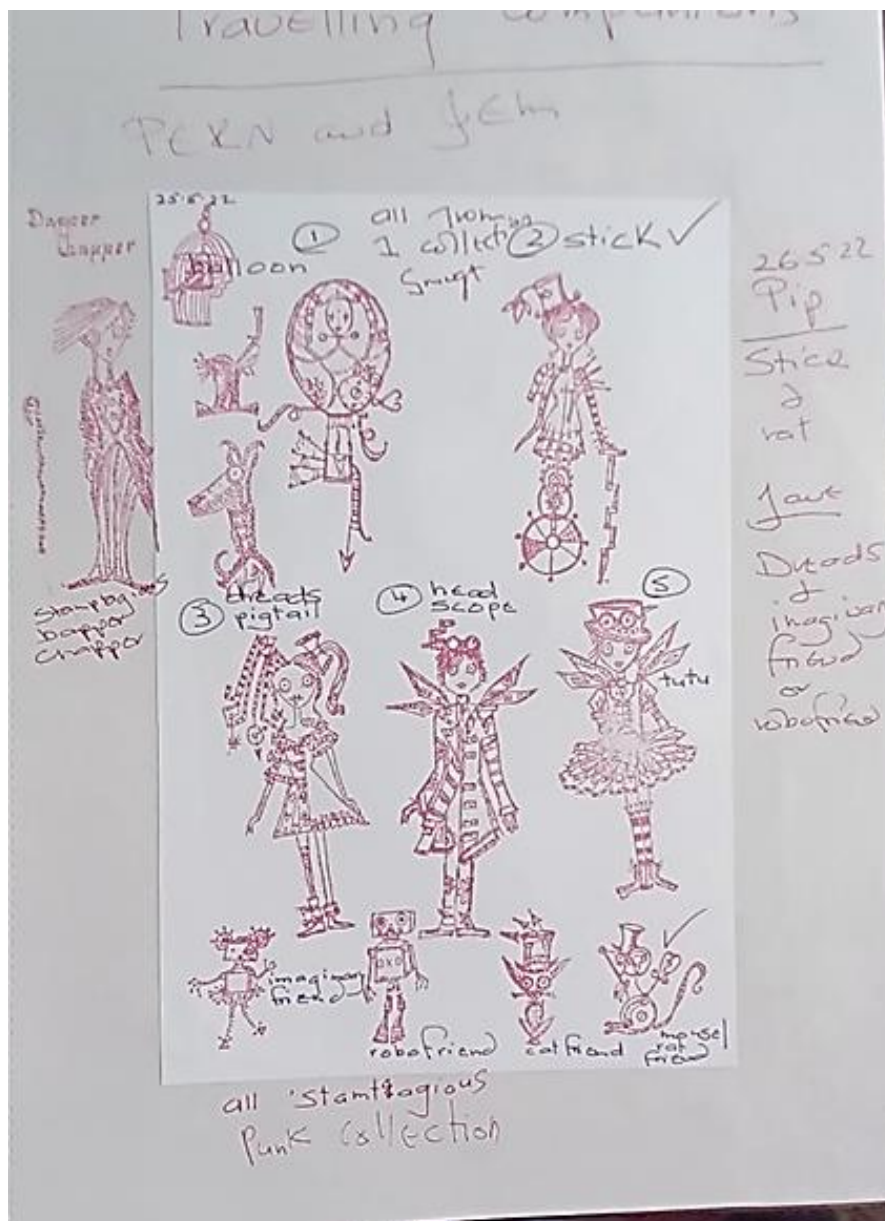


From note book.



Initial run with stamps.

Hodgepodes.



Appendix 2.

David Walliam's *Spaceboy* Pages 70-73.

Spaceboy

Out clambered the **thing**. Its body was surprisingly short. Up to its shoulders, it was no taller than Ruth, and she was small for her age. However, its helmet towered into the sky. It was probably half as tall again as the **alien's** body. There had to be a bizarre-looking creature under there.

Yuri clambered up on to the flying saucer and scuttled over to the mysterious figure. The little dog began jumping up and down, yapping!

"WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!"

The **alien** looked truly out of this world.

Its outfit would be perfect for the bitter cold of space – not so much a balmy summer night in the American Midwest.

Every part of the **alien's** body was covered, although there was a reflective glass slot in the helmet for it to see out. But how many eyes did this thing from outer space have?

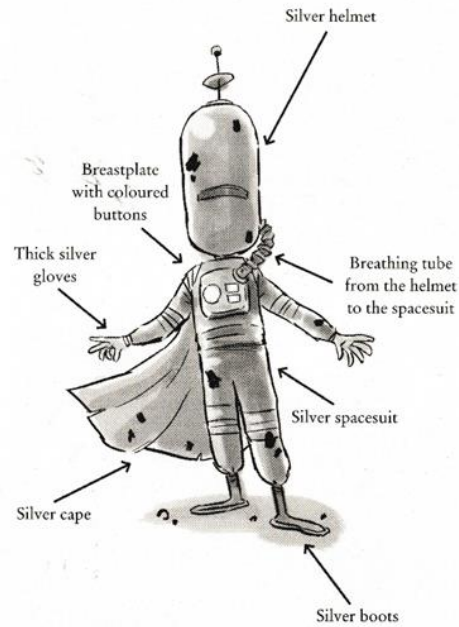
One?

Three?

Three hundred?

Its head looked big enough for **three thousand!**

70



Spaceboy

Ruth's brain was buzzing with a **billion** questions. She blurted them out at a **dizzying** rate.

What planet are you from? What's it like in outer space?

Can I come and visit one day? Is it cold?

Did you stop off on Mars on the way? Why did you choose Earth? Do you need a sweater?

Is there life on Mars? What's your name? My name is Ruth.

Are you green? Or blue?

Or red? Or maybe even purple?

Purple would be cool! Do you come in peace?

Are you planning to destroy the Earth?

Have you ever met Yuri Gagarin? Two, please! One for me and one for my dog.

If so, please could I have his autograph? He's called Yuri too.

Do you have special powers? Are you hungry? My dog's named after him, not the other way round!

Are you thirsty? Can we be pen pals? Have you been to any other planets?

Have you been to the moon? Do you have an awful aunt?

One day, can I have a ride in a flying saucer? I do! I hope you never meet her!

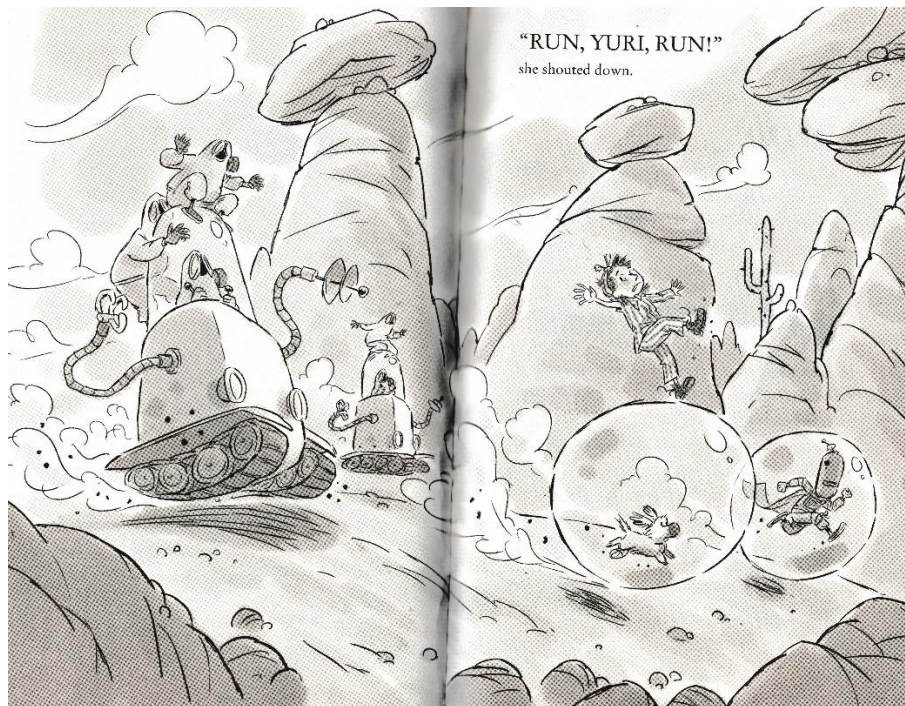
Have you ever seen an ostrich? Oh! Have you ever been sucked inside a black hole?

Is it very dark in there?

Do you have candy in outer space? Does your planet revolve round a sun just like Earth does?

Will you be my friend?

Pages 176-178



Pages 254-255

Spaceboy

Fortunately, the familiar figure of **the president** bounded into view. He was wearing a loud golf outfit, with checks so mismatched that if you looked at him for too long you would get a splitting headache.

"Howdy!" he called across the lawn, holding on to his hair, which on closer inspection looked suspiciously like a toupee. A ginger one at that, even though he had a deep tan. Like his clothes, they did **NOT** match. **The president** was a short, round man, with stubby arms and legs. It would be a miracle if he could reach to wipe his own bottom with those arms.

Behind **the president** towered a secret serviceman in a dark suit and even darker glasses acting as his caddy, lugging a huge bag of golf clubs.

"You didn't see a golf ball anywhere, did you?" asked **the president**. "I am something of a champion golfer, but I seem to have lost my ball!"

"It's right here, Mr President!" replied Ruth, picking the hard white ball up off the grass.

"Why thank you," he replied, taking the ball.

He looked down at **Major Majors** lying on the grass. The great military man with all his medals was still out cold.

254



"What happened to the major?" asked the president.

Ruth looked around at the guards. All were shaking their heads as if to tell her "Don't say a thing".

"Well, I am sorry to say, Mr President, that your

255

Appendix 3.

Richard Ayode's *The Book That No One Wanted To Read* Pages 64-65.

ANGER MANAGEMENT, you bump into a beetling browser in the BIOGRAPHY section. And, being one of the Top Ten Polite People Of All Time In Any Given Bump-Into Situation, you say, in your lowest library voice

- Sorry.

And within (say) one quarter of a millisecond, you hear a sharp "Shush!"

You look over. The librarian's crooked finger bisects her pursed lips; the propulsive force of her sibilance flecks her digit with spittle.

It's kind of gross. But you cannot fault her hearing.

- Hmm.

- Yes, hmmm

says a voice. A voice that is not near by. A voice that no one else can hear. A voice that sounds



View A:
Full frontal



View B:
Cubist



View C:
Skeletal



View D:
Extreme close-up

Fig. 25
LIBRARIAN FINGER,
SPITTLE-FLECKED
(VARIOUS VIEWS)

Pages 86-87

- Oh, so you get to decide what is and what isn't bookist?! Typical non-book behaviour.

- What are you talking about?

- How people treat books. They have no respect. They act like they own them.

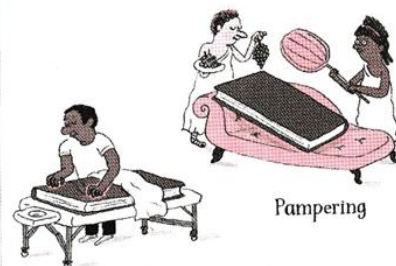
- Isn't that because people DO own them?

- I don't know how you sleep. Books aren't just property. They're not just things. They're alive!

- But aren't they also things?

- So are you.

You're not sure about this. The book's not done though. In fact, it's pretty far from done. Let's just say, if "done" were a place, we'd be flying long-haul.



Massage

Pampering



Adoration

Fig. 37
HOW TO TREAT A BOOK WELL
(THREE SUGGESTIONS)

Appendix 4.

A story written by A.I. - artificial intelligence – using the basic plot from *The Hodgepodes in Space* with Chat GPT Dec15 Version <https://chatgpt.net/>

Write a story about a robot family that go into space to meet a star they had previously met at a circus

Once upon a time, there was a robot family that lived on a small planet called Mecharia. The family was made up of a mother robot named Robina, a father robot named Roboto, and their three children, Robyn, Robo, and Robby.

One day, the family received an invitation to visit a circus that was being held on a nearby planet. Excited to see all the amazing sights and sounds, the family packed their bags and set off on their journey.

As they walked through the circus tent, they were amazed by all the incredible performers and acts. But what really caught their attention was a beautiful star that was twinkling and shining brightly above the stage.

The family couldn't take their eyes off of the star, and they knew they had to meet her. So, they approached the stage and asked if they could meet her after the show.

The star, whose name was Stella, was delighted to meet the robot family and agreed to meet them after the show.

As they chatted, Stella told the family that she had always dreamed of traveling to space and seeing all the different planets and galaxies. The robot family was thrilled to hear this, as they had always wanted to go on a space adventure as well.

So, they decided to team up and set off on a journey to explore the galaxy together. The family packed their bags and hopped on their spaceship, with Stella leading the way.

As they flew through the vast expanse of space, they saw all kinds of amazing sights, from colorful nebulae to swirling galaxies. They also met all kinds of interesting creatures, from friendly aliens to mischievous space pirates.

But no matter where they went, the robot family always had Stella by their side, guiding them on their journey and helping them explore the wonders of the universe.

And in the end, they all returned home to Mecharia, filled with wonderful memories and the knowledge that they had achieved their dream of exploring the stars.

Regenerate response
