

A Magical Journey to Centre-Stage



A thrilling story is about to begin



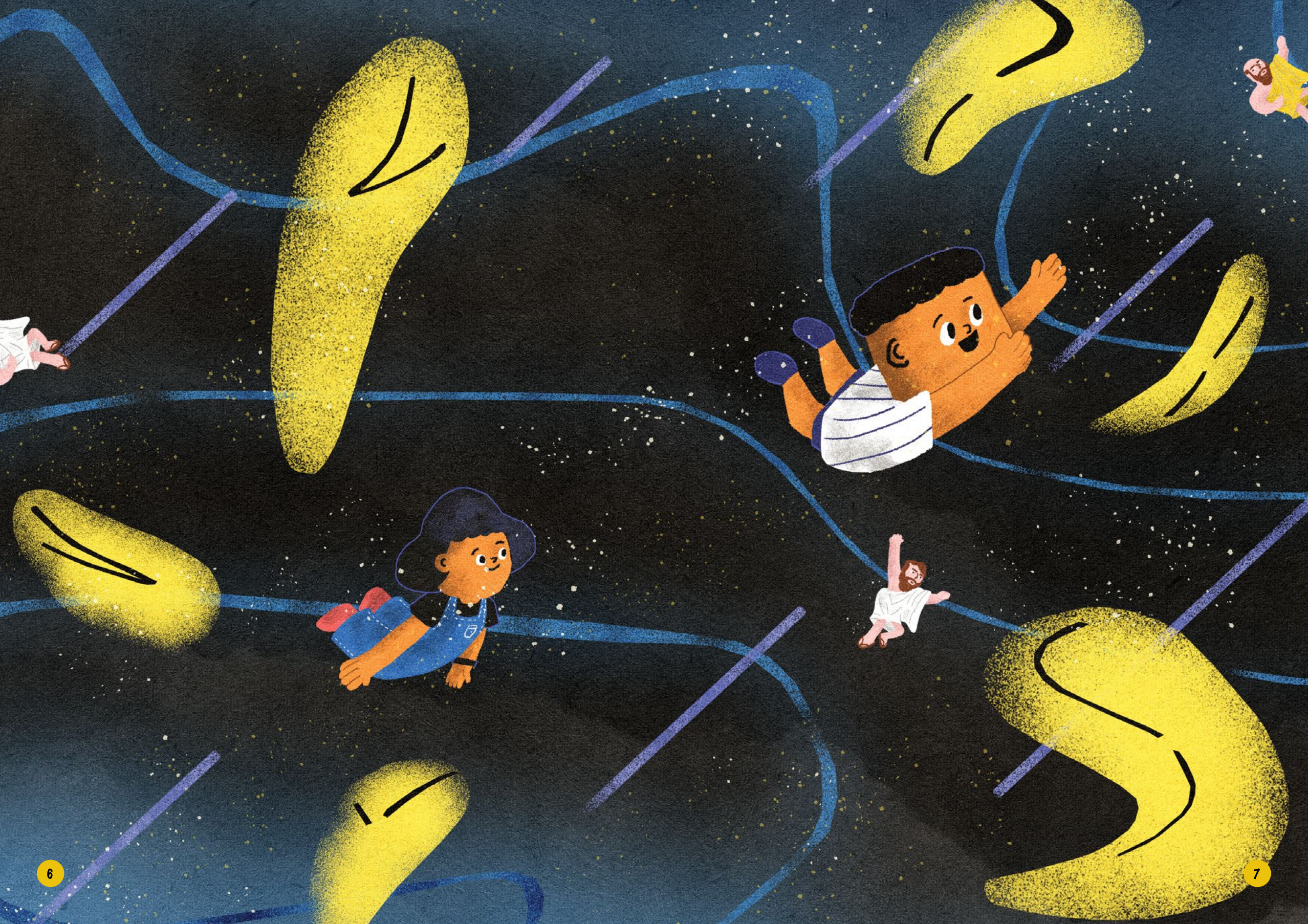
Hi, I came as fast as I could and am so excited!
Did you really say you will take me on a fantastic
adventure through time?

Yes, you're just in time! I finished creating a magical
watch that will take us back to the thrilling origins
of theatre!



We can travel back in time to discover where it all started!

Cool! We can visit the first theatres built hundreds or even thousands of years ago, and experience the excitement of ancient days! Oh yeah!!



Greek Amphitheatre

6th Century BCE*

Welcome to ancient Greece, also known as the cradle of theatre! Whether you are in the countryside or in a big city, whether it is a tragedy** or a comedy***, from grownups to the little ones, everyone loves it!

What did they love so much about plays?

In fact, they just really enjoyed a good story on stage.

If you could visit a Greek amphitheatre, you would surprisingly feel as if you were amidst a concert crowd! Sitting on stone or wooden stands, sometimes built on hillsides, thousands of people crammed the place. In an era where there were no microphones, speakers or screens, the special shape of the theatre made sure one could clearly hear the actors on stage. To be distinguished by the audience sitting far away, the singers had to wear big masks and oversized flashy costumes.

While watching the performance, the crowd would usually behave, although sometimes they would throw fruits on stage to show their dislike. In that case, the guards might use a stick to stop the audience throwing too many fruits; on the other hand, if the performance was very good, they were allowed to shout very loud, and show their enthusiasm. Bravo! Bravo!



* BCE stands for dates from Before the Common Era, which begins with the year when Jesus is thought to have been born.

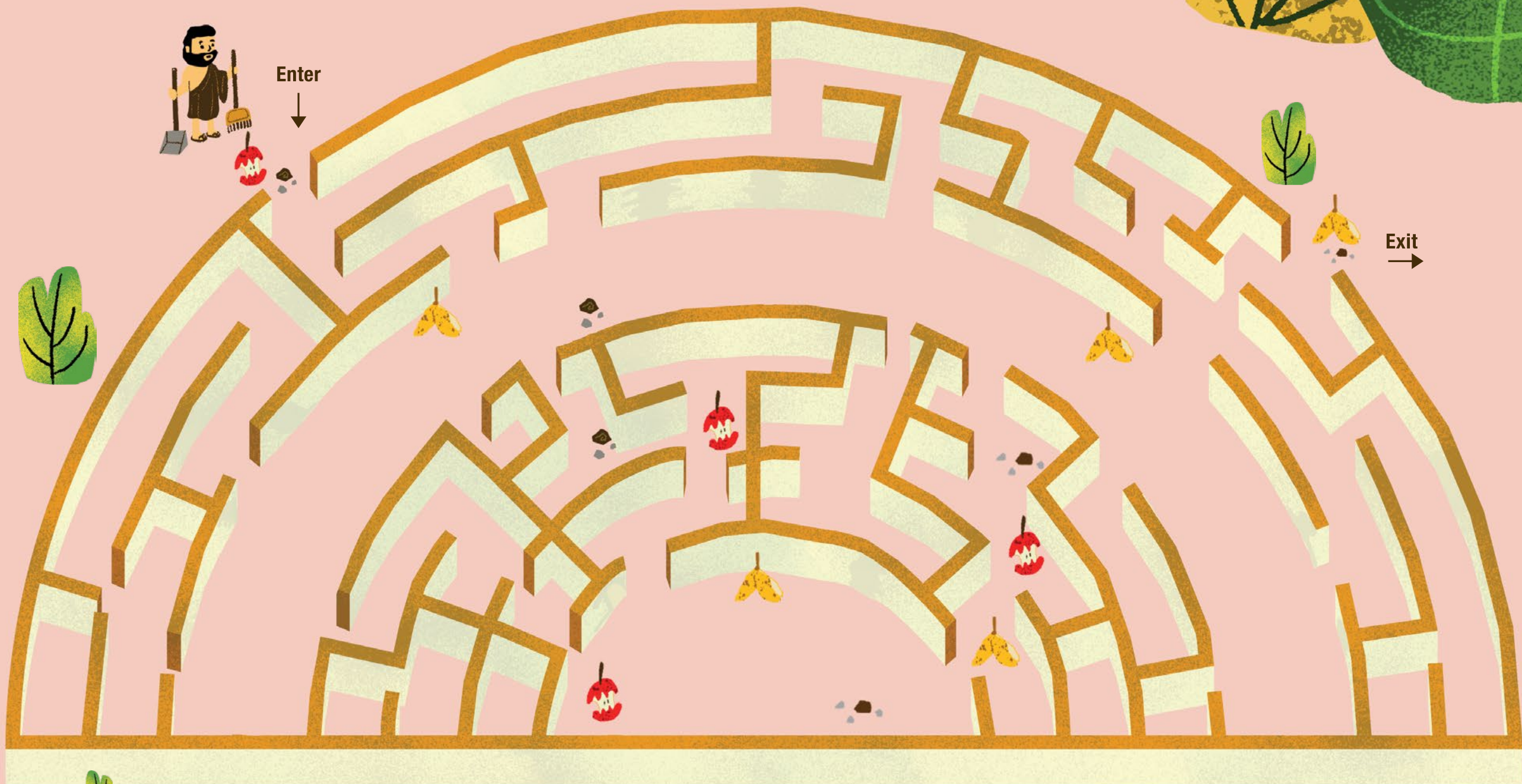
** A tragedy is a kind of story that deals with unhappy endings and sad events that sometimes even make people cry.

*** A comedy is also a story, a funny one, told in a manner that make people laugh.

Did you know that, back then, the female characters were all played by male actors?

Semicircle Amphitheatre

The performance is over, there's garbage thrown by the audience everywhere.
Please help to clean, and pick up the trash
between the entrance and the exit.







Wait, I recognize this place. Are we in London?

That's right, now it's time to discover the house of Shakespeare, the most well-known playwright in the whole wide world, who was also an actor and a poet! Both rich and poor were welcome to watch the plays, however the rich used to sit in the boxes, while everybody else stood at the ground floor, right in front of the stage, eating peanuts while watching the show. A bit like popcorn at the movies nowadays!

Oh look! A pickpocket at the box!

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

1599

Have you noticed some similarities between this theatre and an ancient Greek amphitheatre? They are both without a roof!! The three-story open-air venue could only host performances during the day, as the electric light had not been invented yet.

If you happened to be a young boy, the most likely role for you was that of a female, because here, like in ancient Greece, only men were allowed to perform.

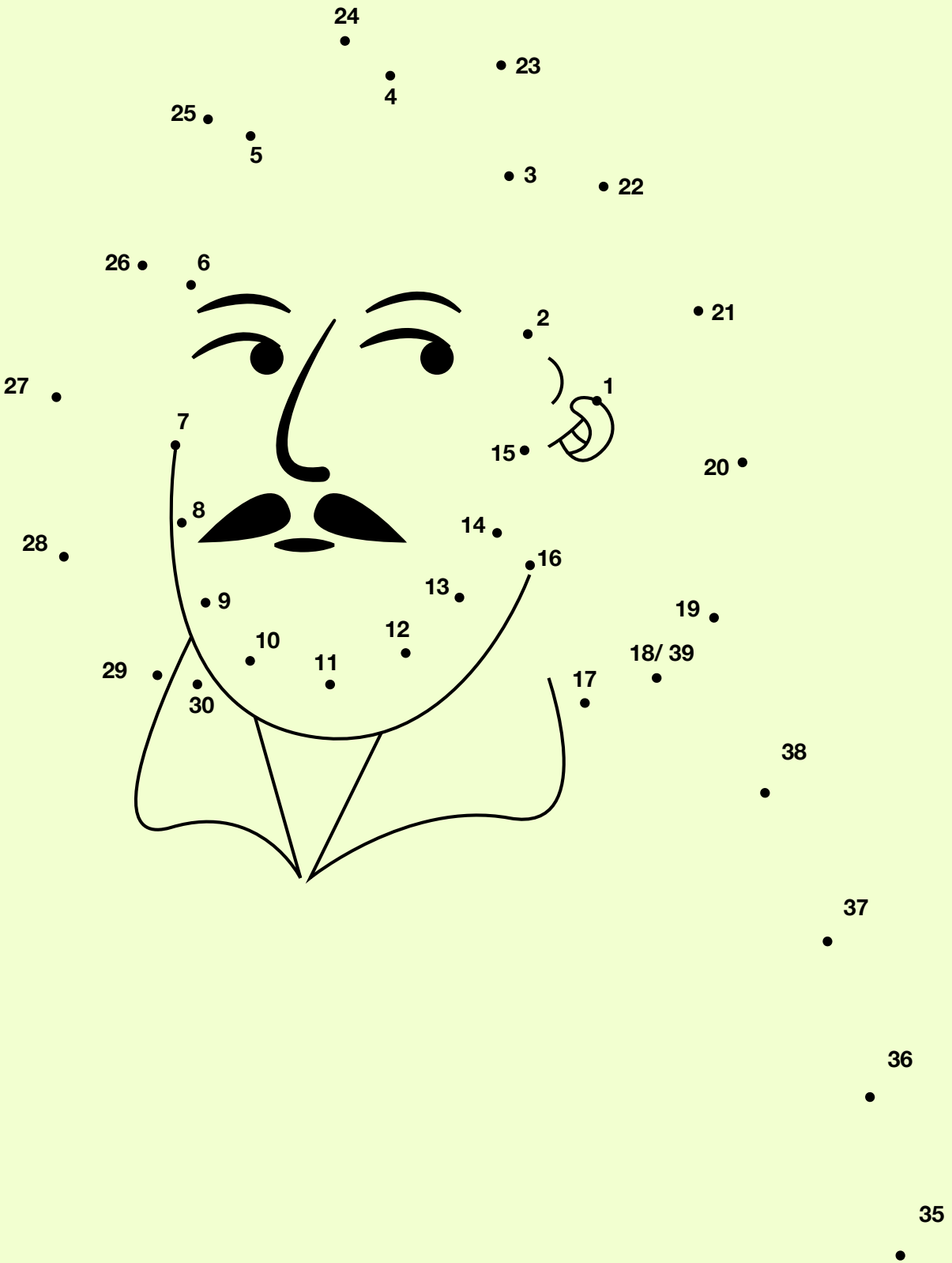
Becoming an actor wasn't that easy. You would begin by doing all sorts of tasks, from cleaning to moving props around, before playing even the shortest roles.



Built more than 400 years ago, this wooden theatre was destroyed by a fire long ago. It was not until 1997 that it was reconstructed exactly like the old one, opening its doors to everyone near the original site. If you travel to London you can visit it!! Yes, it's there, right beside the River Thames!

Connect The Numbers

From the lowest to the highest and you will find the Bard*
(Shakespeare's nickname back then)



*Bard means a poet, traditionally one reciting epic poems.



Bamboo Theatre

206 BCE

You probably know that pandas eat bamboo sprouts. In fact, this giant woody grass is abundant in China where they started using it to even build houses. Bamboo theatres date from thousands of years ago, back in the Han Dynasty, although nowadays they are rare sights in Hong Kong and Macao.

In the past, when our town was still a quiet fishing village, farmers and fishermen used to pray for a better life. In those days, there wasn't much to do during free time, so neighbours and believers would set up theatres in front of the temples and stage operas to reward the gods. Those were big events and the shows could last over ten hours, leaving the brave actors with hoarse voices. Poor them!

In Macao, there are several bamboo theatres, popping up in front of the A-Ma Temple and Nezha's, beside Saint Paul's Ruins. Taipa also has one, in the Pak Tai Temple, and Coloane too, in the square right in front of the beautiful Tam Kung Temple. These temporary theatres can seat hundreds of people, while in smaller areas, such as the Horta da Mitra neighbourhood, tiny, cute street theatres are built.

Hey, hang on. Are we back in Macao? Wow, is this theatre made of bamboo? Is it safe?

Of course, bamboo is so durable and strong that it will even protect you during a typhoon! And these theatres are quite easy to set up, which makes it very convenient because they are only used twice a year, for just a few days!



Counting Knots

The theatre is built with bamboo sticks, tied to each other with many knots. Can you count how many knots are there?

A total of _____ knots

Becoming a bamboo scaffolder is not easy at all. Apprentices must learn with a master for four years, and it takes more than three months just to practice how to safely sit and hook on the scaffold.

Did you know that these temporary theatres were very important for the development of Chinese Opera? As time passed by, wealthy and powerful people, like the emperors living in the Forbidden City, brought them into their own palaces, where they built new ones, using stronger materials, transforming the bamboo theatres into permanent halls.



Answer: 37 knots

D. Pedro V. Theatre

1860

Back in the day, in the mid-19th Century, the people in charge raised money to build a theatre where everyone could watch plays, listen to music, read books and even dance together. In those days, Macao's southeast was mostly inhabited by Portuguese. With its monasteries and churches, St. Augustine's district was a popular meeting point amongst them, so it was decided that a theatre would be built right there!

Watching performances there takes you more than a hundred years back! So take your time to wear elegant clothes and walk around, chatting with your friends, before enjoying a show!

The building hosted many different art forms. But did you know that this beautiful theatre was even used as a shelter for people running from the Second World War?

Look how elegant this green and white building is!

Yes, we are dancing right in front of the D. Pedro V. Theatre, the first Western theatre in China. Did you know it is a world cultural heritage?

Colouring

D. Pedro V. Theatre is gorgeous! If you were an architect*, what colour would you put on this charming building? Give it a go!

*An architect is someone whose amazing work is to imagine and design buildings. They need to be good at math and drawing to make the right choices when deciding on sizes, shapes and materials.

Macao Cultural Centre

1999

Try not to get lost in this huge, smart building. Here we find lots of rehearsal and dressing rooms, production areas and enormous stages. The place is so big that it can take up to 300 people working at the same time, amongst performers and staff.

And moving on to modern times, this is the Macao Cultural Centre, one of the coolest buildings in town!

I know! And with so much to see, from Cantonese and Western opera to dance, the centre has also room for drama, orchestral and world music concerts. The action never stops here!

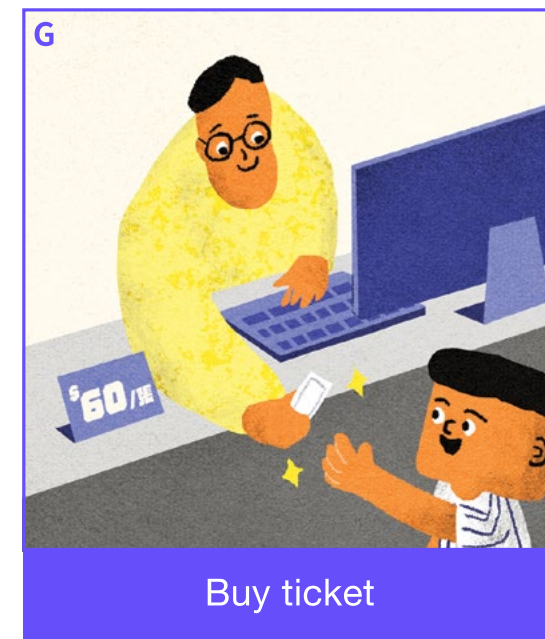
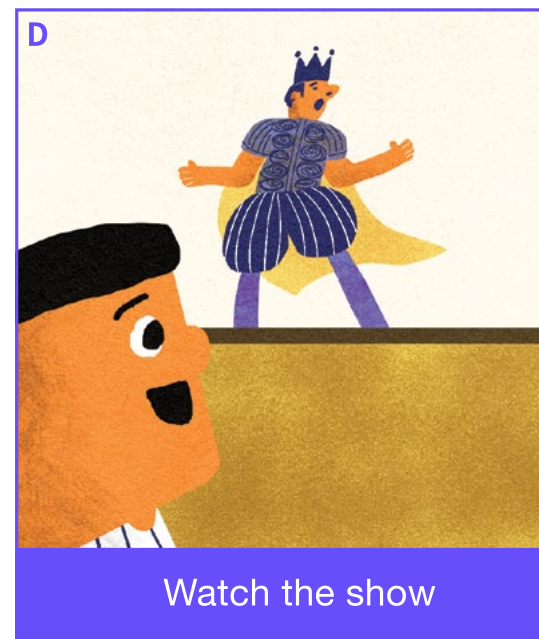
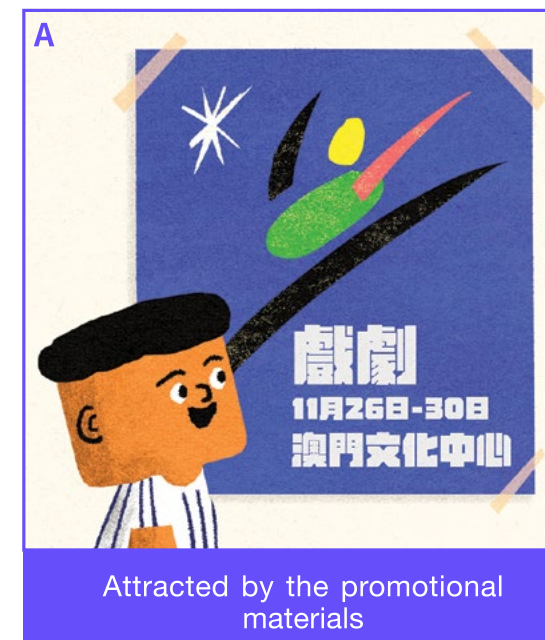
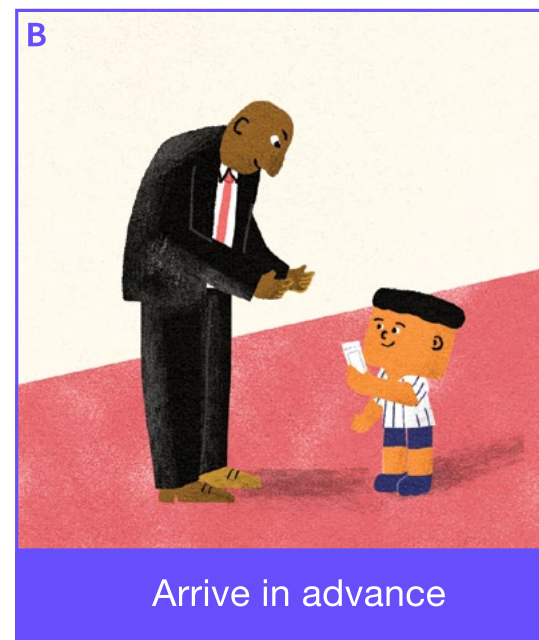
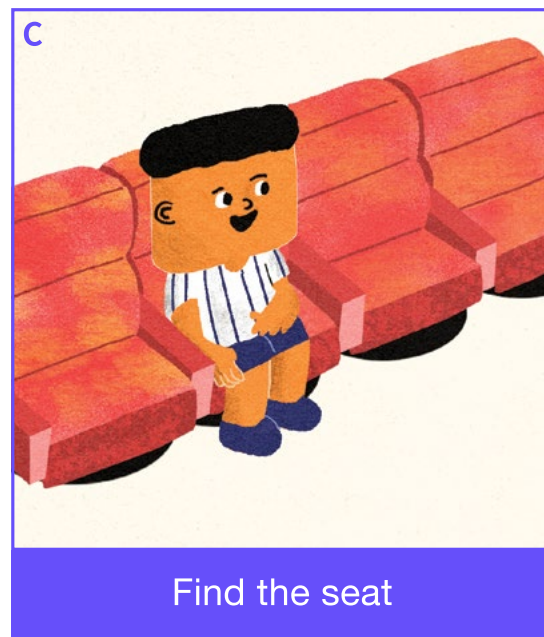
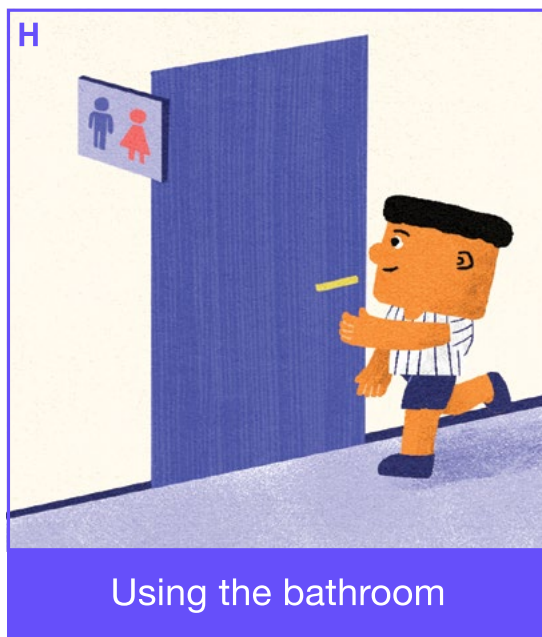
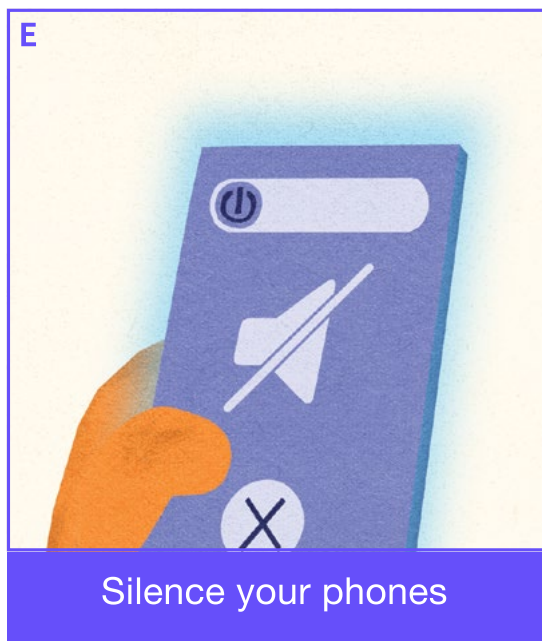
Take a stroll around the centre and walk into a battle field. In the gardens you will find horsemen shooting water at an awesome ship!

Inside the Theatre

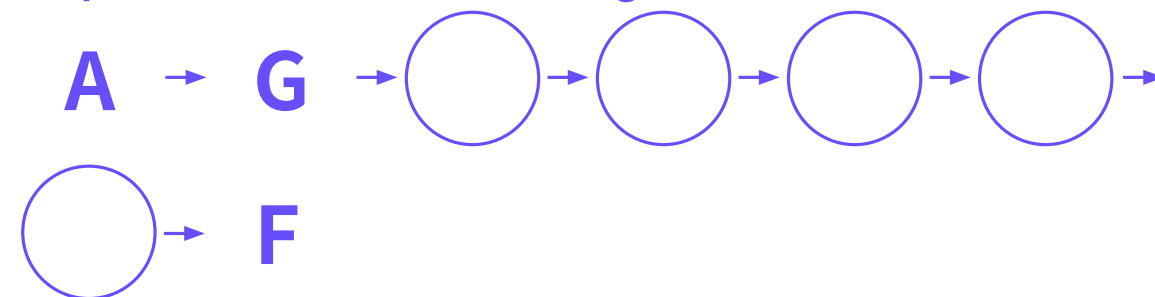
Staging a play, is no easy task. Besides the actors, there is so much going on both behind and beyond the scenes that must be very well coordinated, from lighting and sound to ticketing sales and cleaning. Like magic, when the curtains go up, the stage will be transformed into any place we want!



Now let's see if you find many other fun things happening before and after the performance



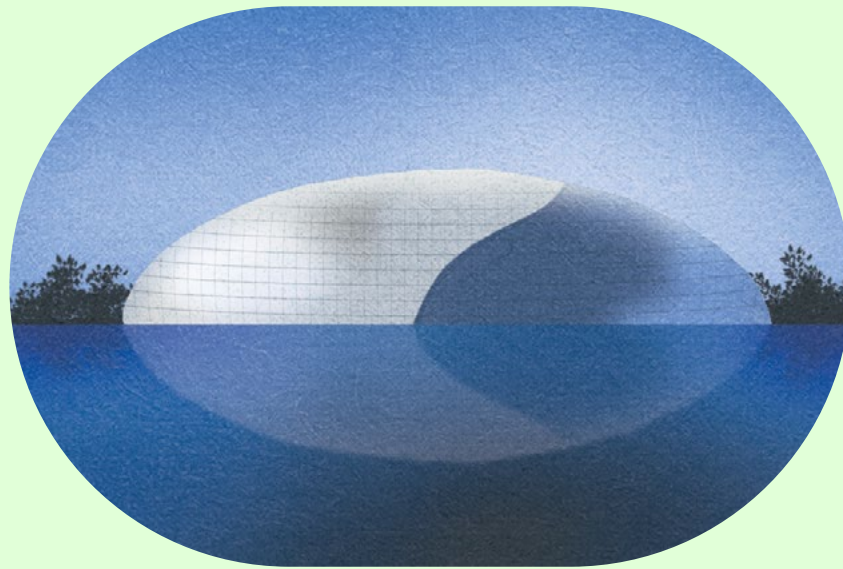
Sequence these actions in the right order.



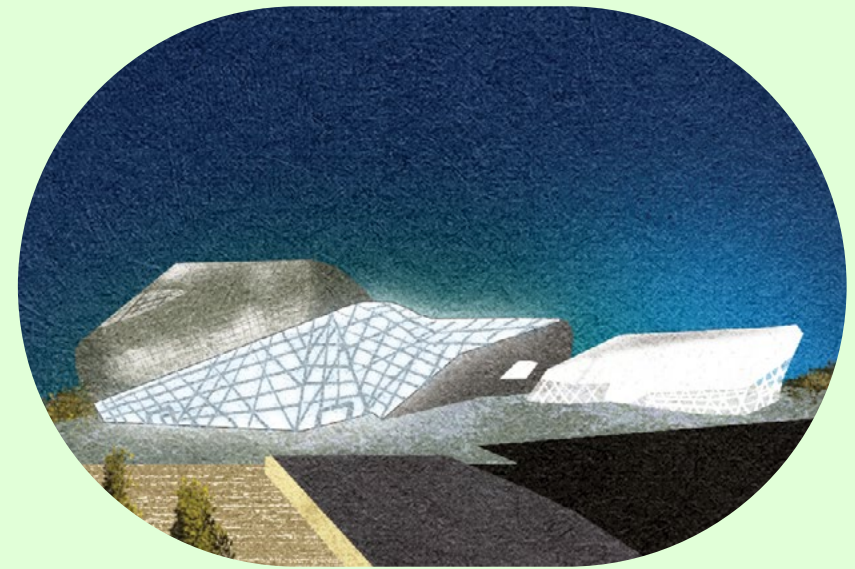
Answer: A → G → B → H → C → E → D → F

Plenty more to see

After the short journey into wonderful historical theatres around the world, we take a peek at a few other amazing buildings we can easily discover in our region.



Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts. Right next to the Forbidden City, this cool building of many rooms looks like a giant egg in the middle of a lake! So serene!



Imagined by the famous architect Zaha Hadid, Guangzhou's Opera House looks like a spaceship with a view to our Pearl River.



Right next door, in Zhuhai, our neighbours built their Opera House shaped as two beautiful, enormous shells, right at the mouth of a fishing harbour.



And this is the mysterious Taichung Theatre in Taiwan. Its architect, Toyo Ito, called it the Sound Cave, because of all its curves and cavities!

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