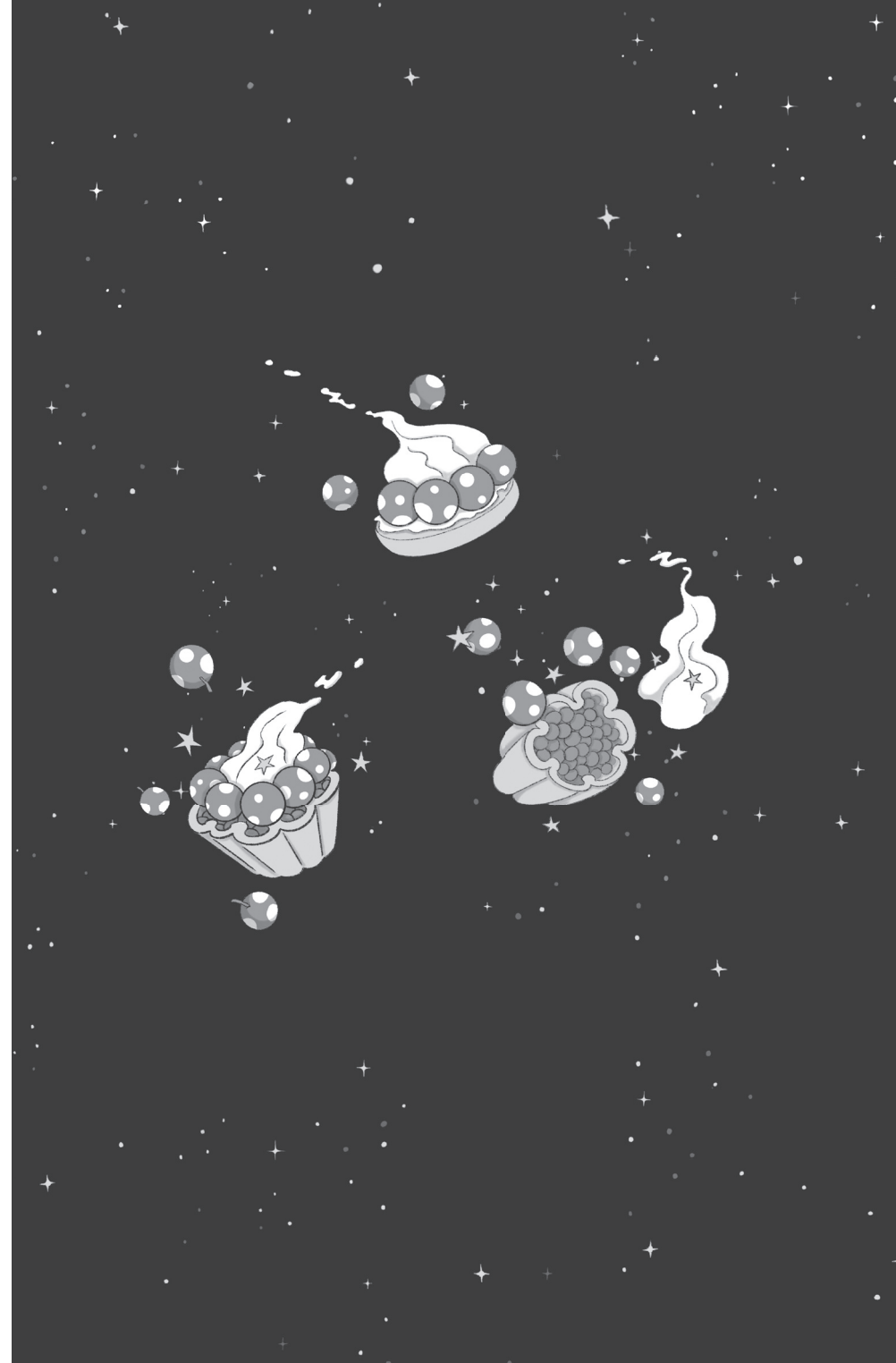
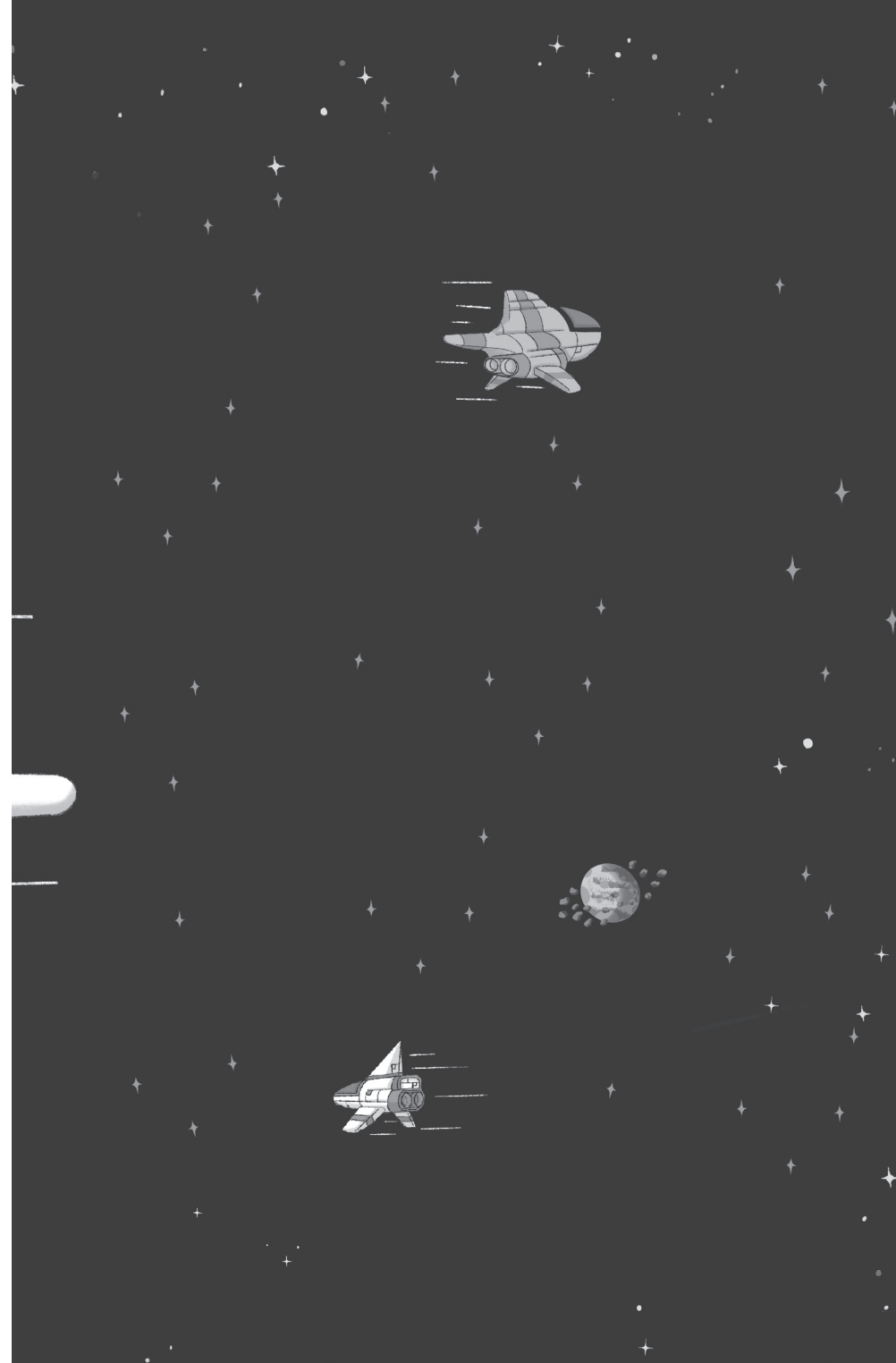




SPACE DETECTIVES

EXTRA WEIRD CREATURES

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series

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To Sylvia Thompson & Nick Devereux

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all at Bloomsbury
– Mark

For Matt, Meg and Jet. Thank you for your
help bringing this book home :)
– Dapo

PROLOGUE

PING!

Somewhere in Starville, a text message arrived on someone's mobile communicator. It was late – past midnight – and the owner of the mobile communicator had been in bed, asleep. Blearily, they reached for the device and read the message.

IS IT DONE???

Yawning, and with tired, fumbling fingers, the owner of the device typed a reply.

YES. WE SHOULD SEE
RESULTS IN THE MORNING.

A pause. Then another message **PINGED** in.

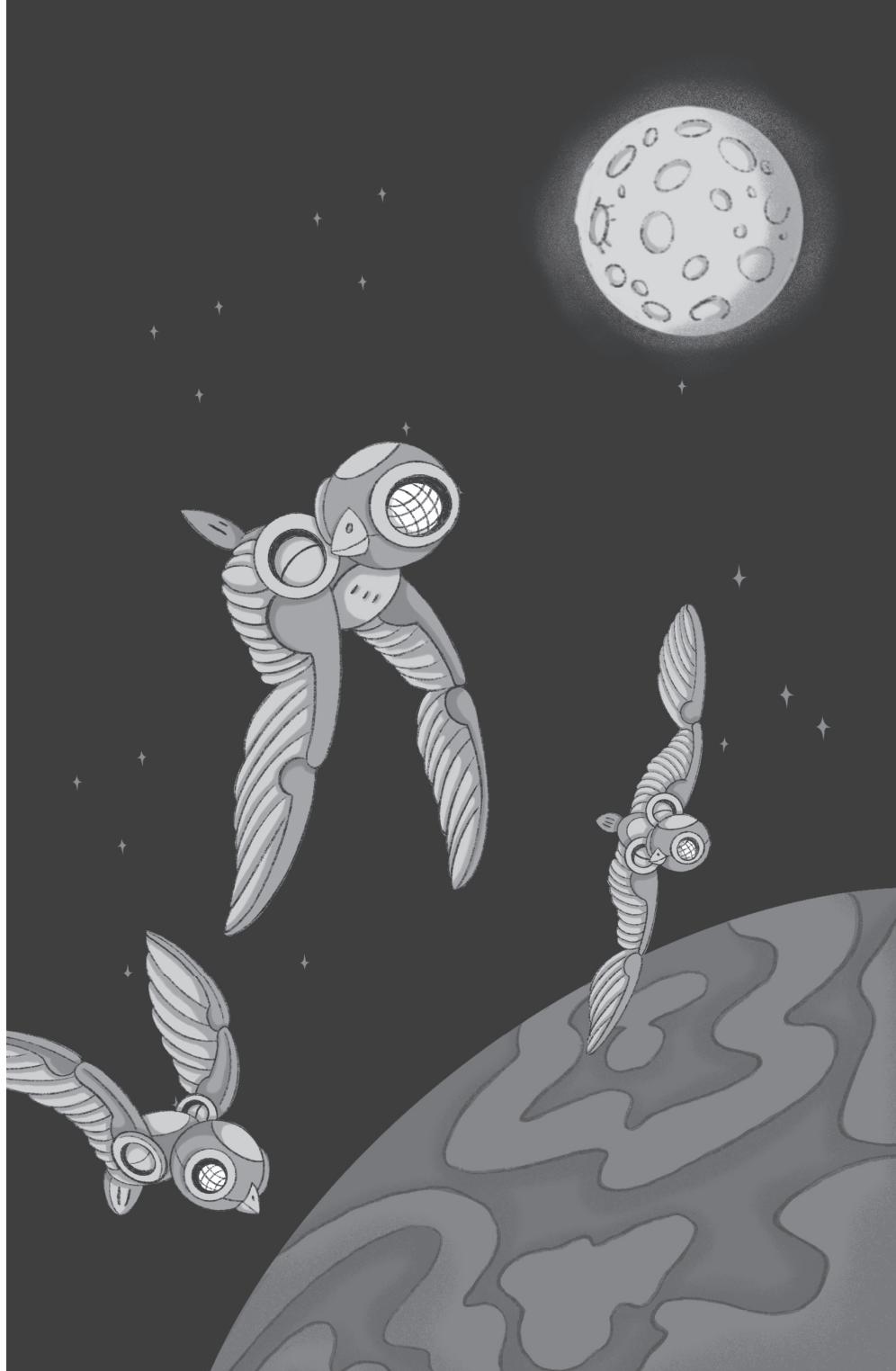


After a few seconds, it added:

NIGHTY-NIGHT, THEN.

The owner of the communicator put down the device and slumped back on to their pillow. Soon, they were deeply and comfortably asleep.





Chapter 1

Felix Plum is unwell

Mrs Plum rapped her knuckles three times on Felix's bedroom door.

'Your breakfast will be in the kitchen in five minutes, darling, or in the cat in ten. Up to you.'

Through the door there came a low, muffled groan.

Mrs Plum heaved a sigh. She'd seen hundred-year-old giant tortoises with more get-up-and-go than her son. She knocked again.

'Come on. The rocket bus will be here at eight thirty.'

‘I don’t wanna go to school,’ came Felix’s voice.

‘It’s the last week of term. You want to see all your friends, don’t you?’

‘I don’t want to do anything. I feel funny and I’ve got a headache.’

‘Oh, not that old fib,’ sighed Mrs Plum. ‘You realise kids have been trotting out that excuse since the dawn of history? I bet kids in caves used it to pull sickies from hunting mammoths. Come on, Felix. Stop wasting time.’

‘I really have, Mum. I don’t feel well. *At all*.’

Mrs Plum frowned. Normally Felix would snap out of his laziness, but today something felt different. A sudden thought occurred. Her son couldn’t actually be ill? Could he?

She pushed open the door. Felix lay sprawled on the bed under an untidy heap

of cushions and pillows, the duvet pulled over his head. Gently, she sat on the edge of the bed and cleared her throat.

'Felix, darling? Come out from under there, please.'

A small pair of hands appeared over the top edge of the duvet and pulled it down a few inches, revealing a scruffy mop of brown hair and a pair of watery blue eyes.



‘Good heavens!’ cried Mrs Plum. ‘You look terrible, darling!’ She laid a hand on Felix’s forehead. ‘And you have a temperature, too! You really are poorly! Is your head terribly painful?’

The boy nodded. ‘Yeah. And there’s this really weird feeling in my shoulder. I don’t know what it is.’

‘Oh dear. Let me see.’

Felix sat up and pulled down the duvet.

Mrs Plum gave a startled gasp and backed away from the bed. ‘Oh my goodness!’

Felix yawned. ‘Hmm? What’s up?’ He noticed his mum was staring, horrified, at his right shoulder. He swivelled his head to see what she was looking at – and let out a blood-curdling scream.