

The SUN

and other Inventions

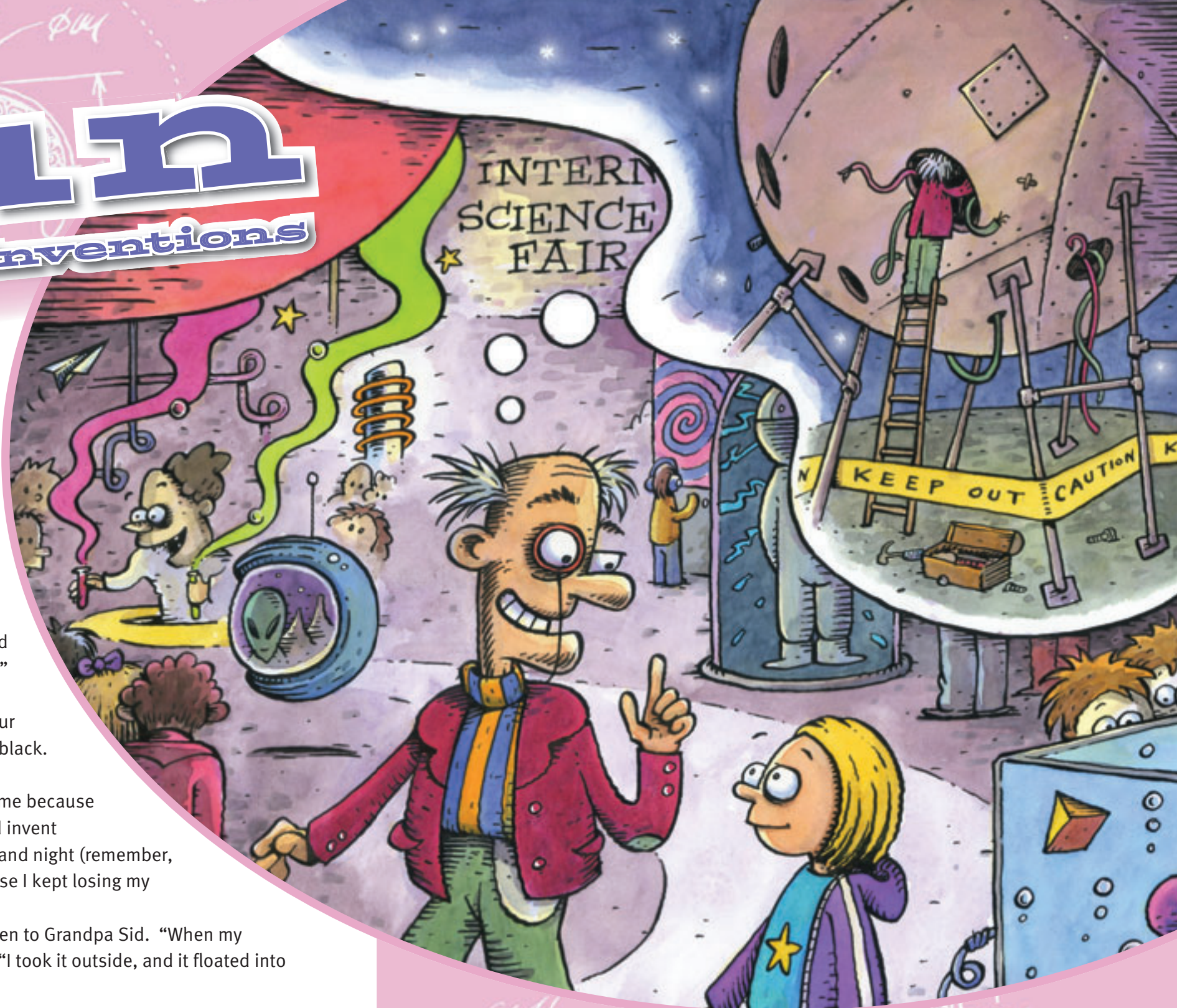
by Simon Cooke

Grandpa Sid took me to the International Science Fair one rainy Saturday afternoon. “You might learn something from these scientists, Emma,” he said, “but I doubt it. I have more knowledge in my little finger than all of them put together – and that’s being generous.”

We went to the exhibition about stars and planets. “Did you know I invented the Sun?” Grandpa Sid claimed loudly so that people would hear. “It was a while back, before your mum was born. The whole world was pitch black. People kept bumping into each other.

“The president of the world came to see me because I was a famous inventor. He asked if I could invent something that would help. I worked night and night (remember, there were no days), and it took ages because I kept losing my screwdriver in the dark.”

By now, a few people had stopped to listen to Grandpa Sid. “When my invention was finally ready,” he continued, “I took it outside, and it floated into the sky.”



“Wow! You invented the Sun?” said a little girl with cheeks as red as Mars.

“Well actually, it was a sun, not the Sun,” amended Grandpa Sid. “It rose up and up until it was just a speck in the sky. There was a little light but not enough.”

The little girl’s father tried to pull her away. His blonde hair trailed like the tail of a comet.

“The president of the world was disappointed,” said Grandpa Sid. “He said I should make a better one. So I did, I tried again and again, but all my suns floated off. Like the first one, they were no good.”

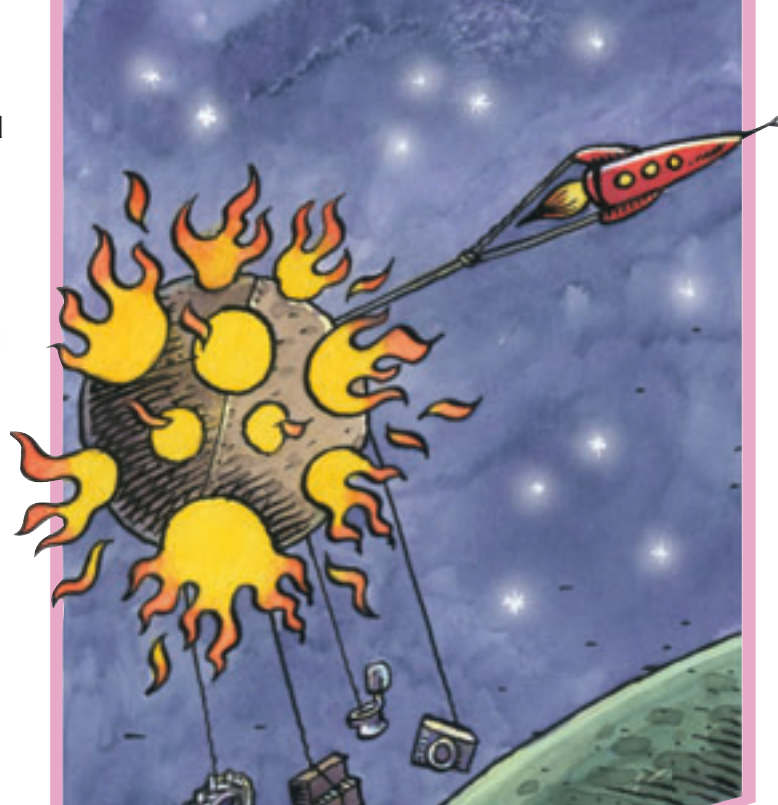
“So are you trying to tell us you invented the stars?” said a man with a belly as round as the Earth.

Everybody laughed except Grandpa Sid. His smile dropped. “I didn’t intend to invent stars,” he said solemnly. “They were a mistake.”

“So how did you stop our sun from floating off like all the others?” asked a lady with eyes like black holes.

“Ahh,” replied Grandpa Sid. “I attached weights ... and then I strapped it to a rocket and sent it flying around the world so everyone would get light.”

The crowd gathered round Grandpa Sid had grown, and it included a scientist who was curious why no one was at his exhibit.



“You can’t possibly believe this man,” said the scientist.

“So who did invent the Sun?” asked twins with faces as pale as the Moon.

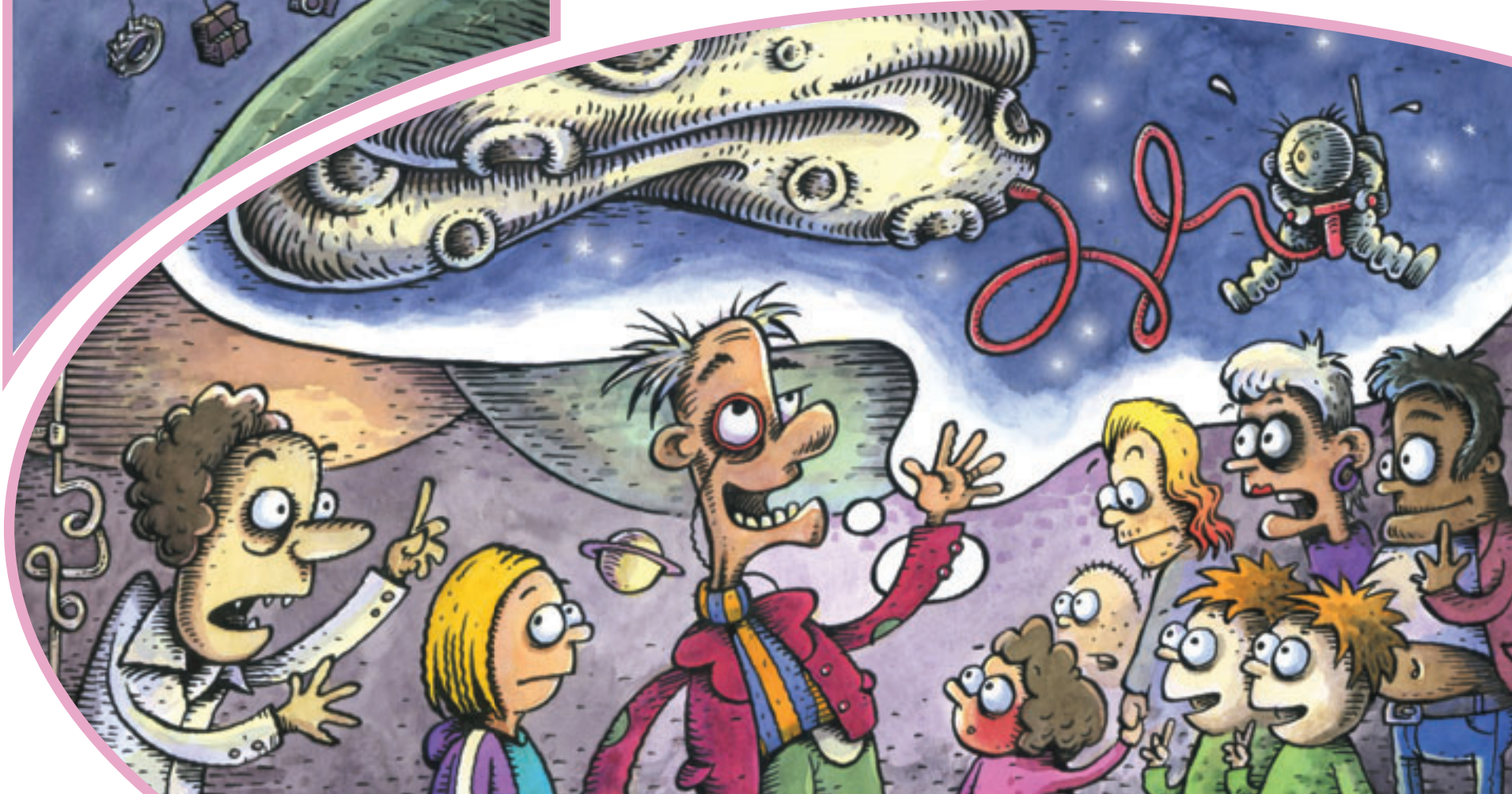
“No one. It’s a massive ball of flames. No one invented it,” replied the scientist.

“I suppose you think no one invented the Moon either?” asked Grandpa Sid.

“Of course it wasn’t invented,” replied the scientist. “It was a part of our planet that got blasted into space billions of years ago.”

Grandpa Sid shook his head. “I’m afraid you’re mistaken. The president of the world asked me to design something to commemorate the World Cup, and I said, ‘Wouldn’t it be wonderful to have an enormous soccer ball orbiting Earth?’”

Grandpa Sid looked a bit sad. “Unfortunately the moon hasn’t been the great success I’d hoped. It keeps deflating – as I’m sure you’ve noticed. I have to pump it up every month. Not my best work.”



“Poppycock!” exclaimed the scientist. “Complete and utter poppycock. No one believes you.”

“I believe him,” said the man with the belly. And everyone else nodded in agreement.

“But it’s ... You can’t possibly ...,” spluttered the scientist. “Wait right here,” he said. He went away, returning with several other scientists wearing white coats and serious expressions.

Grandpa Sid ignored them. “Now that,” he said, looking over towards the display on gravity, “was one of my better inventions.”

“You invented gravity?” I said, knowing that was exactly what Grandpa Sid wanted me to say.

“Oh, yes,” he nodded, “before I made the Moon. The planet was in chaos. People kept floating into space. The president of the world asked me to do something about it.”

“Don’t believe him,” one of the scientists pleaded to the crowd. “Come and look at my display and learn what really causes gravity. It’s to do with mass and the force of attraction ...”



But no one was listening. “How did you do it?” asked a boy with freckles scattered across his face like an asteroid field.

“Well, I built a massive vacuum cleaner with billions of suckers and bunged it deep within the centre of Earth. It sucks away the whole time, keeping our feet firmly on the ground.” Grandpa Sid leapt into the air, then came stomping down. “See ... it works as well as the day I built it.”

“Is that true?” asked the little girl.

“Yes,” said Grandpa Sid.

“No!” screamed the scientists.

Then we noticed two security guards forcing their way through the crowd. Grandpa Sid gave me a wink and grinned more broadly than ever. “Perhaps it’s time to show everyone another of my inventions: the president of the world wanted a way to save people from dinosaurs ...”

“So what did you come up with, Grandpa?”

“Running,” said Grandpa Sid.



illustrations by Jeffy James

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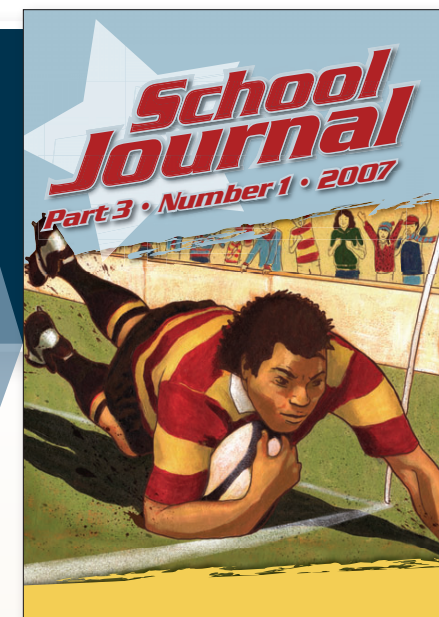
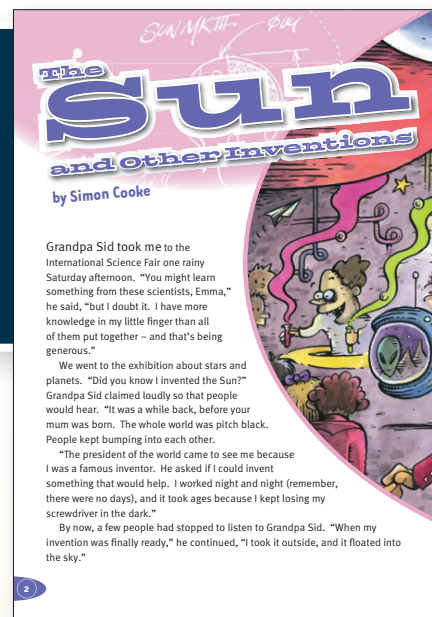
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