

LUNA GRACE

GIRL FROM OUTER SPACE



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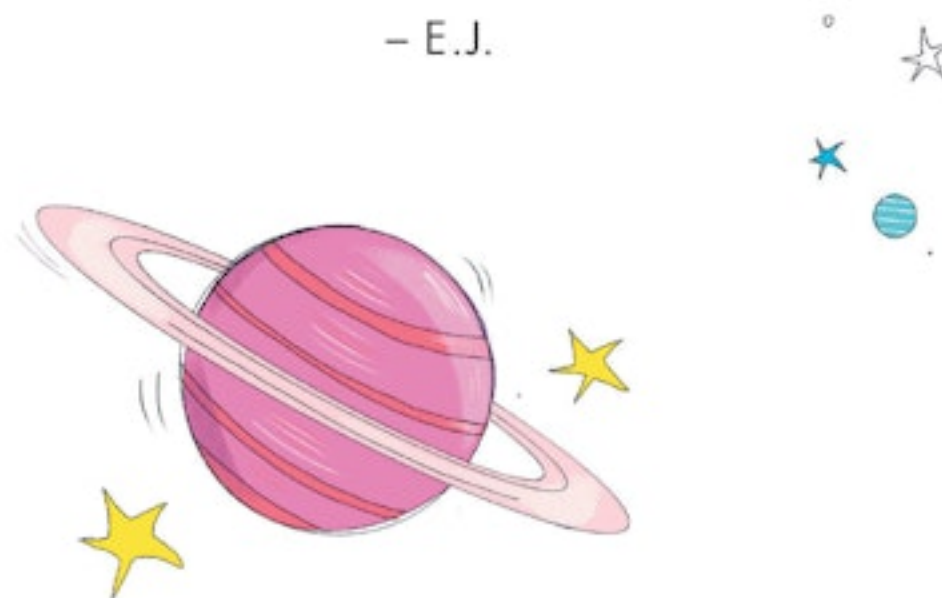


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For Antonia, Polly, Ruth and
Aimee. They met Luna and Twizzle
first and made them feel welcome.
– J.S.

For my six wonderful nieces, Emily,
Charlotte, Matilda, Francesca,
Connie and Meredith.
– E.J.





Starbright
Sun

Shimmer
Stone



Starbright



Dazzle
Rock

Where Luna and her
family come from!

Starbright is orbited
by a moon

The Twinkle
Path Galaxy

Meet the Graces

Luna Grace



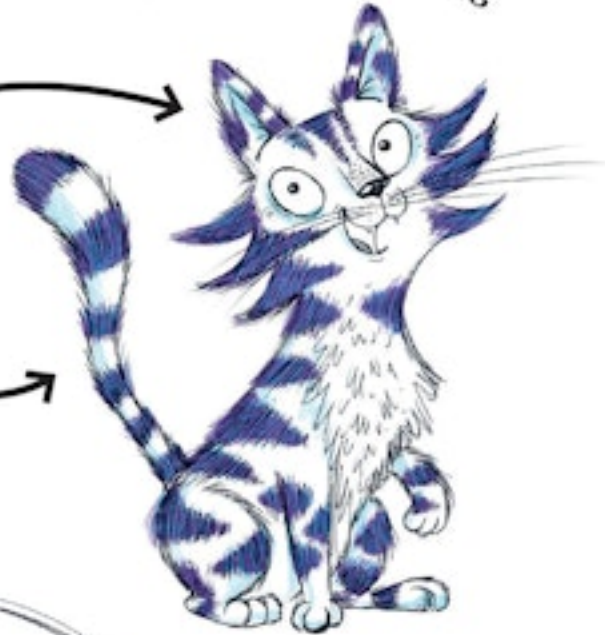
Her hair changes colour to match her feelings.

She can make things move just by thinking about them

She's a moon cat!

She can talk with her tail.

Twizzle



Estrella Grace



Her hair never changes colour.

Luna's mum.

A plant-loving nature scientist.

Ambrose Grace



Luna's dad.

A nature scientist.
He loves animals, especially sparkle owls.

Leo Grace



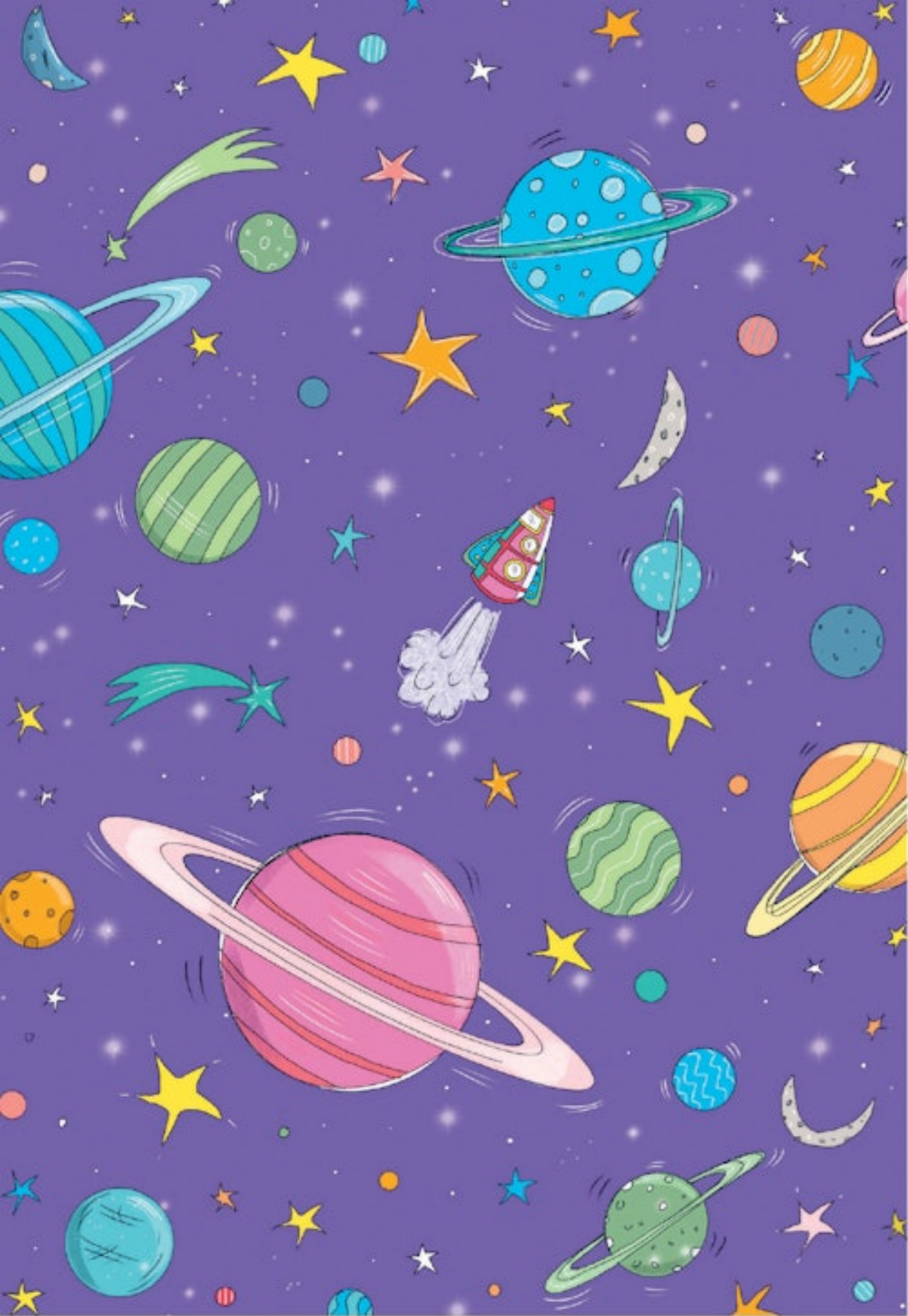
Luna's baby brother.

He's learning how to move things by thinking about them.

Hetty



A young talking plant.
Estrella grew her from a seed.



Luna Grace arrived on Earth at midnight. Her mum landed the rocket on a beach next to some sand dunes. Luna watched with her dad from the cockpit as the rocket tipped over and became a car. From a screen above her head, Luna saw the side flaps open and four car wheels spin into place. Mum cheered as she drove the rocket car from the beach.





Luna hugged Twizzle, her purple-and-blue-striped moon cat. They'd been travelling since early morning. At first it had been exciting but now they were actually here a knot of homesickness twisted in Luna's tummy. What if she didn't like Earth? What if no one liked her? The worry turned Luna's curly brown hair daffodil yellow. Dad was anxious too. Luna could tell because his black hair was streaked with yellow. Luna and Dad weren't very good at hiding their feelings. Unlike Mum who rarely let her emotions show in her hair.

Luna yawned. 'Is our new house far?' It was her first trip by rocket and she'd stayed awake the whole time, gazing out at the stars and planets.



'It's quite near.' Mum clicked her fingers and the rocket car sped up.

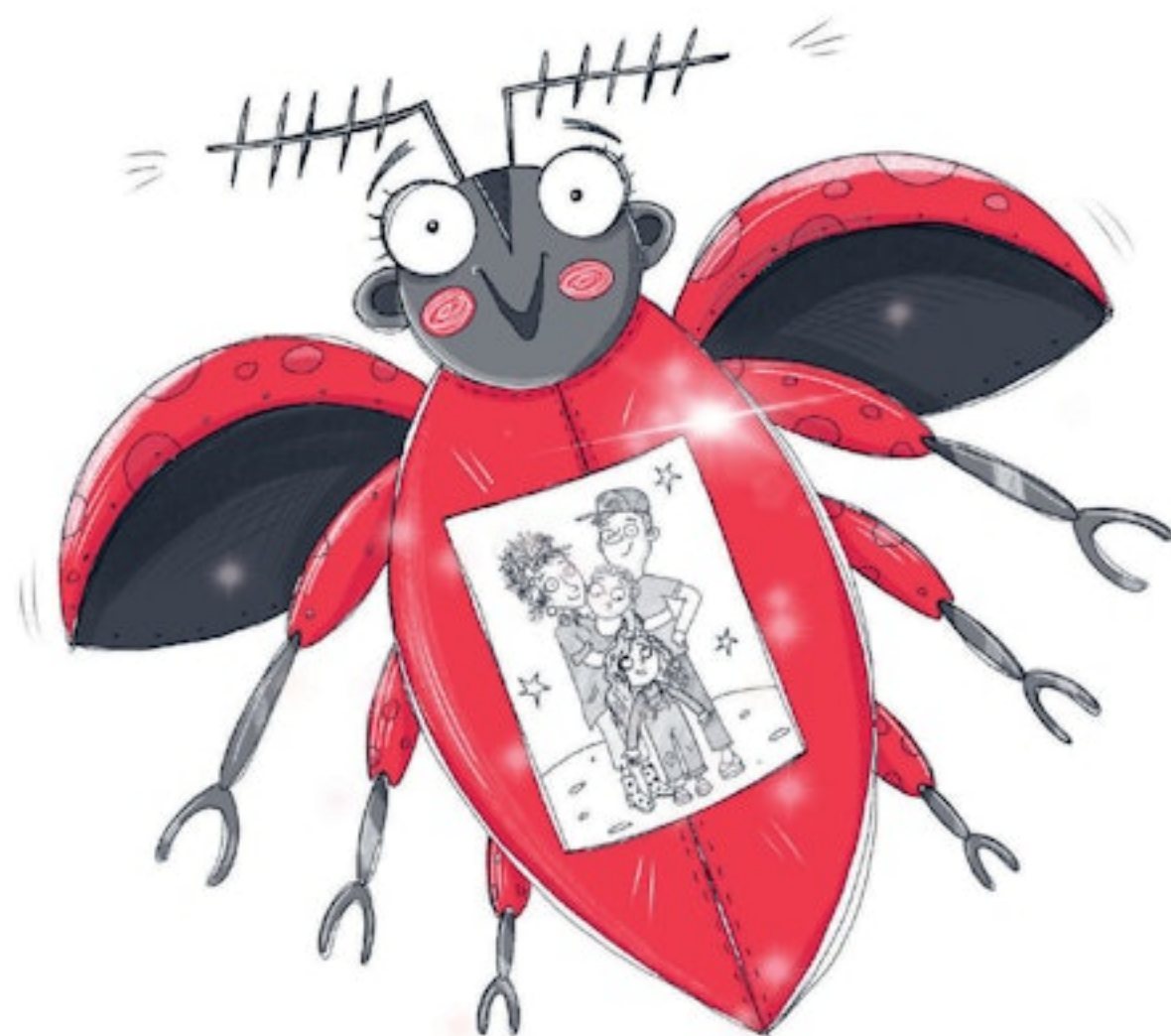
'Steady, my love,' warned Dad, his hair turning marsh-mud green. Dad often got travel-sick.

Mum slowed down a bit. 'Why don't you go and check on Leo?' Luna's baby brother was asleep in the back.

'I was hoping to see a dolphin or at the very least a crab, but it's too dark,' said Mum as they left the beach and joined a road.

Luna's parents were nature scientists. They were starting a new job on Earth to study its wildlife and had been chosen from over a hundred other wildlife experts on their home planet, Starbright. It was a very important position and the

first time anyone from Starbright had gone to live on another planet. Mum and Dad were now minor celebrities back on Starbright and were keen to prove that they were up to the job.



Luna stared out of the window. Her parents had told her all about the wonderful animals and plants here on Earth. She too had hoped to see a friendly dolphin waving a flipper to welcome her. Only Mum and Dad hadn't said very much about the people, Luna realised. Her hair turned raindrop blue as she sadly remembered the family and friends she'd left behind. Twizzle pounced and batted her curls with a paw.

Luna managed a grin. Twizzle always knew how to make her feel better.

'Are we going to like it here?' she asked.

Twizzle made a circle with the tip of her stripy tail which in Tail Talk meant 'yes'.



Then she lengthened her tail and tickled Luna with it. Luna squealed and giggled.

Luna and Twizzle had been best friends since they were little. Mum and Dad had chosen Twizzle for Luna when she was just a teeny baby and the moon cat was a very tiny kitten. They'd grown up together and learned to communicate by Tail Talk, their own special sign language that used hands (Luna) and tails (Twizzle).

Luna pressed her face against the window but all she could see were the pools of light from the streetlamps as the rocket car whizzed along the road.

'Are we nearly there yet?' she asked after they'd been travelling for ages.

'We are!' Mum turned into a street with houses on either side. She drove to the end and stopped.



Their new home was square and white with a grey tiled roof and two chimneys. When the rocket car's lights went out, the house was swallowed by darkness.

Luna's heart flopped to her toes. It was nothing like their brightly coloured home back on Starbright. Quietly she said, 'It's a bit plain.'

'I'll make it more homely in the morning,' Mum promised. 'Who wants hot choco froth before bed?'

'Me!' said Dad, coming into the cockpit with Leo. 'Hot choco froth with sprinkles and extra mallowpuffs.' Dad had a very sweet tooth!

'Extra mallowpuffs for me too,' said Luna.

Everyone clambered out of the rocket car.



Dad carried Leo, Luna held Twizzle and Mum took a huge bag full of their things. When she got to the front door, she stood there expectantly as she instructed it to open.

'You need a thing called a key,' said Luna. She knew about Earth houses from the new book her grandparents had given her before she'd left Starbright, *Galaxy Traveller – a Trillion-and-One Must-Know Things When Exploring the Universe*.



'Of course!' Mum rummaged in the bag and pulled out pulled out a ring with some flat pieces of gold-coloured metal on it.

The door was stiff. 'Stand back,' said Mum, kicking it open with the toe of one of her favourite silver boots.

It was dark inside and the house smelled different. Luna's nose wrinkled curiously but she found she liked the flowery scent.

'Light up,' said Mum.

'This house has switches,' Luna reminded her.

'How quaint!' Mum ran her hand over the wall and found the light switch, flicking it on.

Luna jumped as the hall flooded with light. Switches were fun! 'Can I have a go?'

'And me,' said Dad.

They took turns making the lights flash on and off. Twizzle tapped Luna's leg.



She wanted a go too! Luna lifted her up and Twizzle made the lights flash with her tail until Mum said they'd better stop before they broke something.

The hallway was long and narrow and there were stairs instead of a hopper to glide between the floors. In the living room, the furniture was old and very comfy. The squashy armchairs made great trampolines. Luna and Twizzle bounced up and down while Dad put Leo to bed and Mum made hot choco froth with extra sprinkles and fluffy mallowpuffs. For Twizzle, there was a flask of starlight juice. Carefully Luna poured the sparkly liquid into a saucer. Twizzle was thirsty from bouncing and she licked the dish clean.



'You've got juice on your nose.' Luna wiped it away.

'And you've got a choco moustache,' said Mum, wiping Luna's face with a cloth.

Yawning sleepily, Luna wriggled free. Dad ruffled her long brown ringlets. 'Bed time,' he said.

'Bedtime for everyone,' Mum said, herding them upstairs.





Luna's new room overlooked the garden. Mum pulled back the duvet and plumped up the pillow while Luna opened the window and stared out at the starry sky. Twizzle wove around her legs then tapped Luna's knees, asking to be lifted up. Twizzle was quickly distracted

by the squeaks and rustles coming from the garden. Her ears swivelled and she squiggled and squirmed to be free.

'Oh no you don't,' said Luna anxiously.



Moon cats loved going out at night to dance in the moonlight together. 'You don't know where we are. You might get lost, or worse!' Luna put Twizzle down on the bedroom floor.

'Things are going to be different for a while,' she explained, rocking her hand back and forward to show 'change'. 'Dad said there aren't any moon cats on this planet, just Earth ones. Some are little and some are very big with fierce purrs and sharp teeth. You can't go out alone at night until Dad has checked that there aren't any big cats here.'

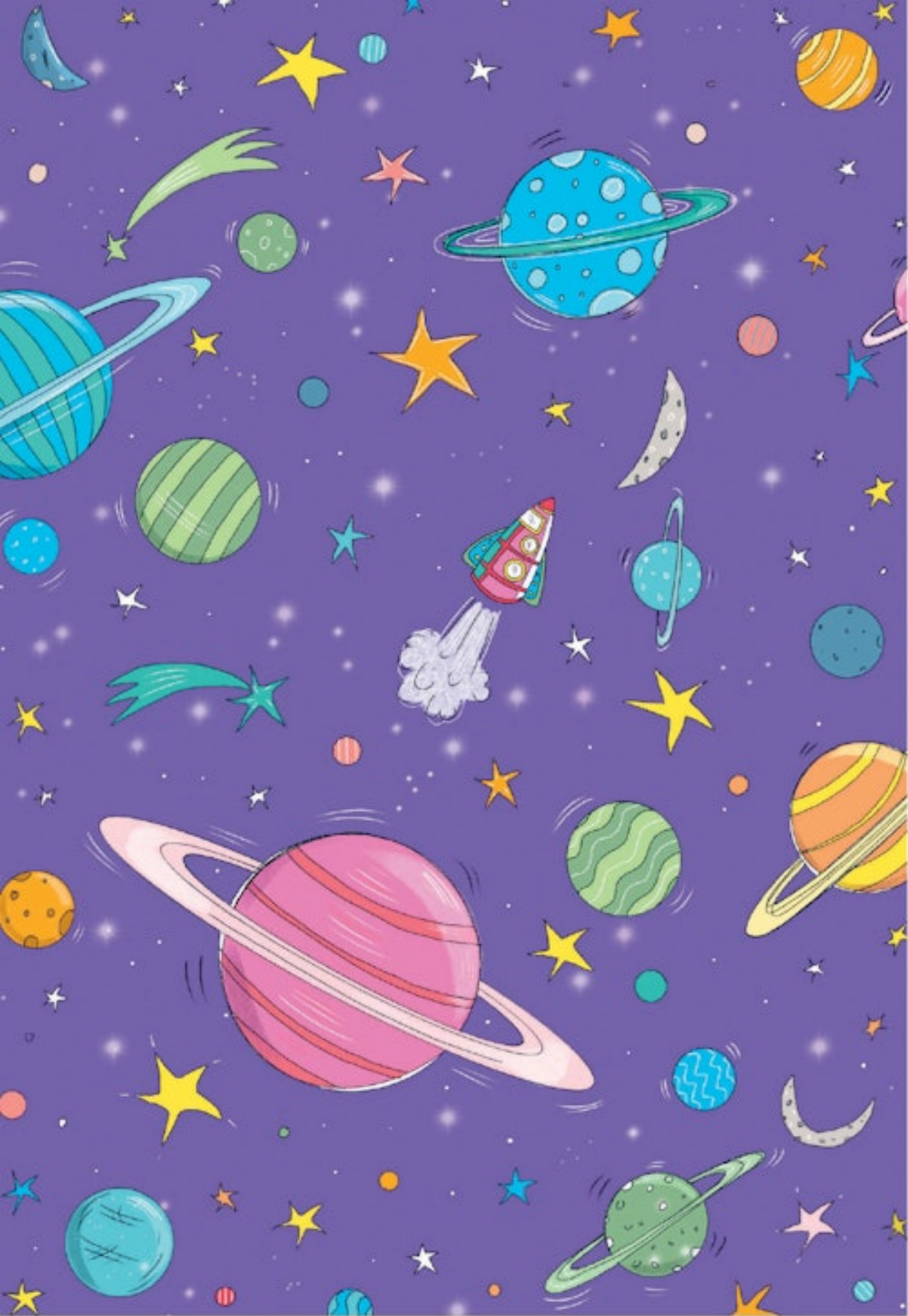
Twizzle flicked her tail impatiently, telling Luna that she wasn't scared of fierce purrs or sharp teeth. Luna stroked her and told her how brave she was.





Longingly Luna looked through the window. Starbright was too far away to see and she wished it was closer. Far away enough to have a big adventure on Earth but close enough to still go to her old school. Before Luna closed the window she waved goodnight to all her relatives and friends back on Starbright. She hoped they were waving back.





The next morning, Luna was woken by a curious hissing noise outside. She leaned out of the window and felt a burst of love for her mum. Hadn't she promised to make things more homely in the morning? Still in her favourite moon-cat pyjamas, Luna ran downstairs with Twizzle. Someone had unpacked and the kitchen felt more like their old one now that it

was full of their things.

'Hello, sleepy morning!' chirped Hetty, the parrot plant.



Luna called back, 'Hello, Hetty! Do you like your new windowsill?'

'Jiggly bottom!' Hetty nodded enthusiastically.



Luna giggled. Hetty was a young plant and only knew a few words which she kept muddling up.

The back door was propped open and Luna went outside. She found baby Leo on a blanket on the grass, playing with his planet tumble tower. His cheeks were puffed out and his hair flashed a disco of colours as he concentrated on stacking the planets on top of each other, not by touching them but by making them float in the air. Mum was at a table with her work journal, scribble stick and a mug full of a dark brown liquid.

'What are you drinking?' asked Luna.

'Coffee.' Mum wrinkled her nose delicately. 'I quite like it. What do you think of the house?'



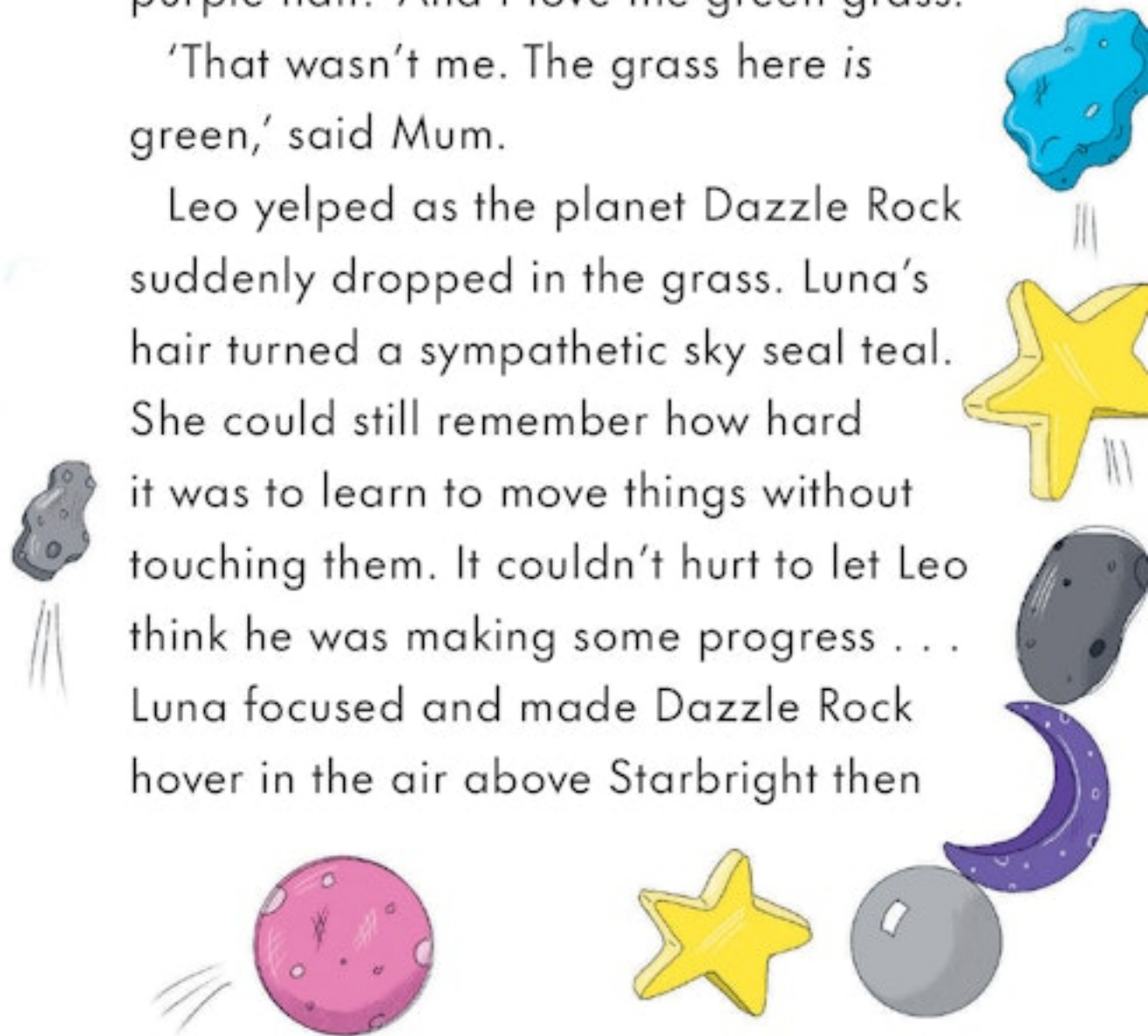


Two large painting whirlers were hard at work, spraying blue and purple stripes over the boring white walls.

'It's lovely!' Luna couldn't stop grinning. 'Starbright purple! My favourite colour.' Luna held out a matching ringlet of purple hair. 'And I love the green grass.'

'That wasn't me. The grass here is green,' said Mum.

Leo yelped as the planet Dazzle Rock suddenly dropped in the grass. Luna's hair turned a sympathetic sky seal teal. She could still remember how hard it was to learn to move things without touching them. It couldn't hurt to let Leo think he was making some progress . . . Luna focused and made Dazzle Rock hover in the air above Starbright then



she stacked the planet Shimmer Stone and the Starbright's moon and sun above them.

Leo gurgled with delight.

'Well done, Leo. That was clever,' said Luna, clapping as she let the planets topple to the ground.

Mum sent Luna a knowing look but she joined in with the clapping.

Dad came running outside in his best sparkle owl patterned pyjamas. He was carrying his own battered copy of *Galaxy Traveller* and his usually black hair was yellow with worry. 'Make the whirlers stop, Estrella! We're not in Starbright now. Earth people can't move things by thinking about them. Remember how we agreed we'd make an effort to fit in.'



Mum raised an eyebrow. 'I don't think their hair changes colour with their feelings either,' she said.

Dad groaned and covered his hair with his hands. 'Then I shall wear a hat. We mustn't stand out. We might upset the locals if we are too different. Fitting in is Number 3 on the *Galaxy Traveller's* list of how to be the perfect traveller.'



Luna felt a wibble of worry about upsetting the locals by not fitting in and before she knew it, her happy Starbright purple ringlets had turned daffodil yellow.

'Nonsense!' As usual, Mum sounded perfectly relaxed. 'There's no reason why we can't be ourselves and still fit in. People will like us or they won't. Either way, *I'll* be much happier if I'm not pretending to be someone different. I went to the shops earlier,' she continued calmly. 'There's coffee in the kitchen. I think you'll like it, Ambrose. Go and pour yourself some.'

Mum's smile made Luna feel better. Gradually her insides stopped wobbling and her curly hair returned to its normal shade of brown.





'What are we doing today?' she asked.

'School for you, nursery for Leo, work for Dad and me!' Mum sighed happily.

'School already!' Luna's hair flashed a nervous pea green. 'But we only arrived yesterday. I can't go yet! I don't know enough about Earth.'

'Breathe,' said Mum kindly. 'That's better,' she added as Luna stopped panicking and her hair returned to normal. 'You know lots about nature. Going to school and meeting other children is the best way to learn about everything else.' She jumped up and

waved her arm around. 'Look at the lovely flowers. There's so much to see. I simply can't wait to get started.'

Mum loved plants – especially Hetty, who she'd grown from a seed. Her enthusiasm was catching but Luna wished she could go exploring with her parents instead of starting school.

'We can't go anywhere yet,' said Dad, sensibly. 'Luna and I are still in pyjamas.'

Mum looked at them both in surprise. 'Hurry up and change then!'

Luna hesitated. 'Can we send Gram and Grampie a star card first? To let them know that we're here.'



'Great idea.' Mum picked up her scribble stick. 'What shall we put on it?'

'Um,' said Luna uncertainly. She looked around. She was about to suggest a picture of themselves smiling happily in front of their new purple-and-blue-striped home, when Mum said, 'How about some flowers?'

Luna nodded and Mum pointed her scribble stick at the pretty blue flowers growing in a bed by the fence. Mum pressed a button and the scribble stick fizzed. Opening her journal at a blank page she touched the end of the scribble stick to it. With a pop, a beam of light spilled out and a picture of the flowers appeared on the paper with writing underneath.



Luna wanted Twizzle. The moon cat always knew how to make things right. But Twizzle wasn't there. Luna's hair went from raindrop blue to misty white then back to blue again.

Then Ollie grinned. In a loud voice he asked, 'How the donkey did you do that? Can you teach me to make things float?'

'And me,' said a girl with short hair.

Luna found herself surrounded by excited faces. Suddenly, everyone was jostling and pushing. Her tickly hat fell off and her hair kept changing colour: shy petal pink, embarrassed sunrise red, worried yellow, frightened misty white. Hands reached out to touch it. Luna's tummy tightened. Her hair was making things worse. She searched for a gap in



the crowd of children to escape through.

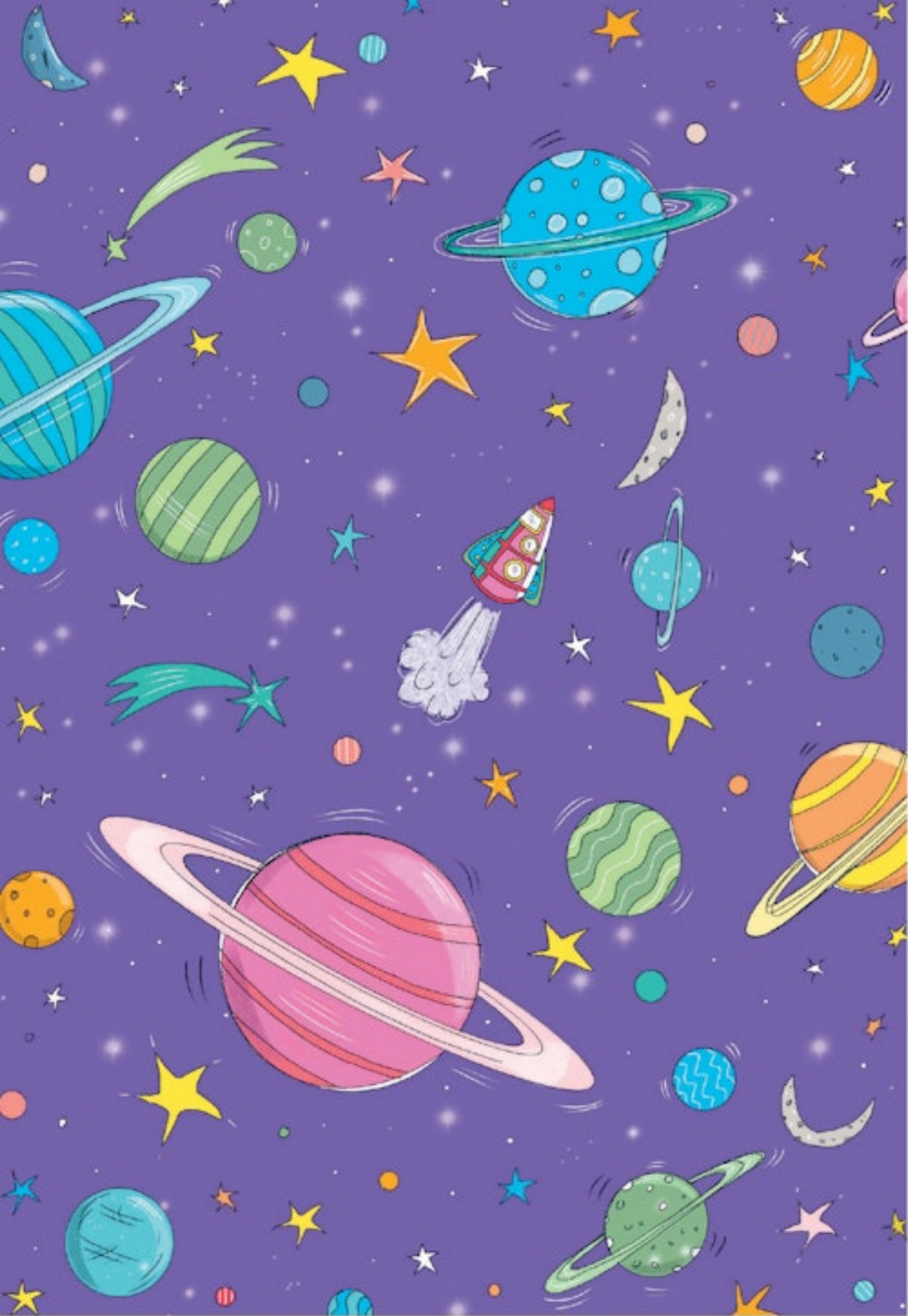
'Look at her hair. It's changing colour again.'

'Make it go pink.'

'No, make it go green.'

Luna pushed through the crowd. She wanted her best friend. 'Twizzle,' she whispered. If only she hadn't sent the moon cat home.





'Meow!'

Luna's heart soared as
she felt something
soft pressing up
against her.
Twizzle!



The moon cat tapped Luna's leg with her tail. Luna crouched to pick her up but Twizzle shook her tail and tapped Luna again. Bending her tail, she gestured through the crowd of children but as Luna turned to see what the moon cat was pointing at, someone barrelled into her. She almost fell over and when she recovered, Twizzle had disappeared again.

'Twizzle!' she cried frantically. What if the moon cat got squished by feet? 'Twizzle!'

'She's here.' Jada held up a purple-and-blue-striped bundle for Luna to see.

Luna hiccupped back a sob. 'Thank you.' She held out her hands and Jada passed Twizzle to her.



'Your cat is funny. I love her stripes. When I picked her up she tickled my fingers with her tail.'

'Twizzle's a moon cat. She's fussy about who she tickles. That means she likes you.' Luna couldn't stop smiling and neither could Jada.

The girl with pigtails came forward then. She put her hands on her hips and scowled at Luna. 'You're not allowed

to bring a cat to school. I'm telling.'

'Don't be mean, Flo. Anyway we're not at school,' said Jada.

'She did have her cat in school. I saw her let it in through the window,' said Flo and she stomped off to find Mr Marker. Twizzle began to wriggle and squirm.



Luna felt hot and shaky as she put the moon cat down. She had broken the 'no pets in school' rule. That was wrong and definitely not fitting in and now Mr Marker would say that she had to return to Starbright immediately. Then Mum and Dad would lose their jobs and not get to be interviewed on the Starbright vision screen or the news fly!

Jada patted Luna's arm. 'Never mind about Flo. She's always moaning about something.'

'Jada's right,' said Ollie, coming to stand by Luna as Mr Marker arrived with Flo. Their teacher stared at Luna's hair then he blinked several times.

'It keeps doing that,' Jada said helpfully. 'The pink's my favourite.'

'I'm sorry,' whispered Luna. 'I am trying very hard to fit in but I'm not very good at controlling my emotions.'

Mr Marker looked a bit confused. 'Well,' he said eventually. 'You're not the only one in Saturn Class who isn't great at controlling their feelings.'



'I go red in the face when I'm embarrassed and so does Jada,' Ollie agreed.

'Ollieeee!' said Jada.

'It's true,' said Ollie.

'Luna broke the rules. She brought her cat to school and she made your ball float down from a tree,' Flo reminded Mr Marker.

'Flo,' said Mr Marker gently, 'I have asked you before not to tell tales or to exaggerate.'

'I'm not exaggerating!' said Flo. 'Ask anyone. We all saw her do it.'

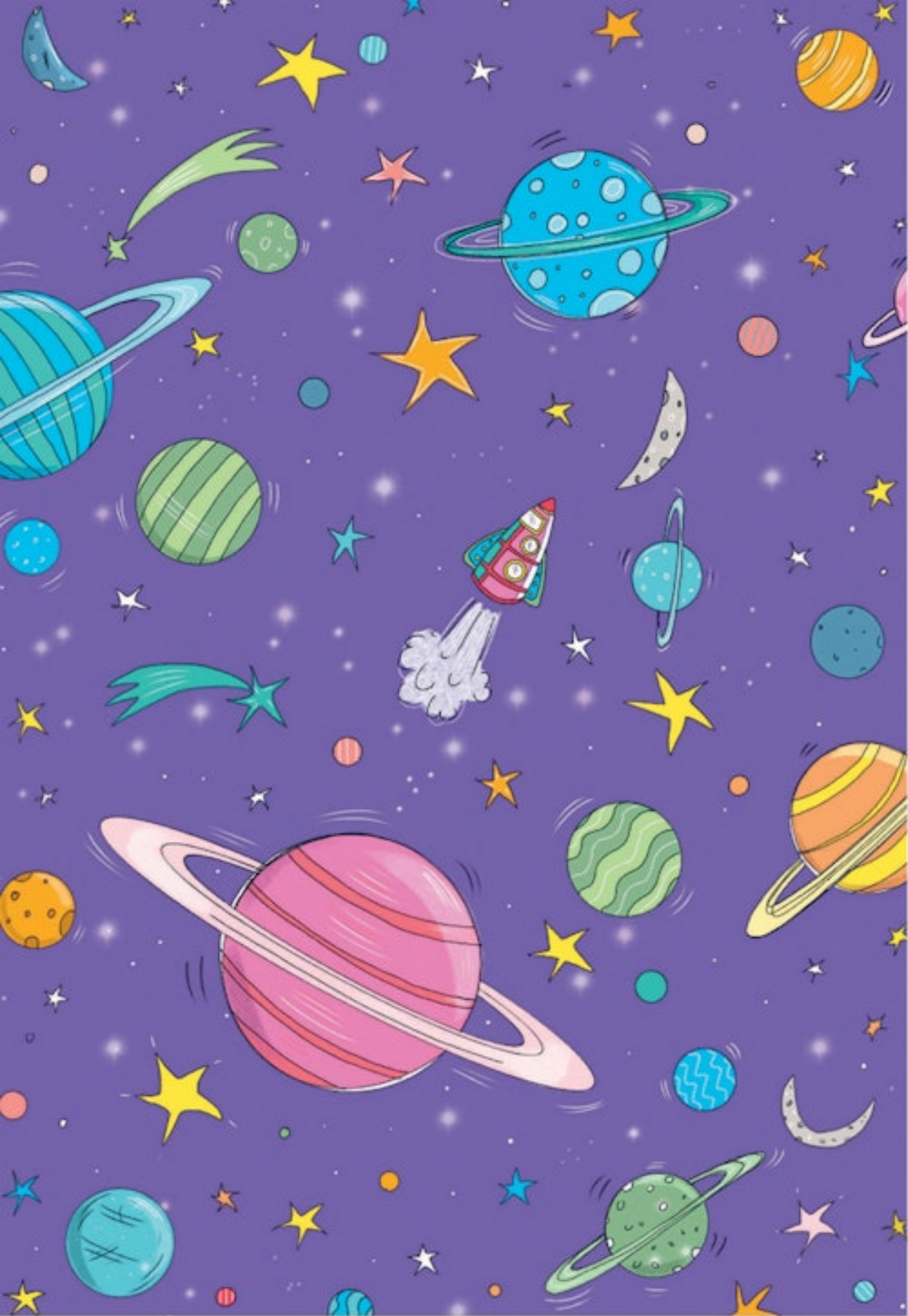
Luna hung her head. 'Back on Starbright, everyone can make things float,' she said.

'Really?' Mr Marker sounded doubtful.



Just then a group of adults came towards the park. Mr Marker let out a big sigh. 'Ah, good! The parents are here to take you home. Can you see yours, Luna? I'd like to have a word with them.'





8

Luna's cheeks burned with shame. This was it! Mr Marker would tell her parents that she hadn't fitted in and that they must take her back to Starbright. Mum and Dad would be so disappointed.

Luna was disappointed too. After a shaky start, today had been fun. She wasn't ready to go home yet.

Mum and Dad wore big smiles as they

came over. Dad was pointing out birds to Leo as he pushed him in the stroller while Mum kept waving her scribble stick at flowers growing in the grass.

'Mr and Mrs Grace?' asked Mr Marker.

'That's us.' A stray tuft of Dad's hair escaped from his hat and turned yellow.

'Is there a problem?'



Luna stared at the grass. 'I'm sorry,' she whispered.

But to Luna's surprise, Mr Marker smiled back at her parents. 'Not at all. Luna has worked hard today and she has already made some friends.'

Jada and Ollie waved to them.

'Did you enjoy yourself, Luna?' asked Dad.

Luna nodded enthusiastically. 'It was different but it was fun.'

Mum smiled. 'We're all different.'

'Quite right too,' said Mr Marker. 'Think how boring life would be if we were all the same.'



'Luna's definitely not boring,' said Jada. 'Her hair is like a rainbow. I wish I had rainbow hair.'

Luna's breath whooshed out in relief. 'So can I come back tomorrow?' she asked.

'Of course!' said Mr Marker. He bent down and whispered in Luna's ear. 'But please don't bring your cat with you.'

Luna's hair turned pebble grey with shame. Breaking the rules had been wrong and definitely not fitting in. 'I won't,' she whispered back.

'Yay! I'm so happy that you came to Castle Bridge Primary.' Jada grabbed Luna and Ollie by the hands and spun them around.

Luna's hair blazed happy Starbright purple. 'Me too!' she said.



It was time to go home. Luna felt like she was floating on space mist as she waved goodbye to her new friends.

Mum and Dad, with baby Leo, headed for the park gates.

'This way, Twizzle,' Luna called as the moon cat trotted towards a line of trees.

Twizzle ignored her and ran faster, beckoning with her tail for Luna to follow.

'Twizzle, no!' said Luna, dashing over. Whatever had got in to the moon cat today? She was often mischievous but never this naughty.

Suddenly, a black-and-white cat ran out from behind a tree. He stopped in front of Twizzle and daintily sniffed her nose. Twizzle sniffed the cat back and then they tapped tails.



Luna's eyes widened. Twizzle had made friends with an Earth cat! Not a big one with a fierce purr and sharp teeth but a friendly one that sniffed noses. And Twizzle had already taught the Earth cat to tap tails.

'Hello,' said Luna, gently stroking the black-and-white cat and giggling when he purred and rubbed his face against her arm. Understanding flickered through



her. In the classroom, Twizzle had only been trying to get her attention. She wanted to tell Luna that she'd made a new friend too!

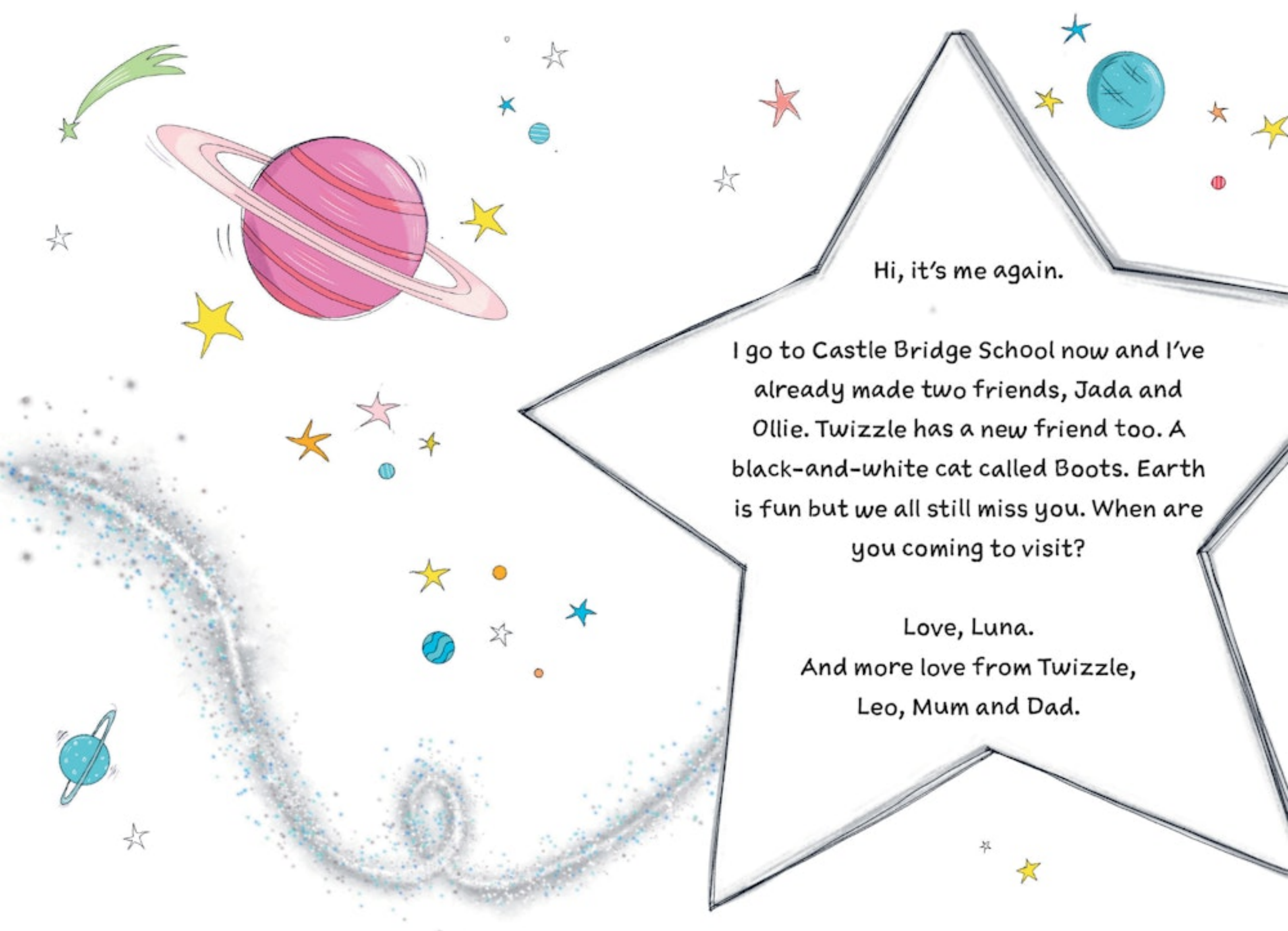


That night, when Luna went to bed, she left the window open for Twizzle to go outside. She held her breath as the moon cat jumped from the window ledge and onto the branch of a nearby tree. The leaves shook and seconds later, Twizzle appeared at the bottom. A familiar black-and-white cat crept out of the shadows. Twizzle waved her tail at Luna then ran to greet him.

Luna waved back, her hair turning Starbright purple as Twizzle and her new friend ran to the bottom of the garden to dance together in the moonlight.







Hi, it's me again.

I go to Castle Bridge School now and I've already made two friends, Jada and Ollie. Twizzle has a new friend too. A black-and-white cat called Boots. Earth is fun but we all still miss you. When are you coming to visit?

Love, Luna.
And more love from Twizzle,
Leo, Mum and Dad.



The news fly is pleased to report that our intrepid nature scientists, Estrella and

Ambrose Grace, have

arrived safely on Earth with their young family. So, how does it feel to be living so far away from home?

Estrella: *It's a great adventure. Earth is a very pretty planet with lots of interesting plants and flowers. I can't wait to learn more about everything that grows here.*

Ambrose: *We miss our family and friends of course, but we are fitting in here on Earth just fine.*

Can you tell our viewers about one thing on Earth that's different from Starbright?

Estrella: *The green grass is fun and it smells*

very nice. There's also a drink that's made from the beans of the coffee plant. It tastes lovely.

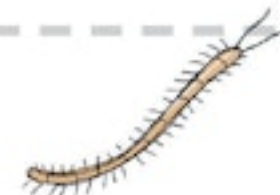
Ambrose: *An animal called a squirrel. They are similar to a hop-skip but they only come in two colours, grey or red. Unlike the hop-skip, they are considered a wild animal so rarely kept as a pet.*

Do you have one piece of advice for anyone looking to become a nature scientist?

Estrella: *Think big and follow your dreams.*

Ambrose: *Work as hard as you can and remember that there are new things to learn wherever you go.*

Great advice! From everyone here on Starbright, thank you and good luck. We'll look forward to hearing more from you both soon.



Meet the Earthlings

Jada



Luna's friend.

Ollie



Luna's friend.

Boots



An Earth cat and
Twizzle's new friend.



Mr Marker

Saturn Class's teacher.

Olivia



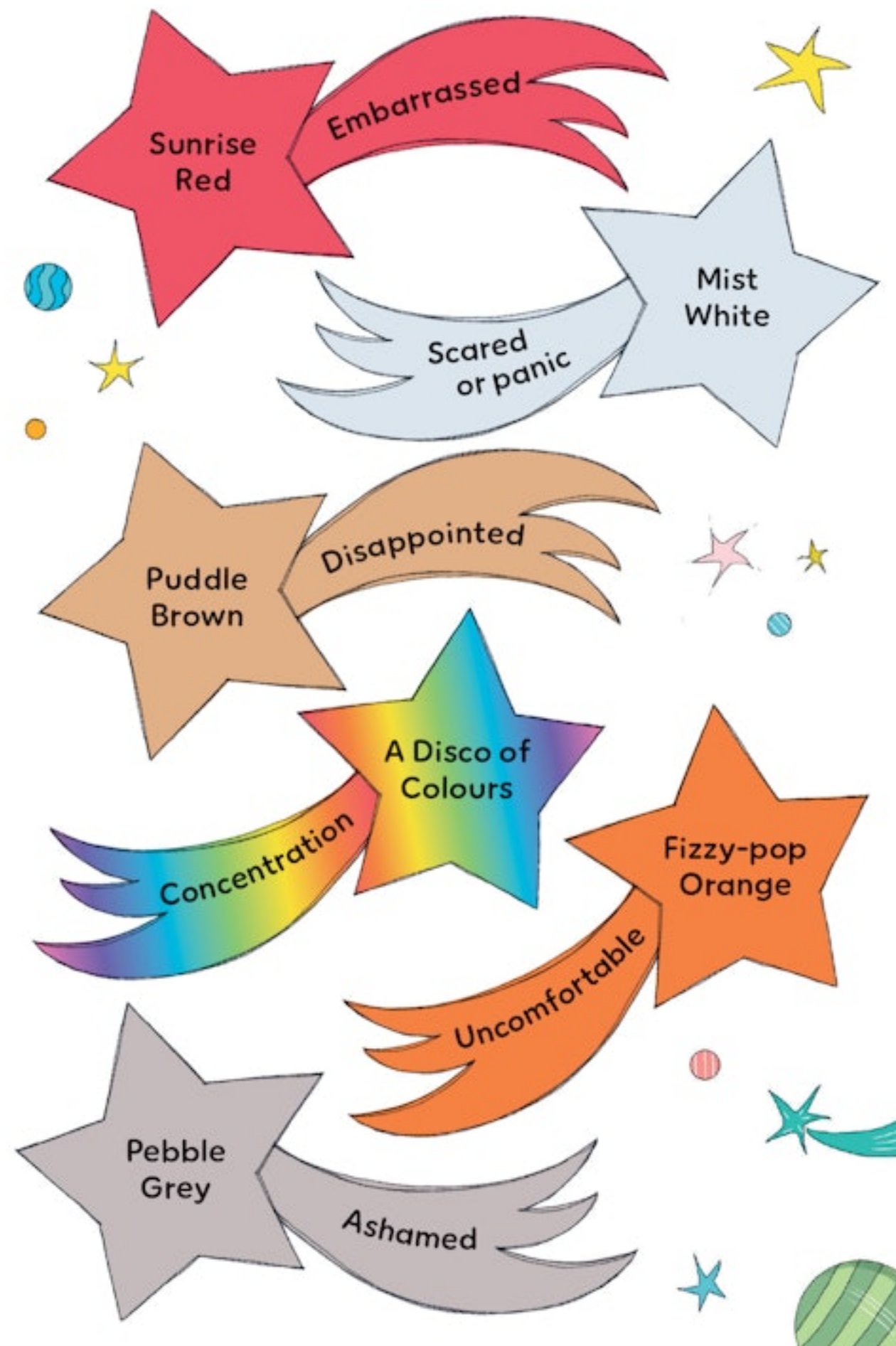
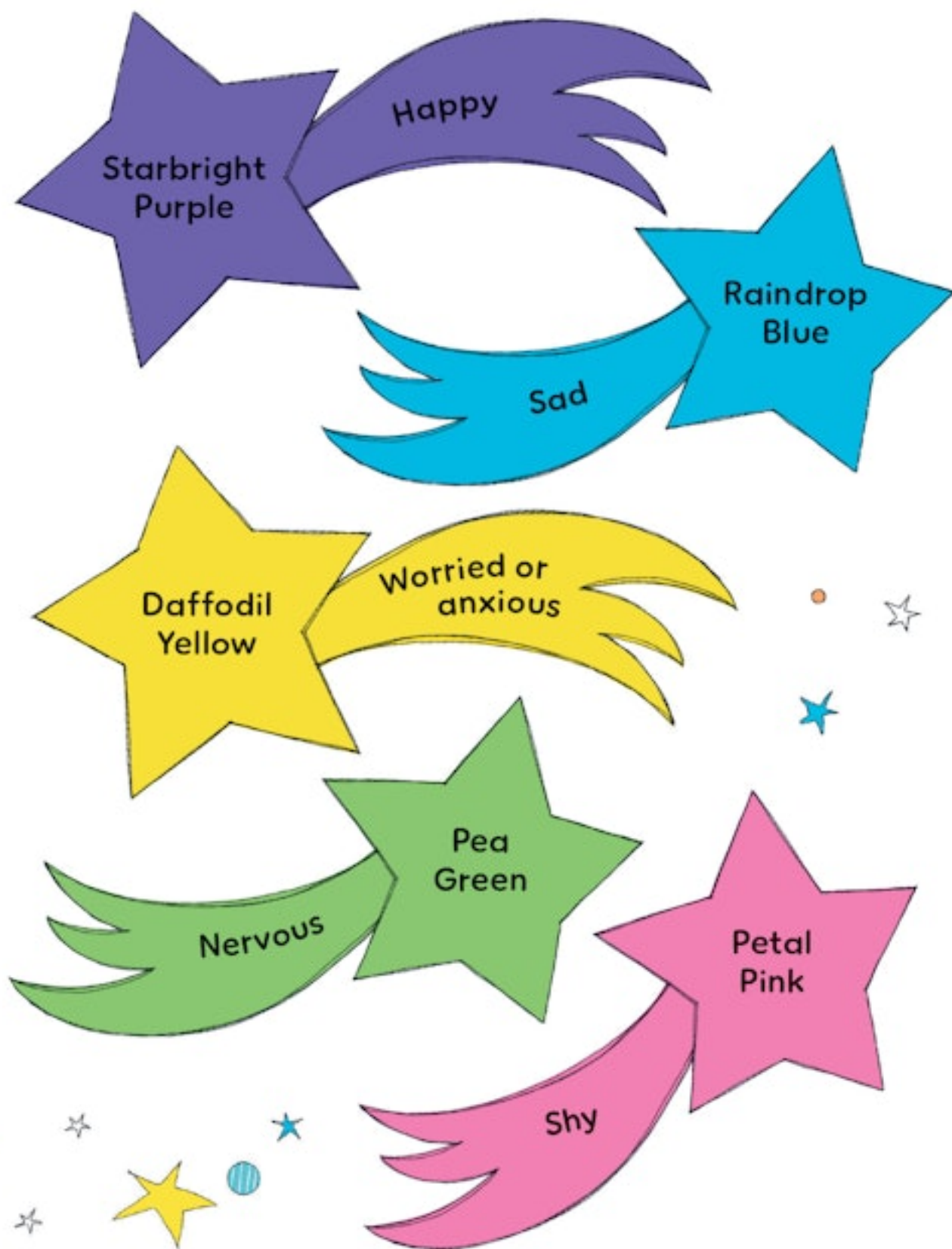
The Graces' next-door
neighbour.

Flo



Luna's classmate.

What Do Luna's Hair Colours Mean?



What Kind of Starbright Pet Would You Have?

Take part in the quiz and find out!

What do you like doing best?

- A. Playing ball games
- B. Climbing trees
- C. Hanging out with your best friend

What's your favourite snack?

- A. All of them but especially moon cheese
- B. Anything with nuts and berries in
- C. Sparkly starlight juice and a lava cake

What would be your best day out?

- A. At the beach, paddling in the sea
- B. In the woods, climbing trees
- C. Going on an adventure, the more surprising the better

How did you do?

If you scored **mostly As** then a space dog would be your perfect Starbright pet. Space dogs are faithful companions who love ball games and eating all the snacks.

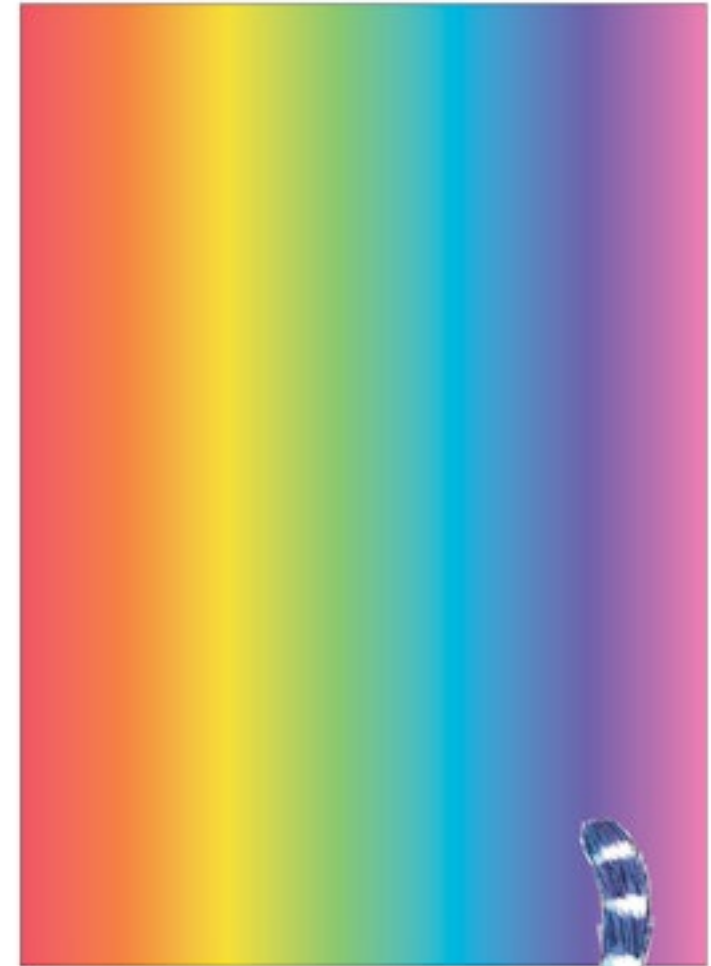


If you scored **mostly Bs** then a hop-skip is the perfect pet for you. Hop-skips love climbing trees and their favourite foods are nuts and berries.

If you scored **mostly Cs** then you're a moon-cat person. Moon cats love spending times with their friends and their favourite things to eat and drink are sparkly starlight juice and lava cake.



Look out for Luna's
next adventure in . . .



Read on for an
sneaky peek!



Chapter 1

A sparkly beam of sunlight sneaked through a gap in the curtains and woke Luna. She jumped out of bed and ran to the window. Outside, the blue sky was dotted with puffy white clouds.

'The perfect weather for going on a sea safari,' said Luna excitedly, her hair turning starshine silver. Luna wasn't good at hiding her feelings and they often showed in her hair.



Luna and her family came from Starbright. Luna's parents, Estrella and Ambrose, were nature scientists and had moved to Earth to study its wildlife. It was the first time anyone from Starbright had gone to live on another planet. Back home they were now minor celebrities with a reputation to live up to!

'Wake up, Twizzle,' Luna called to her moon cat. 'We're off to the seaside. Did you forget that we're going to Puffin Island? Mum wants to look at its plants and Dad at the birds.'

Twizzle was asleep on Luna's bed. Her tail twitched and she slowly opened her eyes. Twizzle was not a morning cat. She liked to stay up late and dance in the moonlight with her friends.



Luna dressed quickly in her favourite purple-and-blue-striped T-shirt to match Twizzle. She packed her rucksack carefully, putting in a towel, swimming costume, sun cream, star-shaped sunglasses, sun hat and *Galaxy Traveller – a Trillion-and-One Must-Know Things When Exploring the Universe*. The bag was so full that Luna and Twizzle had to sit on it and squish everything down before it would close.

Mum called up the stairs, 'Breakfast!' 'Ready, Twizzle?' asked Luna.

Twizzle made a circle with the tip of her tail, which in Luna and Twizzle's special Tail Talk meant 'yes, I'm ready'.

Luna slid down the banister with her rucksack and Twizzle whizzed down after



her. In the kitchen, Mum was cradling a mug of coffee. Dad was spoon-feeding Leo a gloopy, space toffee yogurt.

'Hello, Hetty,' Luna called to the parrot plant. She put her bag in the corner and poured herself a big bowl of Space Snaps.

'Wibbly wobbles,' replied Hetty, who was still learning to talk.

Luna added starlight juice to her cereal and grinned as it burst into song.

**'Space Snaps for you,
Space Snaps for me,
Fill up on Space Snaps,
We're off to the sea.'**



Dad glanced anxiously at Luna and shades of daffodil yellow appeared in his hair. 'That's a very big bag, Luna. The boat might be tiny. Do you need to bring so much stuff?'

'Says you who has a bigger bag than any of us.' Mum had a small bag for herself and a larger one with the picnic in.

'I have only packed the essentials,' said Dad defensively, patting his bulging rucksack. 'Things I will need for work and my scribble stick, notebook, sun cream, gull repellent and *Galaxy Traveller*.'

'I'm taking my *Galaxy Traveller* too!' said Luna. Her grandparents had given her the bestselling book before she'd left Starbright. 'I'm going to look for a mermaid. *Galaxy Traveller* has whole



chapter on them and where best to find one. There's even a picture. Would you like to see it?' Luna took her copy of *Galaxy Traveller* from the outside pocket on her bag. Her tummy jiggled with excitement and her starshine silver hair shone as she showed it to Dad. The mermaid in the picture had pink and blue hair. She was sitting on a rock and pulling gold coins from a tiny black bag called a mermaid's purse.

'I can't wait to meet an Earth mermaid. I wonder if they'll be like the ones on Starbright with glittery tails that change colour to help them blend in?' Luna hadn't actually seen a mermaid on Starbright. They were very shy and kept to themselves. Luna hoped that Earth



mermaids would be more confident and want to be friends if she found one. It would be so much fun swapping stories about life under the Earth's oceans and on the land.

Dad smiled fondly as he put on his sunglasses and favourite hat. It had an umbrella on top that whirled around to keep him cool. 'You mustn't believe everything you read in *Galaxy Traveller*, Luna. That's why we're here. To check that the information we've had from the unmanned expeditions to Earth is accurate. There might not be mermaids here, but there will be lots of other exciting things to see instead. Like the puffin, a brightly coloured bird named for the puffing noises it makes,' he said.



Disappointment dulled Luna's hair to puddle brown. She had pinned her hopes on seeing a mermaid. According to the book, the best place to find one was in the middle of the ocean, but they also like to hang around the coastline and study people. Luna's hair turned midnight blue as she thought about it. Dad was no expert on mermaids. What if *he* was wrong about them and not *Galaxy Traveller*? Luna found the section on birds. Puffins had half a page of writing and a coloured picture. The other half of the page was all about herring gulls, a grey and white bird with an orange beak.

"Be very wary of herring gulls", Luna read aloud. 'Why? *Galaxy Traveller* doesn't say.'



'I don't know,' Dad said. 'But to be on the safe side I ordered some gull repellent on the spacenet.'

'Let me see.' Mum looked at the picture of the herring gull. 'They seem harmless enough. I like their pink legs. What does it say about seaweed and coastal plants?' She flipped to the contents page and sighed happily. 'There are two whole chapters! Since you get carsick, Ambrose, Luna can sit up front in the rocket car and read to me while I drive.' Mum loved plants, especially Hetty, who she'd grown from a seed and was currently waving a leaf at her.

'Bye, Hetty. Be good,' said Mum fondly.

'No thanks. Have a day good,' said Hetty.



They were ready to go. Mum stowed everyone's rucksacks in the rocket car, along with the huge bag full of food and snacks. Dad got in the back with Leo, and Luna and Twizzle climbed into the front.

'Ready, everyone?' Mum asked.

Luna nodded eagerly. 'Prepare for lift-off.'

**Find out what happens next in
Luna Grace: Sea Safari,
coming soon!**