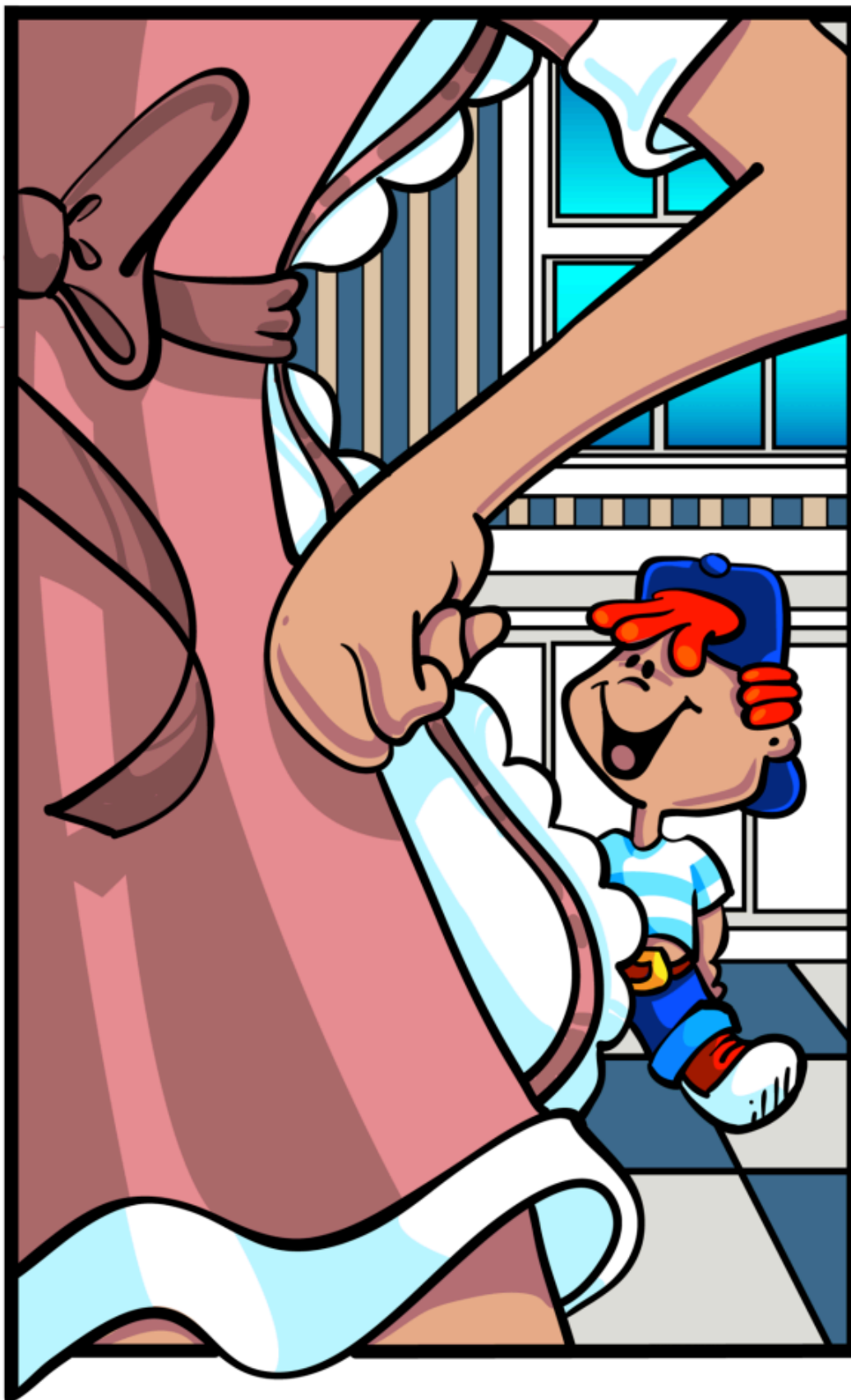


# **Iggy and the Land Behind the Sky**

By Bill Turner

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**For Zoey**



"Go upstairs and clean your room!"  
Iggy sure heard that a lot.  
He liked the way he kept his room,  
but Iggy's Mom did not.

"Get rid of all that junk up there!"  
His Mom was heard to roar.  
"I want that room so squeaky clean  
I can eat off the floor."

So Iggy trudged up all those stairs  
and went into his room.  
Instead of playing in the sun  
he faced a day of gloom.

"Where should I start?" young Iggy thought  
and scuffed across the floor.  
"Well maybe I could clear a path  
from my bed to the door."

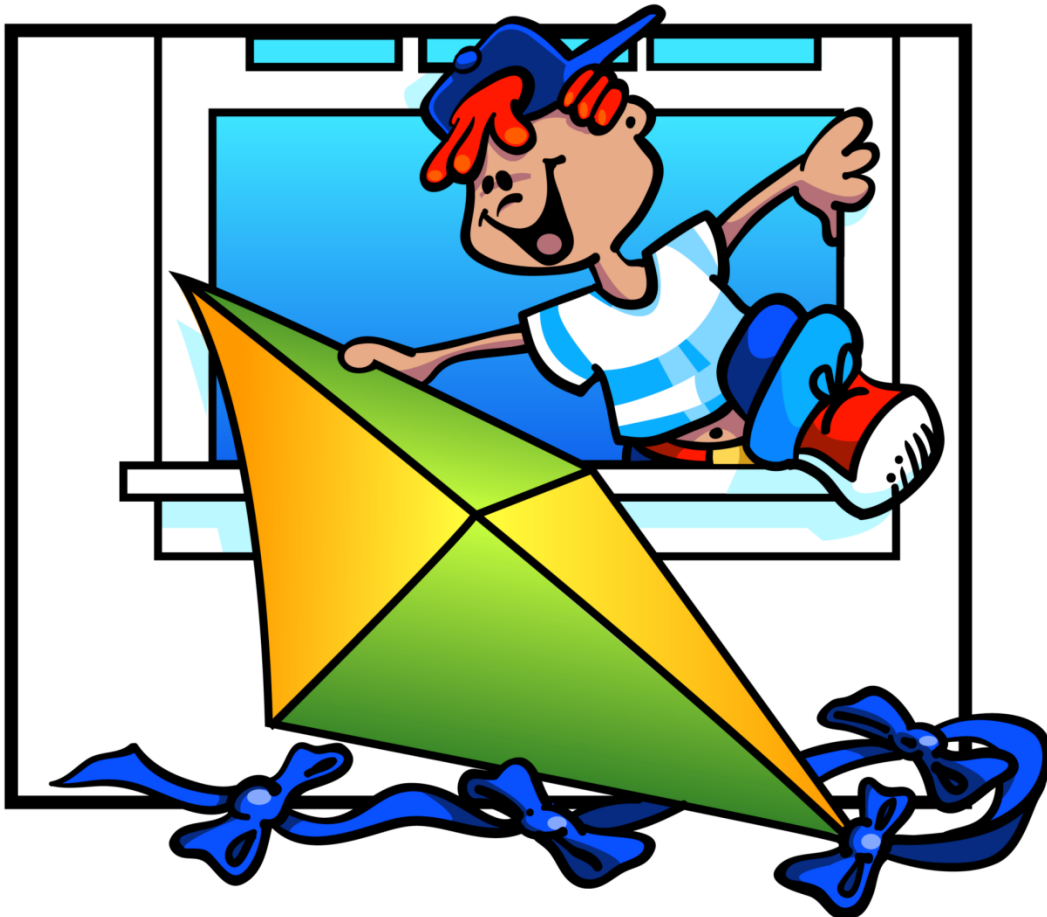
Iggy searched around his room  
until he found a box.  
He filled it with all kinds of stuff,  
from toys to dirty socks.

"I'll make Mom proud and clean this room  
if it takes me through the night."  
At least that's what our Iggy said,  
until he found his kite.

Peeking out the window  
and up into the sky,  
so bright and blue, a breeze so brisk,  
a perfect day to fly.

"How can I think of such a thing?"  
My Mom would ground me good.  
I'll finish cleaning up my room  
just like I know I should."

"Well, one quick flight, then clean my room.  
Yeah, that will be alright."  
So out the window they did climb,  
Little Iggy and his kite.



A running start, a little tug,  
the kite began to soar,  
with Iggy reeling out the string  
he could not ask for more.

The kite zig-zagged so happily  
up in the sky so free  
that Iggy didn't notice  
he was too close to a tree.

Iggy gasped and grabbed the string,  
he pulled with all his might.  
but Iggy was not quick enough,  
the tree had snagged his kite.



"I'll have to climb and save my kite."  
he said, and then he frowned.  
"I wish it hadn't gotten stuck  
so high up off the ground."

Up the trunk, then branch to branch,  
climbing with such style,  
Iggy's kite was within reach  
and he began to smile.

Then Iggy noticed something strange.  
All rules it did defy.  
His kite had flown beyond the tree  
and torn right through the sky.

Iggy climbed up to the hole.  
His eyes were opened wide,  
trying to see through the tear  
and to the other side.

He peeked, he squinted and he stared.  
He could not see a thing.  
But he could crawl right through the hole  
by climbing his kite's string.

"It's now or never" Iggy said and  
did not bat an eye.  
He slid himself along the string  
and up into the sky.





"Hello, excuse me." Iggy called.  
"Is anyone around?"  
He waited for an answer  
but he did not hear a sound.

"I'm just looking for my kite.  
It's yellow, green and blue."  
But Iggy still got no reply  
and wondered what to do.

Little Iggy scratched his head  
and looked from left to right.  
"I guess that it is up to me  
to go and find my kite."

Just as Iggy started  
to turn and walk away  
a noise off in the distance  
made Iggy stop and stay.

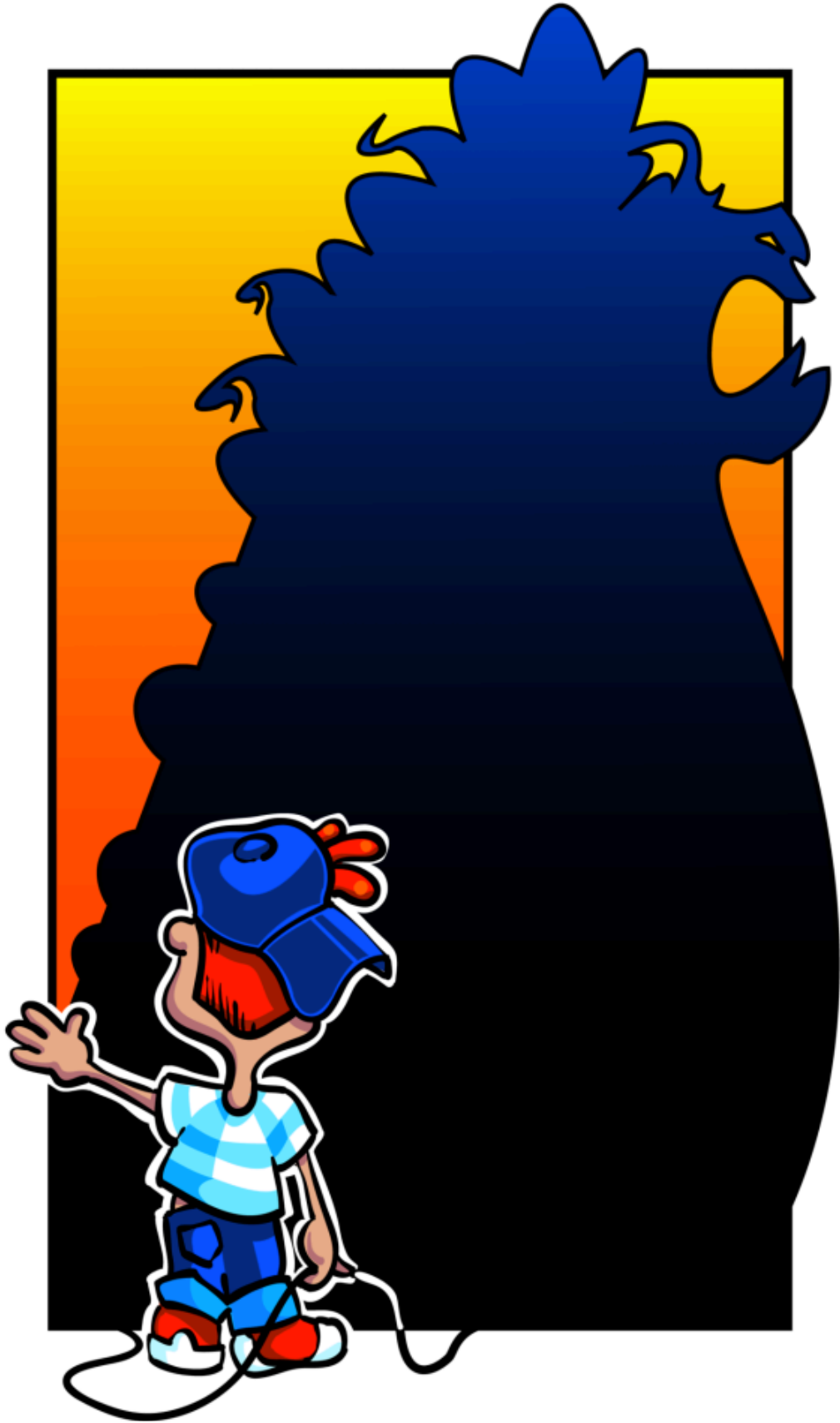
The noise was getting louder.  
Clinking, clanging and a crash,  
sounding like when Iggy threw  
his toy drum in the trash.

Iggy hid the best he could.  
The noisy thing grew near.  
He only saw it's shadow,  
but it filled his heart with fear.

It had a great big scaly back  
just like a dinosaur.  
And every time it took a step  
the creature shook the floor.

It looked like it had great big teeth.  
It must be ten feet wide.  
Iggy closed his eyes up tight  
and wished that he could hide.

"Maybe if I'm quiet  
this thing will pass me by.  
I will not move a muscle,  
I can do it if I try."

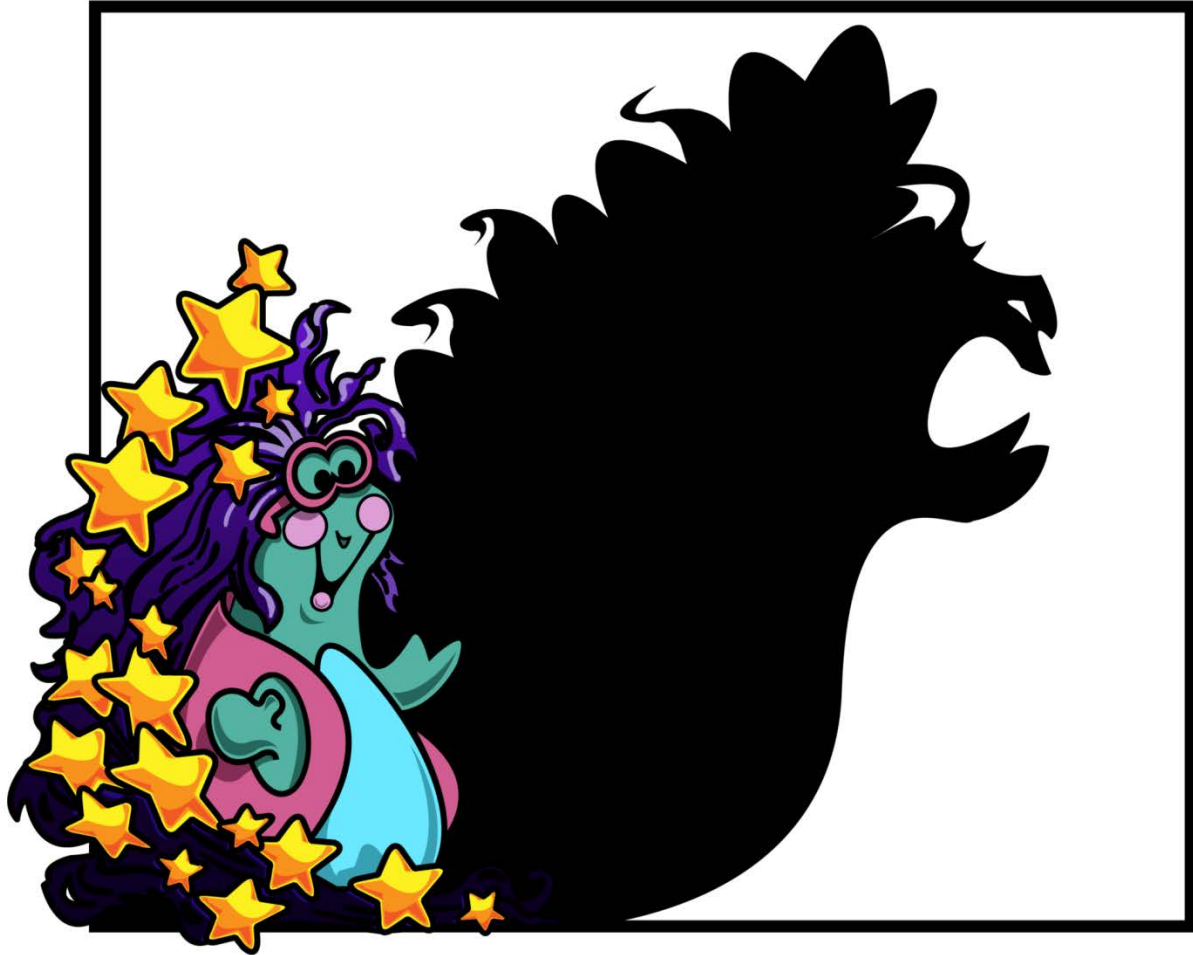


When Iggy felt the creature near  
he could not help but peek.  
He saw then not a monster  
but a creature small and meek.

"I hope, kind sir" the creature said  
"I did not frighten you.  
My friends all call me Startle  
'cause that is what I do."

"Don't be silly" Iggy laughed  
and turned a little pink.  
"Oh, I believe you" Startle said  
and gave a little wink.





Startle's back was made of stars  
from his head down to the ground.  
So when he walked they bonked about  
and made a clanking sound.

He cast a fearsome shadow  
as anyone could see  
in hopes that evil doers  
would turn around and flee.

Startle has his shadow  
like a turtle has it's shell.  
It isn't very dangerous  
but serves him very well.





Startle questioned, "What's your name?

I ask you, if I might."

"You may. My name is Iggy  
and I've come to find my kite."

"Startle, can you help me?

I'm a stranger in this land.

It shouldn't take us very long  
if you have nothing planned."

"Well, Iggy, since you mentioned it,

I was just on my way

to visit my friend Tremelo

and listen to him play."

Startle thought a moment  
and said, "Here's what we'll do.

Come and visit Tremelo,  
then he can help look, too."

Iggy said, "That sounds like fun,

although you did not say

what instrument or music

your friend Tremelo will play."

"He plays a special instrument that

he has put together.

It's not just music that he plays,

you see, he plays the weather."

Now Tremelo's a pale man.  
He's kind of tall and thin.  
A little beard beneath his lip  
but nothing on his chin.

He always wears his favorite hat,  
the Texas wide brimmed style,  
which covers almost all his face  
except his boyish smile.

He wears a shirt with puffy sleeves,  
a custom velvet vest.  
Of all the trousers he could choose,  
he likes blue jeans best.

His instrument, the Stratosphere,  
looks like a weird guitar.  
A lightning bolt used for a neck,  
topped with a cloud and star.

When he played it soft and sweet  
a gentle breeze would blow.  
And if he plucked it like a harp  
you could expect some snow.

Rock and Roll would cause some rain  
and clouds of many forms  
but when he tore into the Blues  
he'd whip up thunderstorms.





Iggy and Startle had arrived  
in time to see the show.  
They worked their way up through the crowd  
to get to the front row.

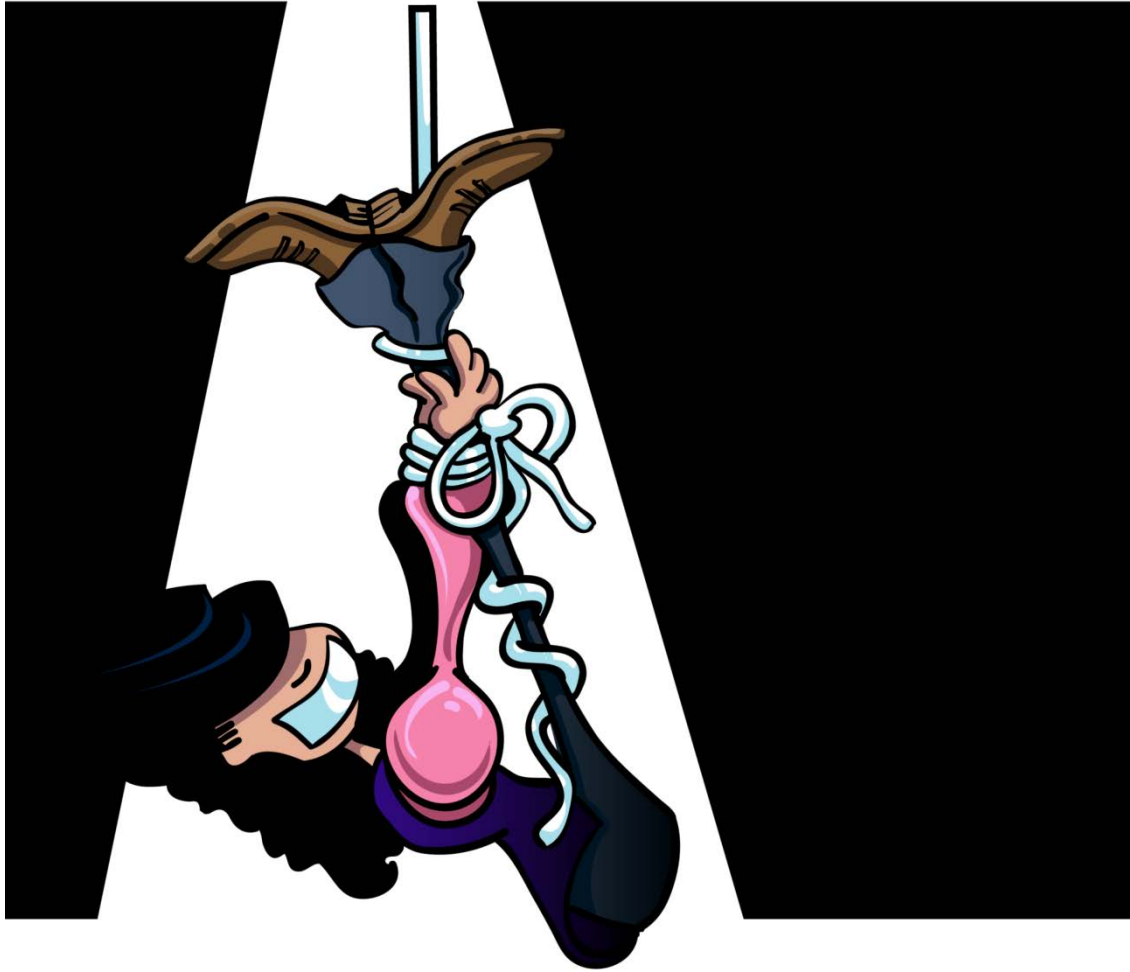
"Greetings," the announcer said.  
"You're all in for a treat.  
Today, the Master Tremelo  
will play mid-summer heat."

"A scorching little ditty  
and one you won't forget,  
so please put on some sunblock  
and prepare yourself to sweat."

The house lights dim. The crowd applauds.  
The curtain starts to rise.  
What was waiting on the stage  
was quite a big surprise.

Under a single spotlight  
all wrapped up nice and neat  
was Tremelo, his mouth taped shut,  
his hands tied to his feet.

The Stratophere was missing  
from the stand that it should sit in,  
but in it's place there was a note  
and this is what was written.



"I've got your precious Stratosphere.  
I've taken it away.  
No longer will I have to hear  
the weather that you play."

"I find it all quite boring.  
It's time now for a change.  
No more sun or stupid rain,  
it's time for something strange."

"When the people down below  
look up into the sky,  
their eyes will pop and jaws will drop.  
They'll stop and wonder, "Why?"

"Please do not take this personally.  
I mean, at least you try.  
Sometimes that's not quite good enough."  
Signed, **WBY**.

By now the untied Tremelo  
had gotten to his feet.  
It's not the way that Iggy thought  
the two of them would meet.

"We must find her right away.  
The Stratosphere, I mean."  
Tremelo was pacing now  
and looking rather green.

"But how do we get started  
and what are we to do?  
It really would be helpful  
if we had ourselves a clue."

"Excuse me, Master Tremelo,  
I do not mean to gloat.  
I do believe I've found a clue  
printed on this note."

Iggy flipped the note around  
to show the other two  
a poster for "The Downspout Club"  
in letters, bold and blue.



The poster read “Nothing to do?  
Well then you need not ponder.  
Come to the Downspout Friday night  
And see the Wide Blue Yonder.”

“The Wide Blue Yonder, don’t you see,  
let’s call in some officials.  
The nasty message we received  
is signed with his initials.”

“Now hold on Iggy,” Startle said  
“We do not wish to goof.  
I think we better check this out  
and get ourselves some proof.”

"The Downspout sure does fit it's name"  
Tremelo did mutter.

"They call the place The Downspout  
'cause it's lower than the gutter."

"It's frequented by gum snappers  
and other grungy types.  
And if that isn't bad enough,  
it's run by Guttersnipes."

"They're mean! They're crude and often rude!  
They cheat at pillow fights!  
And lately, though no one knows why,  
they're into stealing kites!"



Three shades of red filled Iggy's face.

"That's all I need to hear!  
We're going in to find my kite  
and save the Stratosphere!"

"Whoa, cool your jets" said Tremelo.

"Slow down, my little man.  
We might not get back anything  
if we don't have a plan."

"It says here, on the poster,  
that they're holding some auditions  
to fill holes in the Blue Guy's band.  
He needs some more musicians."

"I must remind you" Startle said,  
"You are a great big star.  
They don't know me or Iggy  
but they sure know who you are."

"Well, Mister Wide Blue Yonder  
is in for a surprise.  
He won't see me as Tremelo  
if I wear a disguise."

A brilliant plan, they all agreed.  
So without any fears  
the three set forth to save the day  
just like The Musketeers.

Backstage at The Downspout Club  
the mood had changed to mean.  
It seems the Wide Blue Yonder  
was causing quite a scene.

"My jacket isn't finished yet!  
I do not understand.  
How am I supposed to play  
if I don't have a band?"

"We're sorry, Sir, it took so long.  
Please don't get in a snit.  
Here, try this lovely jacket on  
so we can check it's fit."

The jacket gleamed with colors bold,  
as bright as Christmas lights.  
A silken patchwork suit coat which was  
made from stolen kites.

The Wide Blue Yonder seemed quite pleased  
and gazed at his reflection.  
The jacket sure did compliment  
his very blue complexion.

He wore with that some trousers black,  
sewn from a circus tent.  
A starched white shirt and wing tipped shoes  
like bridegrooms often rent.





"Quick, bring me the Stratosphere"  
the big blue guy did say.  
I want to see how I will look  
this evening when I play."

The Wide Blue Yonder was so large  
the Stratosphere seemed little.  
He had to tuck it 'neath his chin  
and play it like a fiddle.

"Well, my oh my, I must confess  
I really do look grand.  
So, now, my little Guttersnipes,  
when do I meet my band?"

Musicians came to strut their stuff  
from classical to rock.  
They lined up at the Downspout's door  
and half way 'round the block.

Out somewhere in the middle  
of this single file zoo,  
our heroes waited in disguise  
discussing what to do.

The three wore clothes like hip jazz cats,  
berets and dark sunglasses.  
They all were wearing turtlenecks  
and even fake moustaches.



"Remember boys", said Tremelo.  
"Listen to what I say.  
We'll get through this and make the cut  
but never have to play."

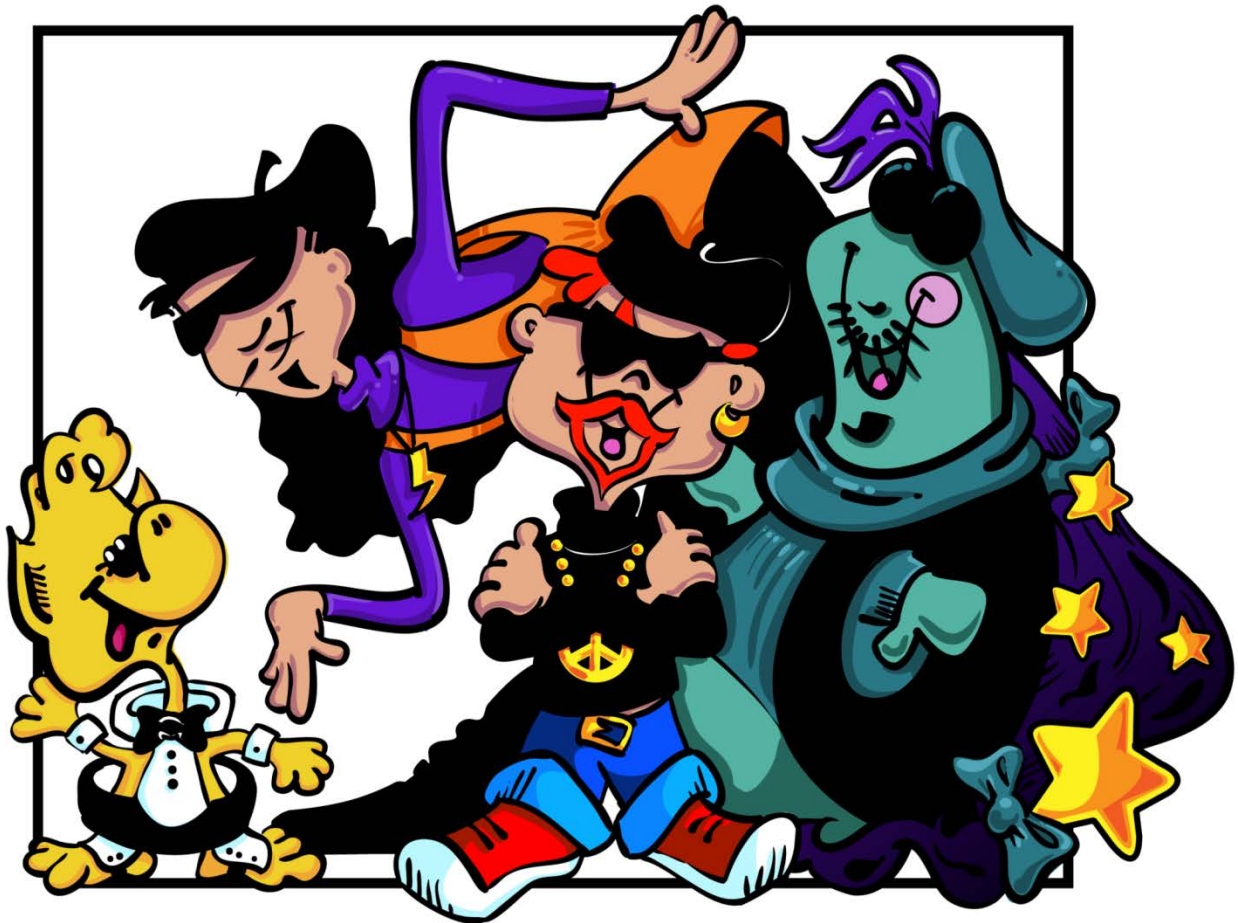
"I know they will accept us  
by the language that we use.  
They'll make believe they understand,  
so just try to confuse."

"Just say a bunch of kooky things  
and finish with a grin  
and rather than admit they're lost  
they're sure to let us in."

The head Snipe snapped, "Please move along.  
We haven't got all day.  
Please state your name and address  
and the instrument you play."

"Hey, we're three groovin' jazzy cats  
from flipside down. Ya dig? "  
"We're here to be bop shoop shabang  
and wail the Blue Dude's gig."

"Oh, is that so?" the puzzled Snipe  
just stood and scratched his head.  
"Would you mind repeating all that  
gibberish you said?"



Iggy thought this seemed like fun  
and he would give a try.  
"Straight up, my bro', we jam the tunes.  
The honeys think we're fly."

"Not only that," Startle explained,  
"the Main Man really shreds.  
The Igster has a rap that's whack  
and dig these groovy threads."

The Guttersnipe was quite confused  
as Tremelo had planned.  
He showed the trio to the stage  
as members of the band.

Inside the stage was buzzing,  
Snipes running left and right  
to get the Downspout ready  
for the Wide Blue's show that night.

"It's so busy," Startle said,  
"No one will miss us here.  
So let's split up and search this place  
to find the Stratosphere."

The three of them went separate ways  
to see what they could find.  
Startle looked around the stage  
while Iggy searched behind.

Iggy crept into the hall.  
A light washed 'cross the floor.  
He followed it until he reached  
the crack beneath a door.

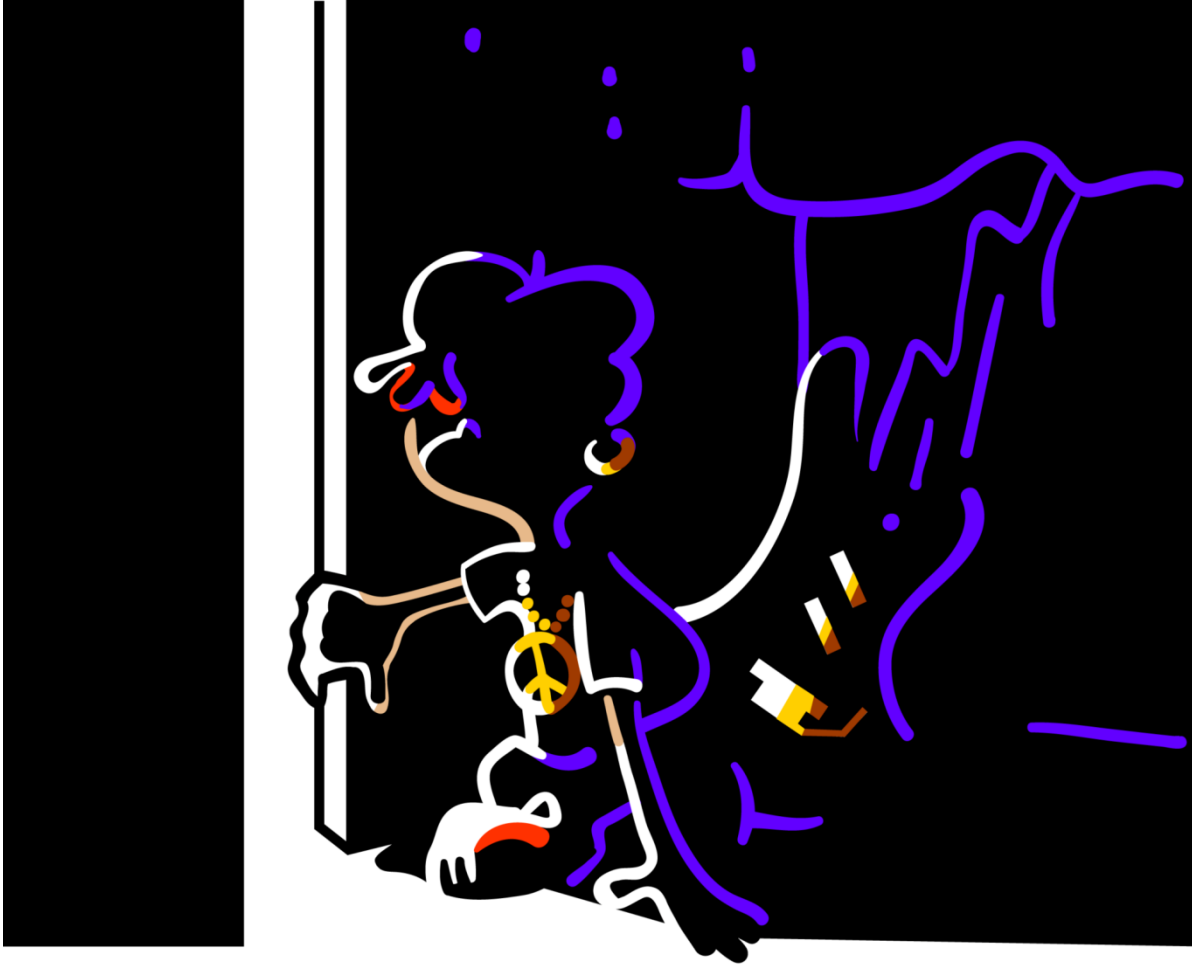
The door was to a dressing room.  
A nameplate hung up high.  
Three initials on a star  
read **WBY**.

Iggy went to turn the knob  
to get himself a peek,  
but as the doorknob touched his hand  
he heard the floorboards creak.

Iggy opened up the door  
and quickly jumped inside.  
He figured that the closet  
was the perfect place to hide.

He dove into the closet  
and huddled 'neath the clothes.  
The Stratosphere, to his surprise,  
was right before his nose.

Just when it seemed the Stratosphere  
was safe in Iggy's hands,  
in came the Blue Guy with his Snipes,  
making goofy demands.



Iggy left the door ajar  
and peeked right through the crack,  
watching Guttersnipes be told  
of talent that they lack.

"My hair's all wrong," the Blue Guy whined.  
"There's far too many bows.  
And look at this, can you explain  
this shine upon my nose?"

"We're sorry, Sir. We're sorry, Sir,"  
the Snipes would all repeat.  
"We'll have it fixed by show time.  
Sit. Relax. We'll rub your feet."

"Oh, very well," the Blue Guy sighed.  
"Go fetch the Stratosphere.  
I wish to get some practice in  
as show time's growing near."

Iggy thought the time had come  
that he was to be found.  
But as the Snipe was drawing near  
there came a knocking sound.

"Delivery for Mister Blue,"  
came from outside the door.  
"I have a present from your fans  
for you, whom they adore."

"By all means. Snipe, please let him in.  
Come, come, now let's be swift."  
The Blue Guy was excited,  
looking forward to his gift.

A dozen Sparkling Starburst buds  
all formed a bright bouquet.  
"Oh, no!" the Blue Guy was to gasp.  
"Quick, take those things away!"

"I am allergic to those things  
and flowers of all sorts.  
I break out in a purple plaid  
and get the twitter-snorts."



The Big Blue Guy was giggling,  
then gave a little wheeze.  
He snorted in a bunch of air  
and let loose with a sneeze.

Snipes went flying everywhere  
from Big Blue's nasal blast.  
Iggy then made his escape  
before the chaos passed.

Iggy scrambled to the stage  
to find the other two.  
He had a way to save the day.  
He knew what they could do.





Later, at The Downspout Club,  
the stage was set to go.  
A crowd was forming at the door  
waiting to see the show.

Wide Blue in his dressing room,  
just primping in the mirror.  
Making sure he looks his best  
to play the Stratosphere.

Iggy stood with Tremelo,  
Startle close at hand,  
eagerly awaiting all the  
mayhem they had planned.

The crowd had settled in their seats,  
set for the night's events.  
Musicians took their place on stage  
and tuned their instruments.

A Sprite approached the microphone.  
"Let's get things under way.  
If all of you are ready  
there's just one thing left to say."

"Here he is. The one you want.  
Of no one we are fonder.  
I am honored to present,  
Maestro Wide Blue Yonder."



The Stratosphere beneath his chin,  
he tightened up his bow  
then scraped it across all the strings,  
the high notes then the low.

It sounded like a dentist's drill  
that badly needed oil  
and was about as pleasant as  
a mouthful of tin foil.

The Blue Guy never would admit  
how horribly he played.  
They once expelled him from the band  
back in the second grade.

As the Wide Blue Yonder played  
the sky began to change.  
The weather he was forming  
was becoming rather strange.

You may have heard the saying  
"It was raining cats and dogs."  
Well, that it did, but real ones  
as well as pigs and frogs.

The pigs were wearing top hats.  
The frogs were wearing spats.  
Some of the dogs had polka dots.  
There were some checkered cats.





At this point in the music  
he was joined by the band.  
Our heroes scheme was taking place,  
just as it was planned.

Flowers, buds and petals  
of every shape and size  
were flying from the instruments  
and up into the skies.

Every time a horn would blow  
or when a drum would beat,  
blossoms would float through the air  
and land at Wide Blue's feet.

The Blue Guy stopped his playing  
with a twitter and a wheeze.  
A giggle and a sputter,  
then he began to sneeze.

His face was turning purple now  
with cheeks of pink and green.  
He twittered and he snorted  
more than anyone had seen.

Then he dropped the Stratosphere  
as he sneezed once more.  
Iggy dove and snatched it up  
before it hit the floor.



Tremelo took it from there  
as he began to play  
a melody of gentle rains  
to wash the flowers away.

Wide Blue sat upon the stage,  
wet and filled with shame.  
The concert was a total wreck  
with only him to blame.

"I should have listened to my Mom,  
instead I only mocked her.  
If I had taken her advice  
I could have been a doctor."

Iggy couldn't help but see  
the Big Guy feeling blue.  
So Iggy went to ask  
if there was something he could do.

"You would help me?" asked Blue Yonder  
"Though I'm such a fake?"  
Iggy said, "You don't judge somebody  
by just one mistake."

"I agree," said Tremelo.  
"I think without a doubt,  
you simply need some tutoring.  
With that I'll help you out."

"You are all so very kind,"  
sniffed the ol' Wide Blue.  
"I only wish that there was something  
I could do for you."

"There is one thing," Iggy said.  
"I'd ask you, if I might.  
It really would be awesome if  
you could return my kite."

The Blue Guy and his Guttersnipes  
were making quite a racket,  
trying to find Iggy's kite  
sewn somewhere in his jacket.



Iggy, now with kite in hand said,  
"I am sad to say  
although I haven't been here long,  
I must be on my way."

So Iggy and his new found friends  
he met behind the sky  
went back to where the sky had torn  
and there they said "Goodbye."

Iggy said, "I'll be back soon  
or you can visit me."  
Then Iggy gave a little wave  
as he climbed down the tree.



Iggy ran across the yard  
and went into the house,  
sneaking back into his room  
as quiet as a mouse.

He quickly started cleaning,  
picking stuff up off the floor.  
He turned around and saw his Mother  
standing at the door.

"It's such a shame, my little man,"  
his Mother was to say  
"For us to be stuck cleaning  
on a warm and sunny day."

Off to the park, the two did go,  
the sky so blue and bright.  
His Mother packed a picnic lunch  
and Iggy brought his kite.

