

[The Fabric of Spacetime]

(MILKY WAY exhaustively drifts in.)

MILKY WAY

My tummy hurts... Need Crunch Time with family. Milky Way for...

(The SOLAR SYSTEM lives in MILKY WAY's head.)

EARTH

Forgotten?

MILKY WAY

Imaginary friends?

ERIS

No, we're your planetary friends.

EARTH

I'm not.

PLANETs not EARTH

No one is asking you, Earth.

ERIS

Don't give up. You're not the only one forgotten. Everyone knows Pluto. But I'm cooler, literally. I'm Eris and I should be the heiress/heir-no-less of the dwarf planets. You may be barred, but barred spiral Galaxies are larger than many.

JUPITER

You most certainly are a massive spiral Galaxy.



SATURN

Says the gas giant with dozens of Jovian moons.

JUPITER

Go play with your ring.

SATURN

Jupiter is just jealous of mine. Got a ring to spare, Uranus?

URANUS

Two. In fact.

JUPITER

SATURN

You are a two.

(Laughing.)

SUN

Planets. What is with the radio outbursts?

URANUS

Sun. My gas giant siblings are making me the butt of the joke!

MILKY WAY

You have a son?

URANUS

No... Sun is our nomy/mother/father. We are basically sons of Sun.

MILKY WAY

Sons can have sons...?

EARTH

Yes, child. It's the natural order of things. When you get older, you'll have clusters of stars of your own. You should know better. What are you? Twelve eternities old?

SUN

Earth, you know we don't discuss galactic formation in our Solar System household. It is theoretical heresy.

ERIS

Earth and you have a lot in common. You are rather dense, if not diffused with clouds. But you're not in the inner circle like Earth is. Trust me as I make my way around the Kuiper Belt. I hate my elliptical orbit. One decade, you're with your family. The next centuries, you're a rogue planet.

MILKY WAY

Patience. Only a millennium.

EARTH

Oh yeah, you're a Galaxy. The frame of time is dilated for you. Let this rocky planet convert it... The last time you were in your family's orbit was... 13.81 billion years ago. As a Galaxy, do you hate being an oval?

SUN

Earth, I didn't raise you to be mean to other shapes.

EARTH

Sun. Just like you as a star, I'm very proud to be a sphere. Milky Way... Ew, waves... Pff, wrinkles.

(MILKY WAY feels their body and face.)



ERIS

Don't take any more of Earth's bullying. They may be the perfect person that you always want to be. But you are already a person, Milky Way. What with your waves. And wrinkles, imperfect as they are. Just like Oort Cloud, who I want you to meet.

OORT CLOUD

I'm out of this Solar System and yet I have a stronghold on it, just like you. I have an influence that is about a hundred thousand astronomical units wide, but you, you are 6.685 billion. I've heard a lot about you, Milky Way. Personally, I know enough about comets' tails. Do you have a tidal tale to share with us, Milky Way? Gather around, Solar System!

(The SOLAR SYSTEM pops out as puppets.)

EARTH

Gravity well... Theorize somethin'!

*(MILKY WAY gracelessly and half-melodically bellows with cracks.
They suddenly hiccup.)*

EARTH

Milky Way warped themselves!

(The SOLAR SYSTEM bursts into laughter.)

(MILKY WAY bursts into tears.)

MILKY WAY

I hate myself...

OORT CLOUD

All the use crying, Milky Way. Let it out. Melk of celestial kindness. There is a pattern here. You show a huge quality.

(MILKY WAY examines their physical self.)

OORT CLOUD (cont.)

Not your mass. Oh, the Ellipses... You are a special Galaxy. You hold something dear that no one else has. Well, *your siblings probably do, but they won't show it.*

MILKY WAY

Tell me.

OORT CLOUD

You hold personhood. Persons with warping voices, growing waves of hairs, and whose skin are covered in wrinkles. There is a person in you, Milky Way.

EARTH

There are people in me.

PLANETs not EARTH

Cut your hubris, Earth!

OORT CLOUD

We like all things, *unearthly*, about you. You carry our weight, our history, our culture, our pride, our secrets, our voices.

MILKY WAY

Sing it.

OORT CLOUD

You must first, own it.

(MILKY WAY nears the SOLAR SYSTEM puppets.)

13. WARP, WAVES, AND WRINKLES

SOLAR SYSTEM

MILKY WAY'S
ON THEIR OWN.
ALL ALONE.
KNOW THAT FOR
US AT HOME.
YOU'RE THE ONLY WAY FORWARD,
THROUGH WARP, WAVES, AND WRINKLES.

THROUGH IT ALL.
THICK AND THIN.
THROUGH THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.

OORT CLOUD

YOUR PLANETARY FRIENDS FEEL LIKE THEY'RE IN YOUR HEAD.

SOLAR SYSTEM

IMAGINARY!

OORT CLOUD

BUT REALLY...

ERIS

THE SOLAR SYSTEM IS LOCATED ON YOUR ARM.

SOLAR SYSTEM

ONE OF SEVERAL...

(Extra arms extend out behind MILKY WAY. They are unaware of these arms.)



ERIS

ARMS, IN FACT.

URANUS

Look in a mirror!

MILKY WAY

What's mirror?

URANUS

It's the thing to check what you look like.

MILKY WAY

I never know what I look like...

(The extra arms shake MILKY WAY's hands.)

PLANETs not EARTH

Neither do we. But take it from us, we know you're beautiful on the inside!

(The SOLAR SYSTEM puppets shake each hand.)

SOLAR SYSTEM

SCUTUM-CRUX ARM.

PERSEUS ARM.

NORMA, CYGNUS.

SAGITTARIUS,

ARM AND HEART.

WE'RE HOME ON THE ORION.

ARM SO SMALL AND SO MINOR.

[A tiny arm pops out.]



OORT CLOUD

You are Magellanic.

They're not planets and you don't need to imagine. We hid a present in your waves.

(MILKY WAY digs into their dress. They pull out two magnolia flowers.)

OORT CLOUD

Like you, they have existed from the beginning of time. They signify perseverance and longevity—

(MILKY WAY devours the flowers.)

OORT CLOUD

Don't eat your natural satellites!

MILKY WAY

(Mouthful of Magellanic Clouds.)

I gravitate my feelings...

OORT CLOUD

You ellipsoid... Go ahead and have a taste of the Local Group while you're at it. Cook Sagittarius at 3 megaparsecs.

MILKY WAY

Parsecs no work like that. Parsecs distance, not time.

OORT CLOUD

I'm parsecs away from losing it.

JUPITER

It's the nature of Galaxies... They'll eat everything.

SATURN

Like us gas giants. We're persons too after all!

ERIS

Like you said, Oort Cloud: Milky Way has always been a person. In fact, they have reached a new stage in personhood.

(MILKY WAY sings with cracks and flaws.)

MILKY WAY

I NOW HAVE
WARP, WAVES, AND WRINKLES.
I LIVE WITH IT.

WARP, WAVES, AND WRINKLES.

(Deepening voice.)

I LOVE MYSELF.

(The extra arms⁶ may hug MILKY WAY.)

(Many SOLAR SYSTEMs spiral in. These dancers resemble known and unknown stars and planets, while EARTH drags their feet. They orbit MILKY WAY like the spiral arms around a supermassive black hole of a Galaxy. One dancer places a halo on MILKY WAY's head.)

SOLAR SYSTEMs

HALO FRIEND
AND OUR HOME.
PROTECTOR
AND OUR RIDE.
HITCHHIKER
AND THE ONLY WAY OUT OF OUR...

WARP, WAVES, AND WRINKLES!
WE LOVE IT ALL!

⁶ Avalokiteshvara, the multi-armed Buddhist deity who embodies compassion. Religious imageries make this song.



SUN

Any more radio outbursts and I'll supernova your asteroids!

*(MILKY WAY and the SOLAR SYSTEMs lower a bit in distress.
They confidently resume.)*

MILKY WAY

SOLAR SYSTEMs

OUR WARP, WAVES, AND WRINKLES!

[End of "Warp, Waves, and Wrinkles".]

*[The stage goes red as though the Sun has become a red giant and
is swallowing the Solar System in their wake.]*

*(The SOLAR SYSTEMs run away and steal MILKY WAY's halo.
EARTH screams in the searing heat. JUPITER and SATURN
maniacally laugh.)*

*(MILKY WAY suddenly feels a headache. They touch their
forehead. They take their hand off to reveal a zit on their forehead.)*

MILKY WAY

W— W— N— W_r—

OORT CLOUD

Warp, waves, and wrinkles, we got a sense for... But not red giants. Welcome to adolescence.

(MILKY WAY passes out on the ground.)

(TRIANGULUM and ANDROMEDA stroll in.)