Knit Kit No. 1 - A Rose in the Reaches

What do you see? A flower? A rose? Each petal is full of promise - the promise of a planet perhaps.
Image: Kraus et al 2020

The Story:

Prof. Stefan Kraus
In the parable of the blind men and an elephant, a group of blind men come across an elephant and try to imagine what an elephant is by touching it. Each person feels a different part, such as its side, tusk, or tail, and all think it's a different animal. In the same way, in astronomy we often study objects in space with different types of light, and end up seeing different aspects. The images can be beautiful, like this one. We ‘see’ different parts because we are looking with different ‘eyes’.

The Science:

Astronomers often make computer models of how star systems are made. This helps us to understand what they see in space. Usually, stars are born out of swirling discs of gas and dust in space. Once the star is born, the leftover gas and dust leaves a wide ring around the young star, which can form into planets after a long time.

In 2020, for the first time, astronomers discovered three young stars orbiting each other, with three swirling discs meeting at different angles. They found them in the constellation Orion in the far reaches of our galaxy almost 900 light years away. The discs have been stirred and broken up by the gravity of the stars. It was the first time anything like this has ever been seen. The three stars
in the centre are far too small to see without zooming in, but you can see parts of the three rings around the stars if you know what to look for. We think they look like rose petals, what do you see?

This is a complex knit. You will need:

- 4 colours of wool - we used black, red, pink, and yellow.
- A pair of knitting needles

And that's it!

If you can use double-knit (DK) wool and 4mm needles, your knitting will work out around 15-18cm on each side, but use what you have or what you can get hold of.

Colours don't have to match the image, you can use whatever you or your family have lying around. In this knit, we used around 25g of black, 10g of plum, magenta and pale peach. It was knitted on 4mm knitting needles.

Skills used include: Cast On, Knit, Purl, Change Colour, and Cast Off. Go to our website www.knittheuniverse.co.uk for links to handy YouTube videos to learn these skills. Remember: After casting on, knit odd-numbered rows, changing colours as you go, and purl even numbered rows, changing colours as you go.