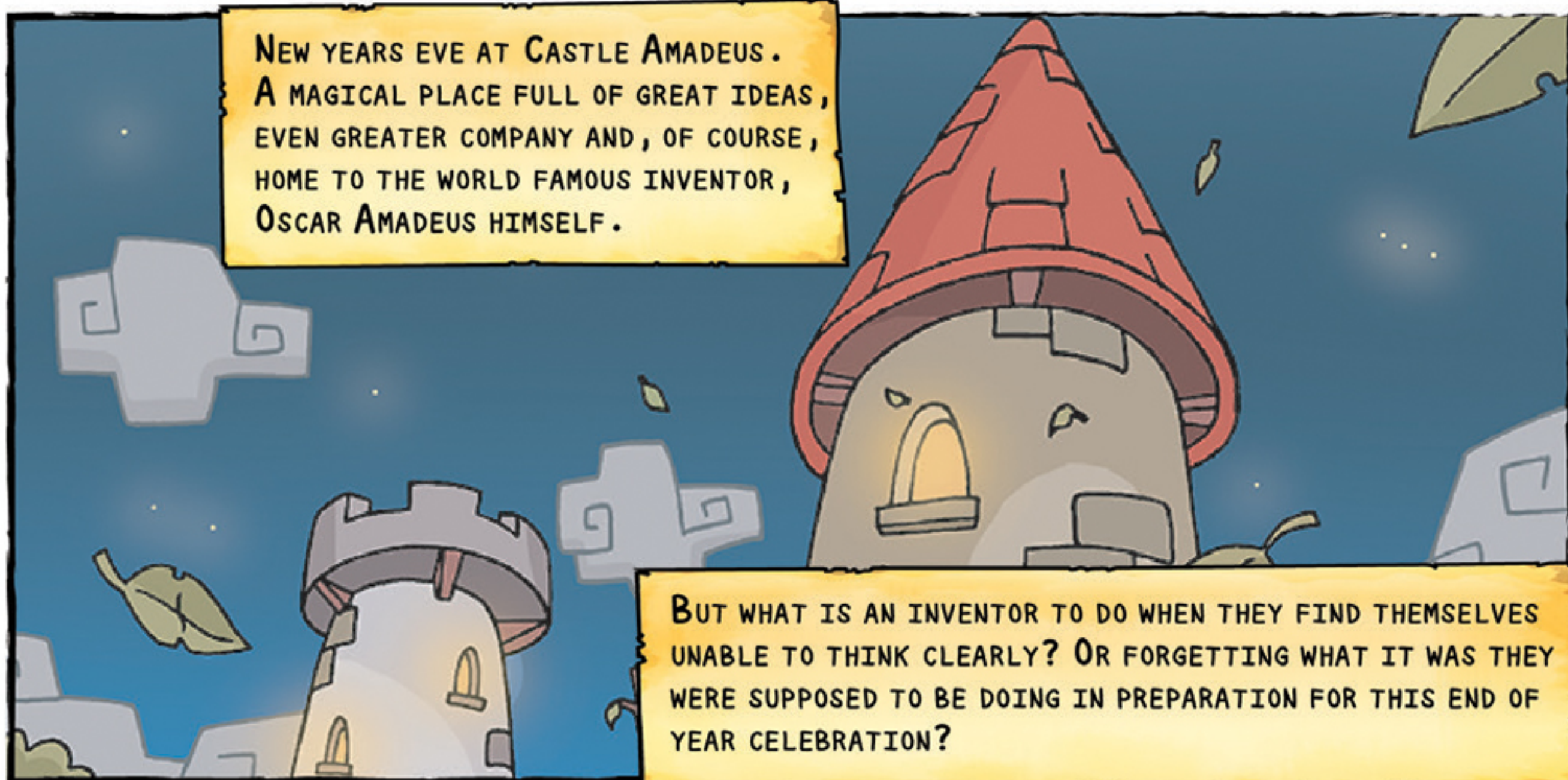


NEW YEARS EVE AT CASTLE AMADEUS.  
A MAGICAL PLACE FULL OF GREAT IDEAS,  
EVEN GREATER COMPANY AND, OF COURSE,  
HOME TO THE WORLD FAMOUS INVENTOR,  
OSCAR AMADEUS HIMSELF.



BUT WHAT IS AN INVENTOR TO DO WHEN THEY FIND THEMSELVES  
UNABLE TO THINK CLEARLY? OR FORGETTING WHAT IT WAS THEY  
WERE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING IN PREPARATION FOR THIS END OF  
YEAR CELEBRATION?

ON A NORMAL DAY, OSCAR WOULD TAKE  
HIS HOT AIR BALLOON FOR A GENTLE RIDE  
TO THAT PEACEFUL PLACE BELOW THE  
CLOUDS, YET HIGH ABOVE THE TREETOPS  
WHERE IDEAS FLOW TO HIM AS FREELY AND  
AS OFTEN AS NEW FRIENDS DO - OSCAR  
BEING SUCH A NICE CHAP

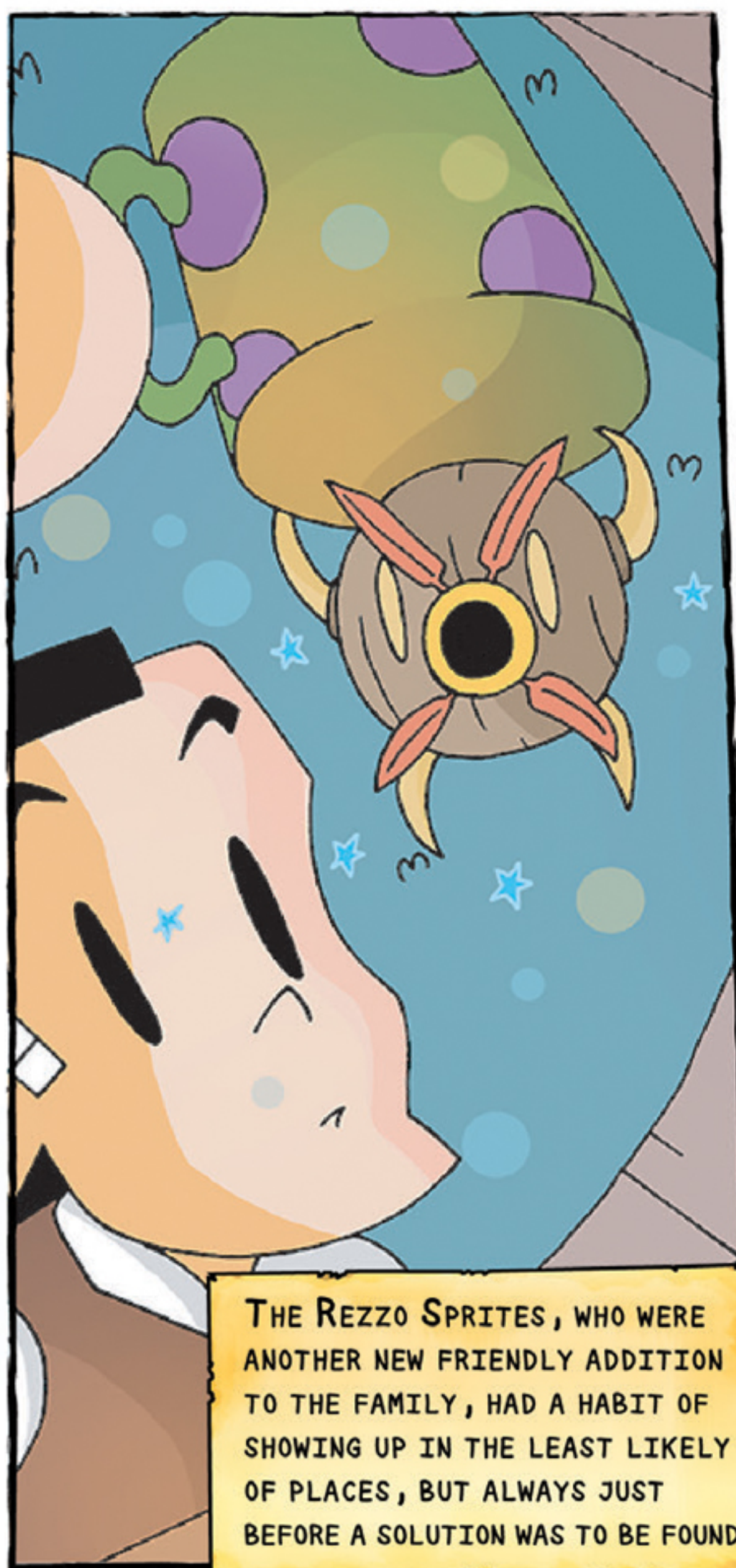


TODAY HE WOULD HAVE TO GO  
WITHOUT HIS TRUSTY BALLOON  
CONTRAPTION, FOR HE HAD  
FORGOTTEN TO FIX THE ROPES  
THAT ALLOWED THE BALLOON  
TO RISE!

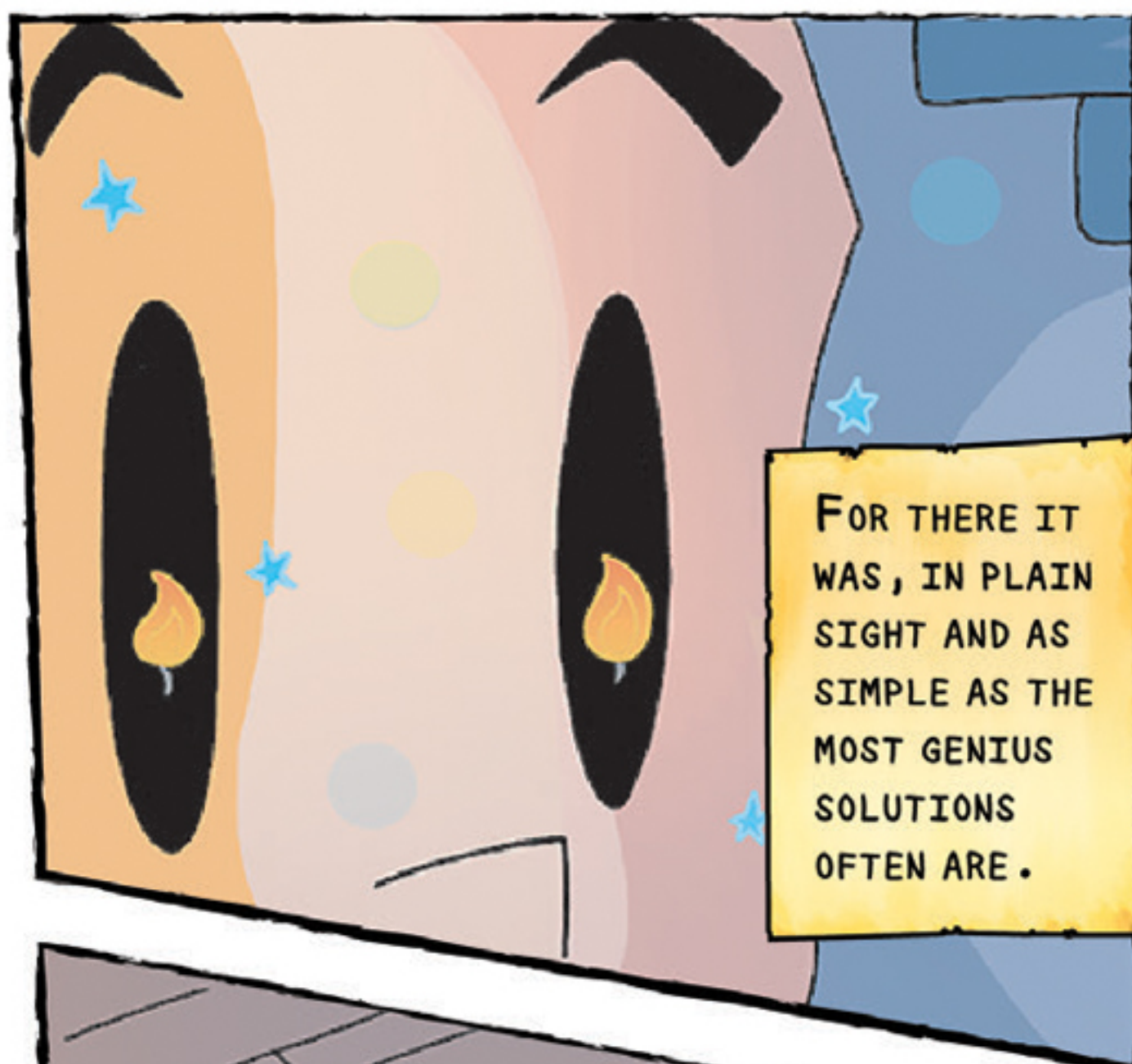




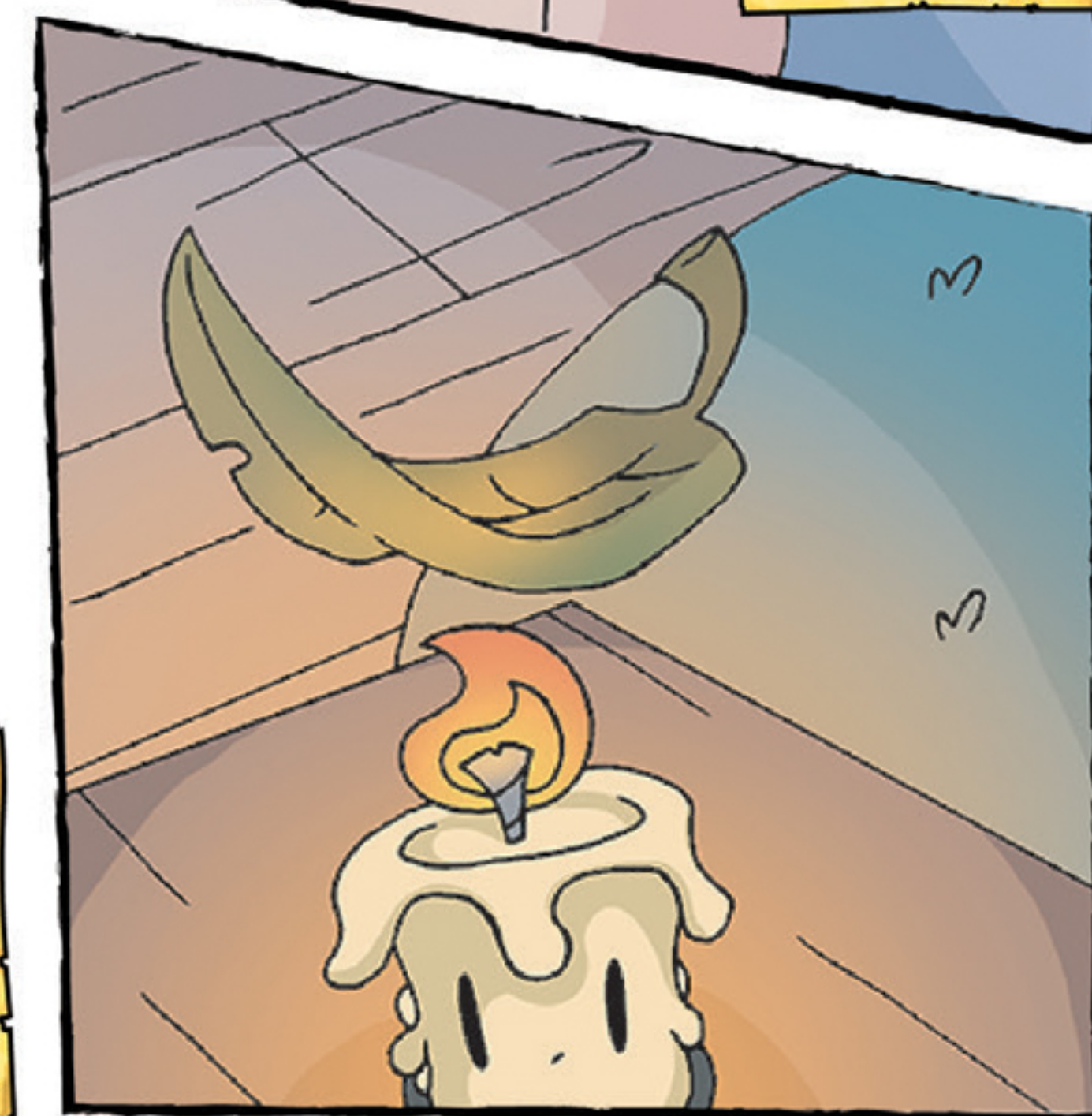
RANDALL THE CANDLE HAD BEEN HELPING LIGHT OSCAR'S STUDY EVER SINCE HE HAD JOINED THE BEASTIE FAMILY, AND HE DISLIKED MOST OF ALL SEEING HIS PAL SO FRUSTRATED AND STUCK IN TIMES SUCH AS THESE.



THE REZZO SPRITES, WHO WERE ANOTHER NEW FRIENDLY ADDITION TO THE FAMILY, HAD A HABIT OF SHOWING UP IN THE LEAST LIKELY OF PLACES, BUT ALWAYS JUST BEFORE A SOLUTION WAS TO BE FOUND.

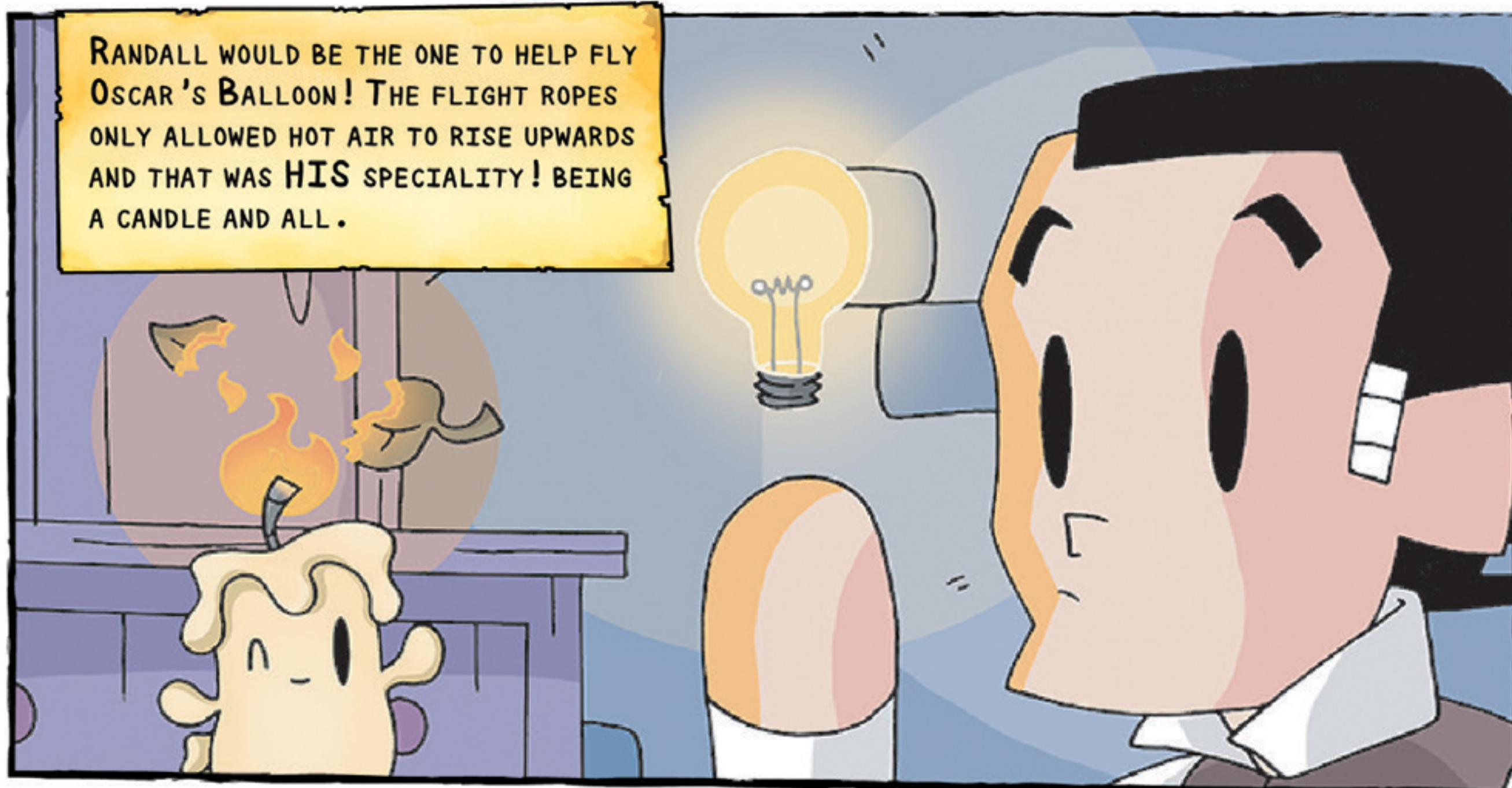


FOR THERE IT WAS, IN PLAIN SIGHT AND AS SIMPLE AS THE MOST GENIUS SOLUTIONS OFTEN ARE.





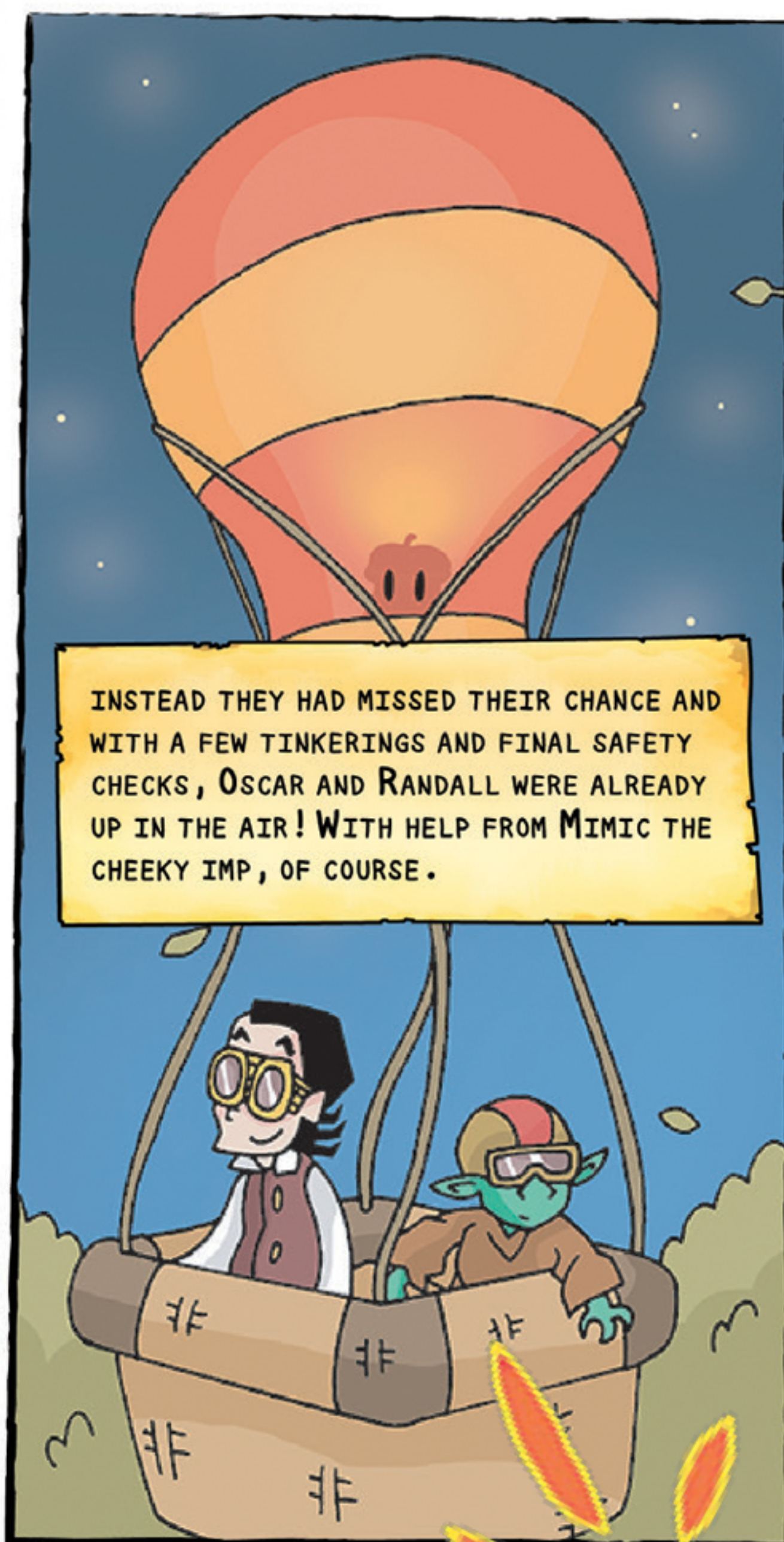
RANDALL WOULD BE THE ONE TO HELP FLY OSCAR'S BALLOON! THE FLIGHT ROPES ONLY ALLOWED HOT AIR TO RISE UPWARDS AND THAT WAS HIS SPECIALITY! BEING A CANDLE AND ALL.



AS THE PAIR RUSHED OFF, THE REZZO GANG HAD REALISED THEIR MISTAKE, THEY HAD WANTED TO USE THEIR MAGIC TO INSPIRE THE LITTLE CANDLE TO TAKE A BREAK ONCE IN A WHILE AS HE HAD BEEN BURNING BRIGHTLY FOR SO VERY LONG!

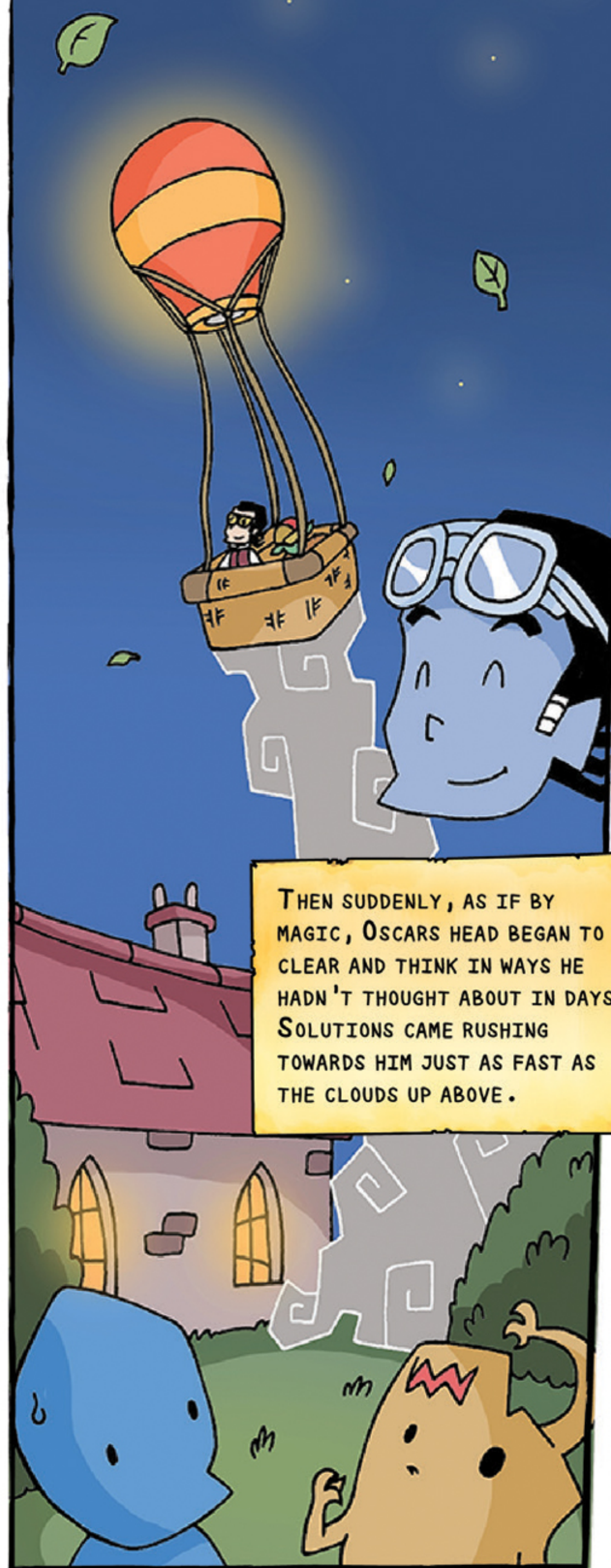


INSTEAD THEY HAD MISSED THEIR CHANCE AND WITH A FEW TINKERINGS AND FINAL SAFETY CHECKS, OSCAR AND RANDALL WERE ALREADY UP IN THE AIR! WITH HELP FROM MIMIC THE CHEEKY IMP, OF COURSE.



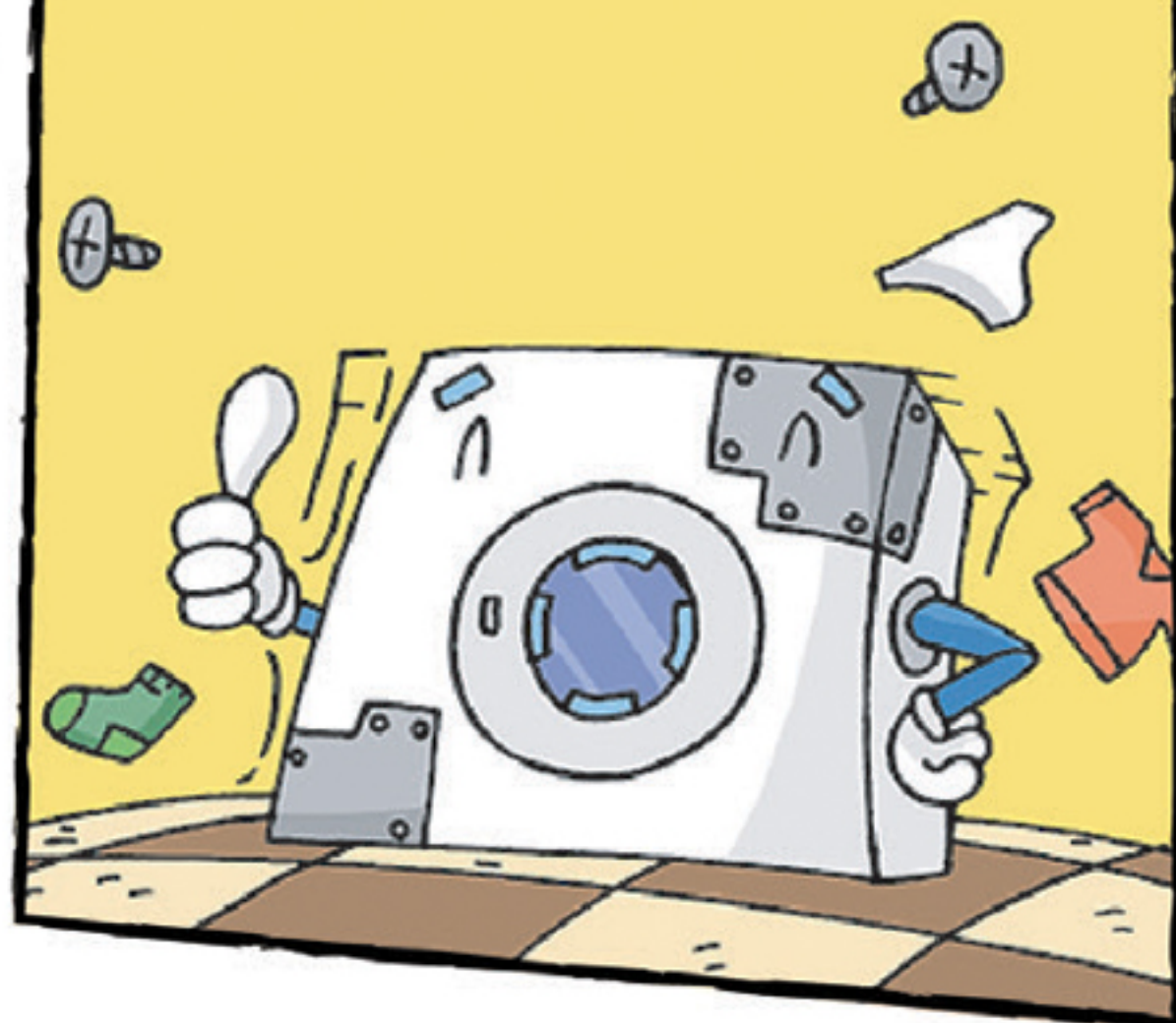


THE LITTLE CANDLE BURNED BRIGHTER THAN EVER BEFORE, AND WITH A WHOOSH AND A ZOOM! THE TRIO HAD ALREADY LEFT THE CASTLE FAR BELOW, UP UP UP THEY CLIMBED.

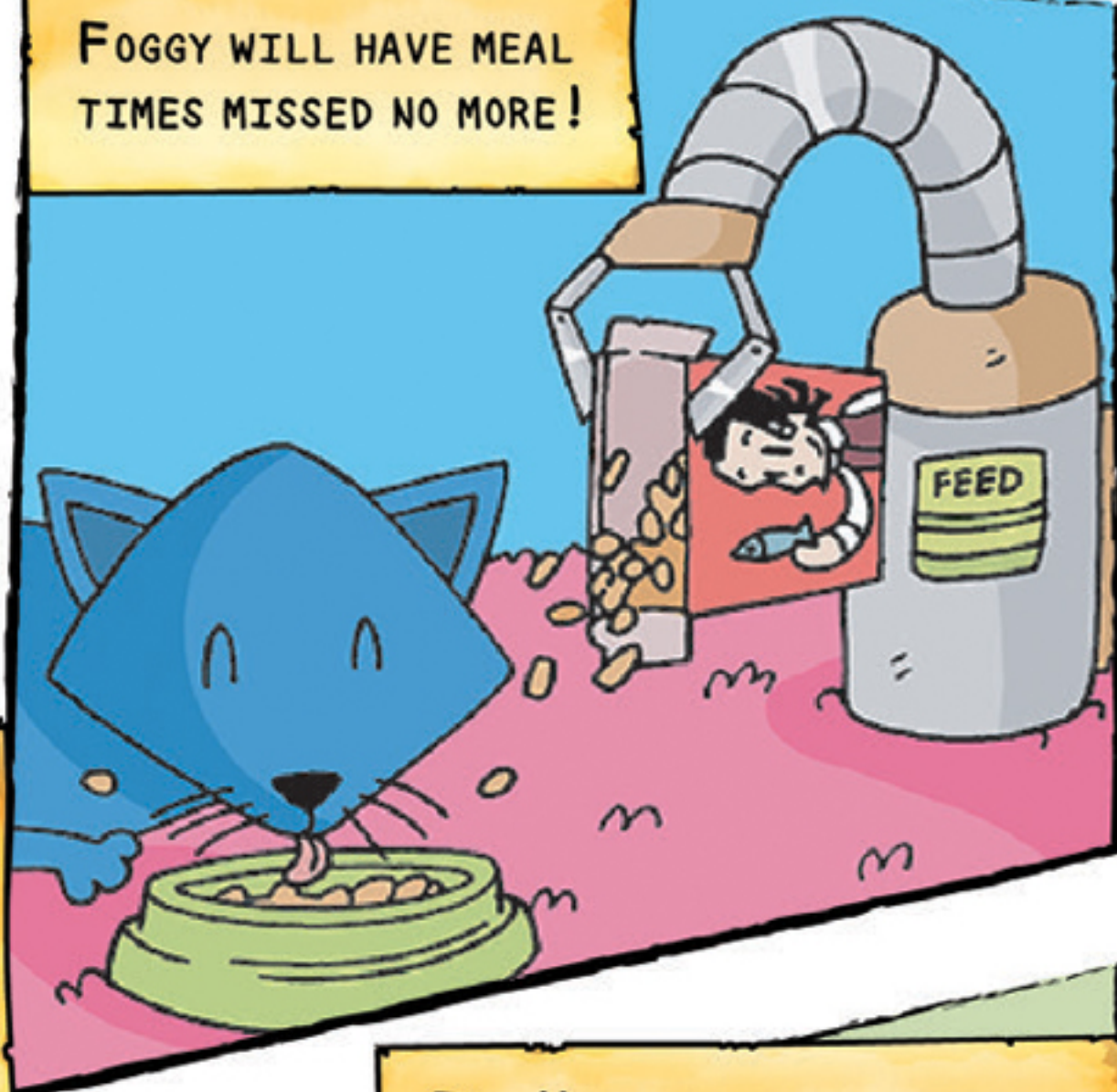


THEN SUDDENLY, AS IF BY MAGIC, OSCARS HEAD BEGAN TO CLEAR AND THINK IN WAYS HE HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT IN DAYS! SOLUTIONS CAME RUSHING TOWARDS HIM JUST AS FAST AS THE CLOUDS UP ABOVE.

THE TUMBLE DRYER WOULD FIND ITSELF TUMBLING AND DRYING IN NO TIME AT ALL.



FOGGY WILL HAVE MEAL TIMES MISSED NO MORE!



THE HEDGEMAZE WOULD NO LONGER HAVE THOSE ANNOYING LITTLE TWEAKY BITS STICKING OUT THE TOP OF IT!





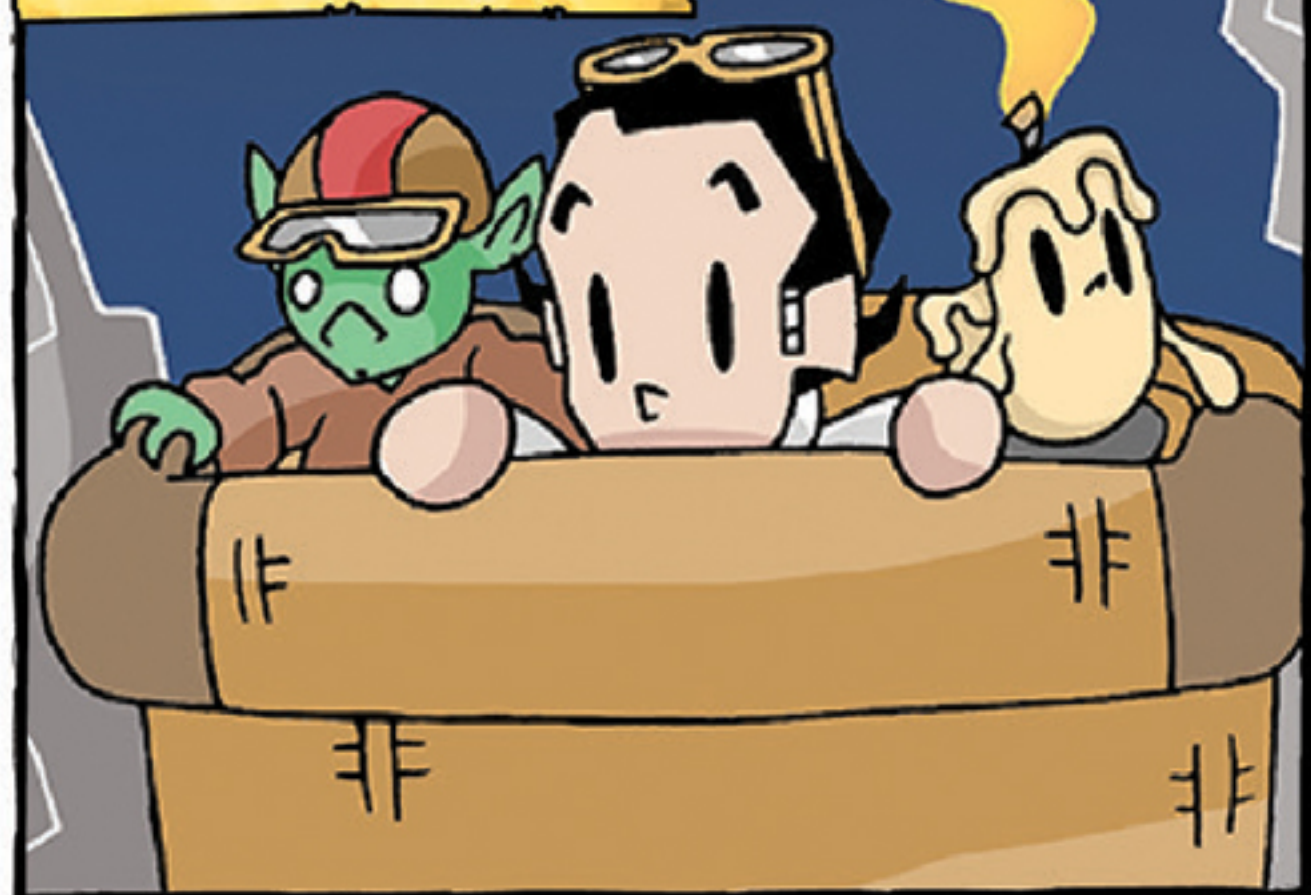
ALL MANNER OF WEEKLY WORRIES AND TROUBLESOME CONCERNS MELTED AWAY FROM OSCAR'S MIND THE FURTHER UP THEY CLIMBED. UNTIL...



WHAT WAS EVEN MORE WORRISOME WAS THE VERY BALLOON THAT HAD ALLOWED THEM TO FLY SO HIGH WAS NOW FLYING OFF WITHOUT THEM!

THEY WERE FALLING!

THE THREE OF THEM CLUNG TO THE SIDE OF THE BASKET AS THEY TUMBLED TOWARDS THE GROUND, AND JUST AS QUICKLY AS THEY HAD ARRIVED, THE IDEAS AND INVENTIONS DREAMT UP IN OSCAR'S MIND HAD FLOWN AWAY...



OH NO! THE POOR LITTLE CANDLE HAD WORKED HIMSELF TOO HARD AND NOW HE WAS BURNING HIS WICK FROM BOTH ENDS!



PROBABLY STOLEN BY SOME PASSING SEAGULL WHO NOW WITH THE BENEFIT OF A GENIUS INVENTORS THOUGHTS WAS SAT AT HOME ENJOYING BEING BRILLIANT AND RATHER PLEASED WITH ONESELF.



THE THREE OF THEM GRIPPED TIGHTER AND DESPERATELY HOPED FOR THE BEST!



THEN OUT OF NOWHERE, A DAZZLING  
DISPLAY OF FIREWORKS SURROUNDED  
THE BASKET AND SEEMED TO BE  
HELPING THEM DOWN GENTLY IT WAS  
THE REZZO SPRITES ONCE AGAIN!



LOWER THEY WENT, AND LOWER STILL UNTIL  
FINALLY THEY WERE ALL SAFELY NESTLED  
IN THE SOFT GRASS OF THE CASTLE GARDENS.



THE LITTLE SPRITES  
TOLD RANDALL HE HAD  
TAKEN ON TOO MUCH  
WORK BY HIMSELF AND  
EVERYONE KNOWS IN  
ORDER TO PROPERLY  
HELP OTHERS YOU MUST  
FIRST HELP YOURSELF.



OSCAR THEN REMEMBERED THE ONE THING  
HE HAD KEPT FORGETTING TO DO, THE  
REASON HE HAD WANTED HIS BALLOON  
TO WORK IN THE FIRST PLACE. THEY HAD  
NEEDED A CELEBRATORY DISPLAY THIS  
NEW YEARS EVE, AND THEY HAD TAKEN  
CARE OF IT TOGETHER SPECTACULARLY.

