



What are You Looking At?



It isn't often that astronomers look into space and see another pair of eyes staring back at them, but that's what we have here. These aren't the eyes of an alien, but a pair of galaxies nicknamed 'The Eyes' because they look like a pair of white eyeballs glowing in the dark! (To see both 'eyes' you have to click on the picture.)

At first view, the galaxies don't look a lot like eyes in this photo, but that's because this picture was taken with a very powerful telescope called the Very Large Telescope. To see the eyes better, just take a few steps backwards and look at the picture again. Or, even better, look at these galaxies through a smaller telescope and it really will look like a pair of eyes staring back at you from space!

The galaxy towards the left of the image looks like it has a bruise – a black eye! The darkest part of the 'bruise' is actually dust and the blue region is young, blue stars. The other galaxy doesn't have any dust or stars – these were probably ripped away by strong forces when the two galaxies started to get dangerously close to each other.

The galaxies will get closer and closer to each other until they eventually become one galaxy. The Eyes will need a new nickname when they merge, but since this won't happen for a very long time, astronomers can take their time thinking about it!

COOL FACT



Our own galaxy, the Milky Way, will collide with a neighbouring galaxy called the Andromeda Galaxy in about 3-4 billion years.

