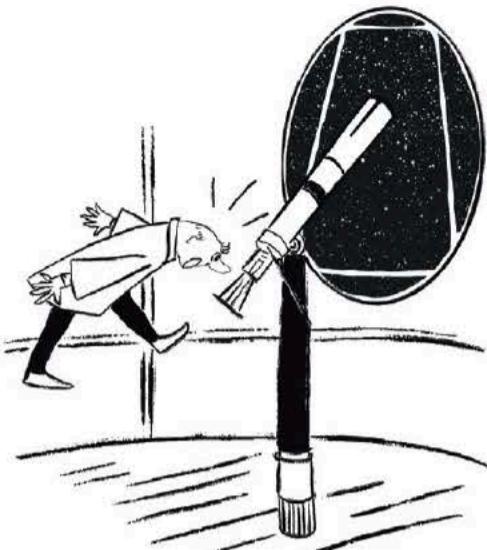


INTRODUCTION



On Wednesday morning, September 1st, 1993, to be exact, Dr. Shpilark, discovered a galaxy that was visible only through the recently acquired state-of-the-art laboratory telescope. He was so elated by this discovery that he jumped a bit too high and hit his head on the ceiling, knocking himself out.

Had Dr. Shpilark been a patient man, and taken the time to calmly explore the galaxy, he would have spotted, just there at the edge, a small planet bursting with color. Had the good doctor taken the time to look, he would have been amazed to see an aging star hanging above the planet and a little girl in a blue dress climbing all over it. And had he spent even a bit longer observing, he might have seen a cube-shaped object wearing a giant mitten on its antenna following the child all over the planet like an annoying pest.

Unfortunately Dr. Shpilark was not a patient man and when he tried to find the galaxy again, he couldn't spot it. It was gone. How was that possible?

Actually, the galaxy wasn't attempting to hide from anyone. It simply wasn't interested in making friends or in being found. It had no rhyme nor reason for it—it simply was.

And it is in this galaxy that our story begins.

CHAPTER ONE

Give Me Luck and Put Me on a Rock

"Fluffy!"

For a beat, and then two, there was no answer.

"Fluffy!"

Another beat, still no answer.

"Fluffy! Show yourself at once!"

An aging star craned its golden body to peek around a curve of a small colorful planet below.

"Where is this child hiding?" grumbled the star.

"Fluffy! Answer me this instance!"

The silence that followed seemed unyielding, until suddenly the layers of kaleidoscopic colors coating the surface of the small planet began to ripple in waves. Something was moving rapidly underneath them. Just as swiftly as it started, the rippling came to a stop and a small pale arm shot up parting the layers.

Out popped a little girl. Her head, just a bit too large for her body, sat atop a white daisy-shaped collar. Her hair, the color of the darkest shade of blue, was pulled into two big buns affixed on each side of her head. A few loose strands refusing to behave stuck out on top, waving to and fro as she moved about.

With a glint in her big dark eyes and a mischievous grin, Fluffy bounced up onto her feet revealing striped legs that were not to be mistaken for stockings. She held a shiny ball in her hand, and smiling a wicked smile, she yelled to a cube with a mitten on its head hovering in the distance.

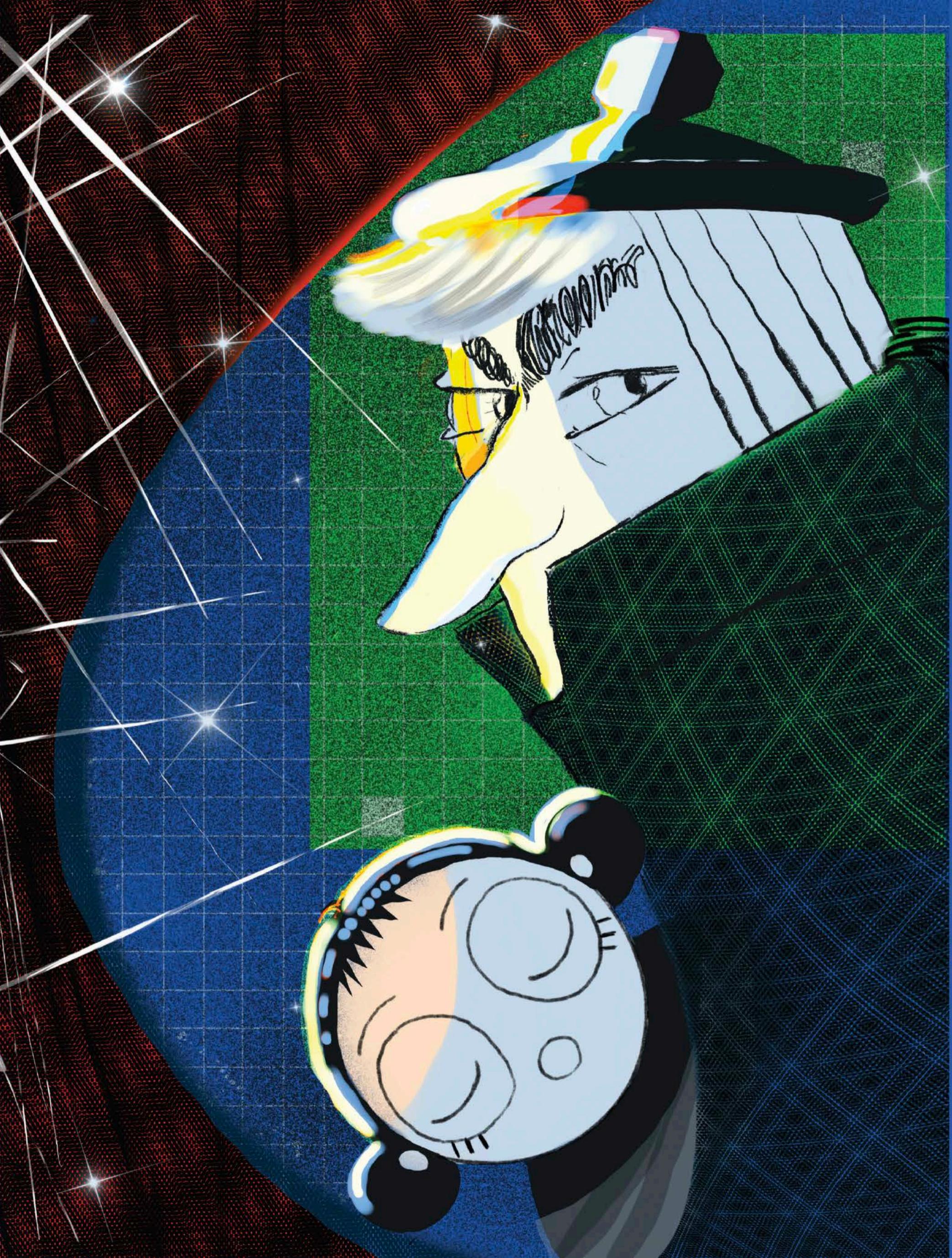
"GRITO! Blazeballs!"

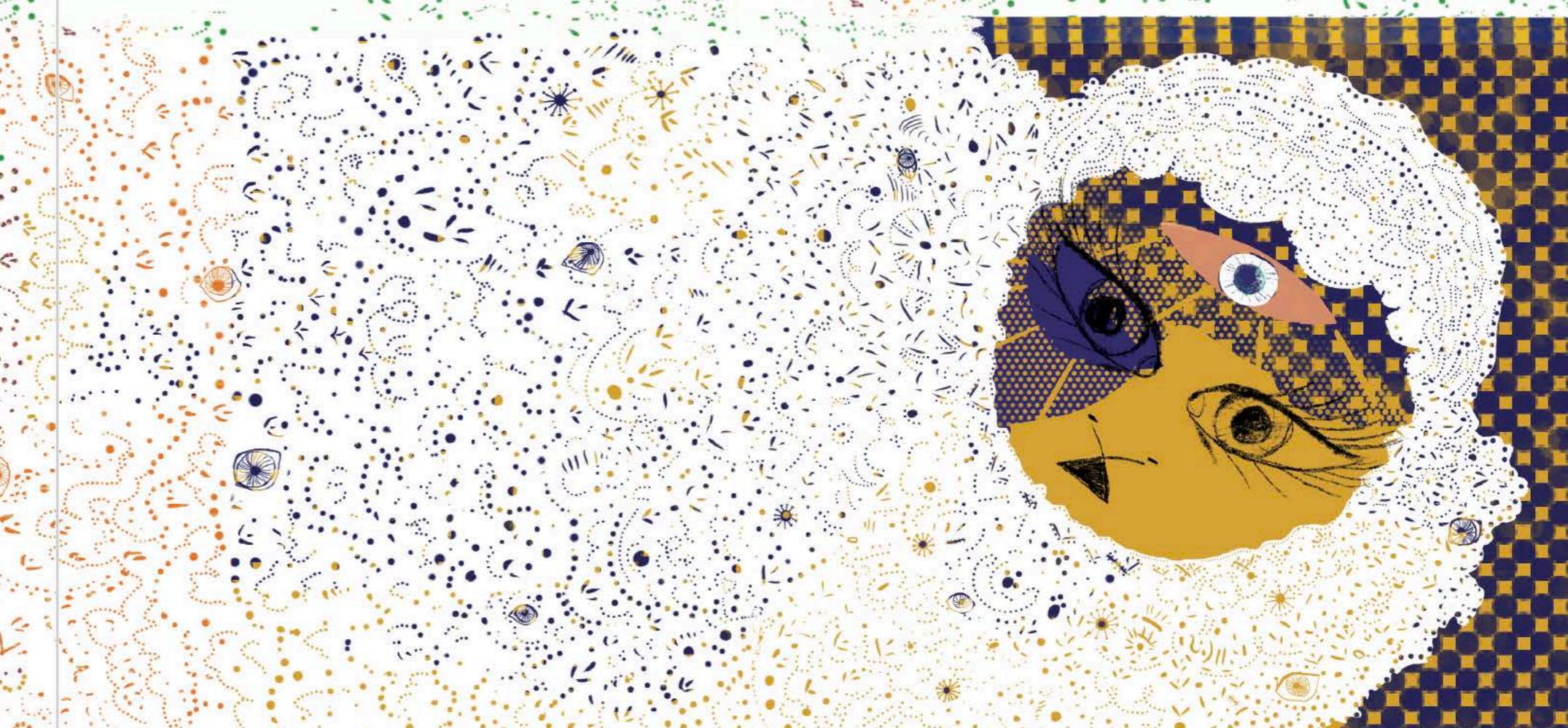
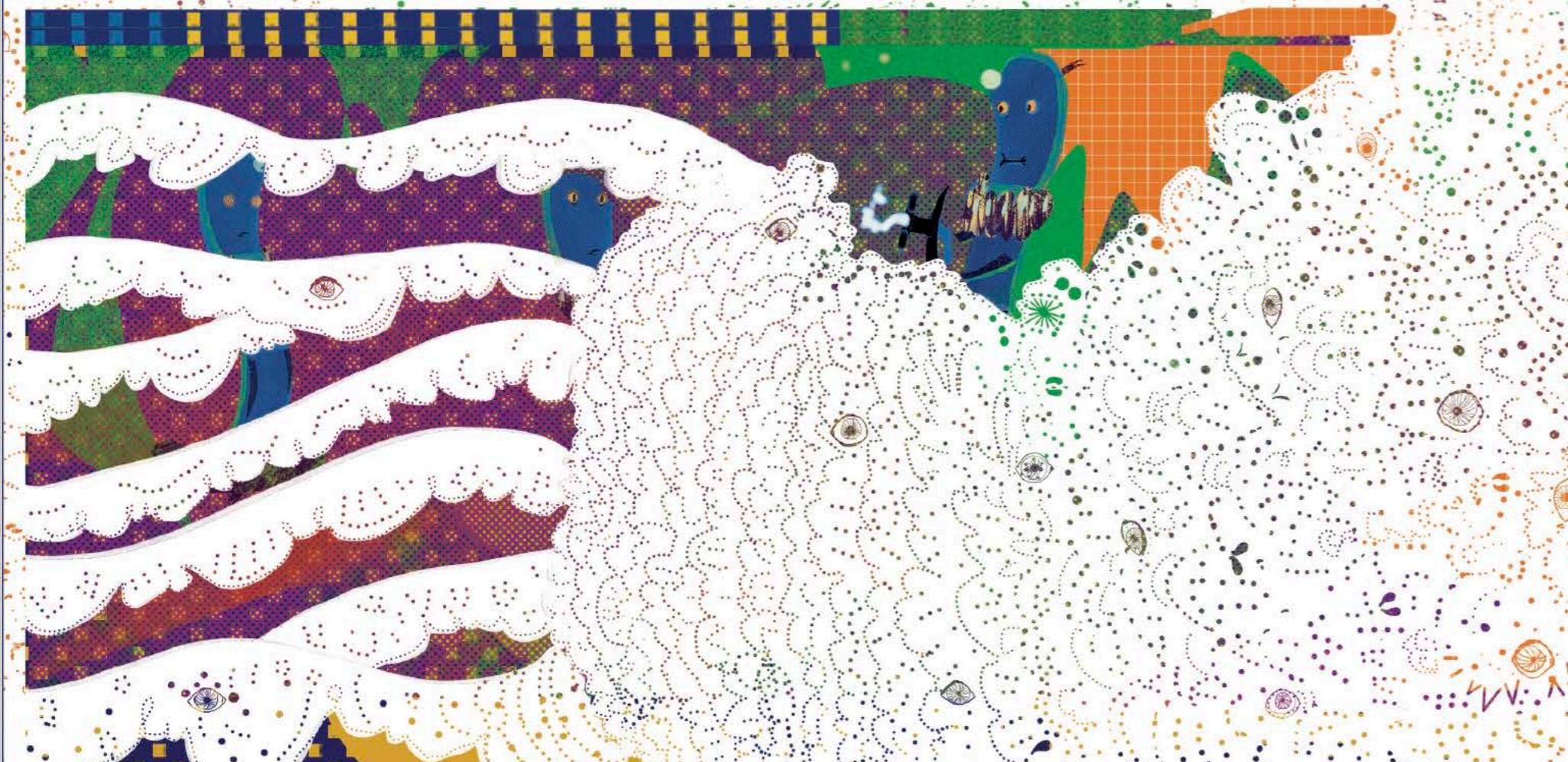
WAIT! STOP!

Oh dear reader, I have jumped straight into the story, haven't I? I do get a bit carried away when I talk about Fluffy. Let me start again at the beginning.

Long ago, as far back as her memory could stretch without becoming too faint and unreliable, Fluffy lived in a tiny galaxy in the Fourth Knowable Quadrant of the universe.

She was brought there by Captain who had traveled on a meteor through numerous star systems, dodging angry asteroids and bumbling craters, and suffering insistent bursts of disgustingly hot wind and occasional interstellar dust storms.





Sure, thought Fluffy bitterly. This new GRITO probably did have great descriptions of patterns, but it still wouldn't have images of them. She sighed and peered at the patrons in a line that had suddenly stalled.

Up ahead, a team of corbs was busy spraying a very tall large creature with layers and layers of white material.

"It's called lace," Captain told her, and added that it was no good for anything but whimsy, as it had "too many holes."

Suddenly, the creature cried out, sending its painfully high pitched voice ringing through the atelier.

"**THERE MUST BE MOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOORE!**"

The creature's big eyelashes fluttered as it glared at its much smaller companion, who at a first glance somewhat resembled Captain, if Captain was short, had three eyes, and...was that...a tail???

The companion was nervously chewing

on his tail. Fluffy did not approve. If she had a tail, she would have treated it with care and utter respect. Sadly, the point was moot, as she did not in fact have a tail. Not yet, she snickered to herself.

The large creature was enveloped in delicate white lace from head to toe. Still unsatisfied, it demanded more as the once airy lace dress grew heavier and heavier.

"Madam Samsa, surely this is enough," her companion pleaded, his chewed up tail wagging drearily on the ground. "It looks good, you look good, let's stop here."

"More!" demanded Madam Samsa. "I need more! If you cannot do it yourselves, call him. Call Tailor!"

"Who is Tailor?" asked Fluffy, pulling on Captain's cloak obnoxiously.

"Quit pulling on my cloak!" hissed Captain. He discreetly pointed at a plump figure on a hovering disk gracefully gliding into view.

