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# The African genie

## Pre-reading questions

1. What is a genie? Have you read other stories about genies?
2. Look at the pictures. What do you think this story is about?
3. Would you want to meet a genie? Why or why not?

Long ago, in a township called Mabuya, there lived a young boy named Sasa. Sasa lived with his mother, father and his younger sister.

Sasa was a smart little boy who had big dreams. Sasa's mother and father worked hard. At lunchtime, his mother sold food at the school. His father did garden work in the suburbs. Sasa and his sister, Suzie, had to walk many kilometres to school every day. Sasa was a very kind boy.



He always looked after his little sister. One afternoon, it was raining heavily. Sasa decided that they should take a shorter way home.

While they were walking, Sasa saw a beautiful bottle lying on the ground. He picked it up and rubbed off the dirt. Suddenly, he heard funny sounds coming from inside the bottle. The noise became louder and louder.

Sasa and Suzie heard a voice, “Hey, let me out of here!”

“Just throw it away, Sasa!” Suzie cried.

“No, Suzie. I don’t think it will harm us,” replied Sasa.



Who or what do you think is inside the bottle?

“We don’t know if we should open the bottle and let you out. What are you?” asked Sasa.

“I am an African genie. If you let me out of here, I can grant you three wishes.”

Sasa replied, “Are you sure?”

“Yes! Just tell me what you want.”

Sasa started stuttering, “I ... I ... I ... want to help my family.”

The African genie replied, “Okay. I can help you with that.”



Sasa opened the lid and out came the genie.

“So, will you grant me my wish?” asked Sasa.

“Of course. I will give you my magic wand this evening,” said the genie.

The next minute, he was back in his bottle, fast asleep.



What do you think Sasa will wish for?

Sasa and Suzie arrived home.

“Let’s take off your wet uniforms and you can do your homework,” said Mom.

After supper, Suzie fell asleep at once, but Sasa struggled to fall asleep.

He still hoped the genie would come to give him a magic wand.

Early in the morning, Sasa woke to see the genie coming out of the bottle.

He held a magic wand.



What do you think will happen next?

He handed it to Sasa and said, “Your kindness has been rewarded. Use this wand wisely. You can only make three wishes with it.”

Sasa nodded his thanks with a big smile on his face.



Sasa flicked the magic wand. “My first wish,” Sasa began, “is for my family to have enough food.” The genie waved his hand and there was food.

“For my second wish, I want our land to be rich. I want there to be enough crops for everyone.”

Once again, the genie waved his hand. Everyone’s land was filled with green grass, maize, fruits and vegetables.

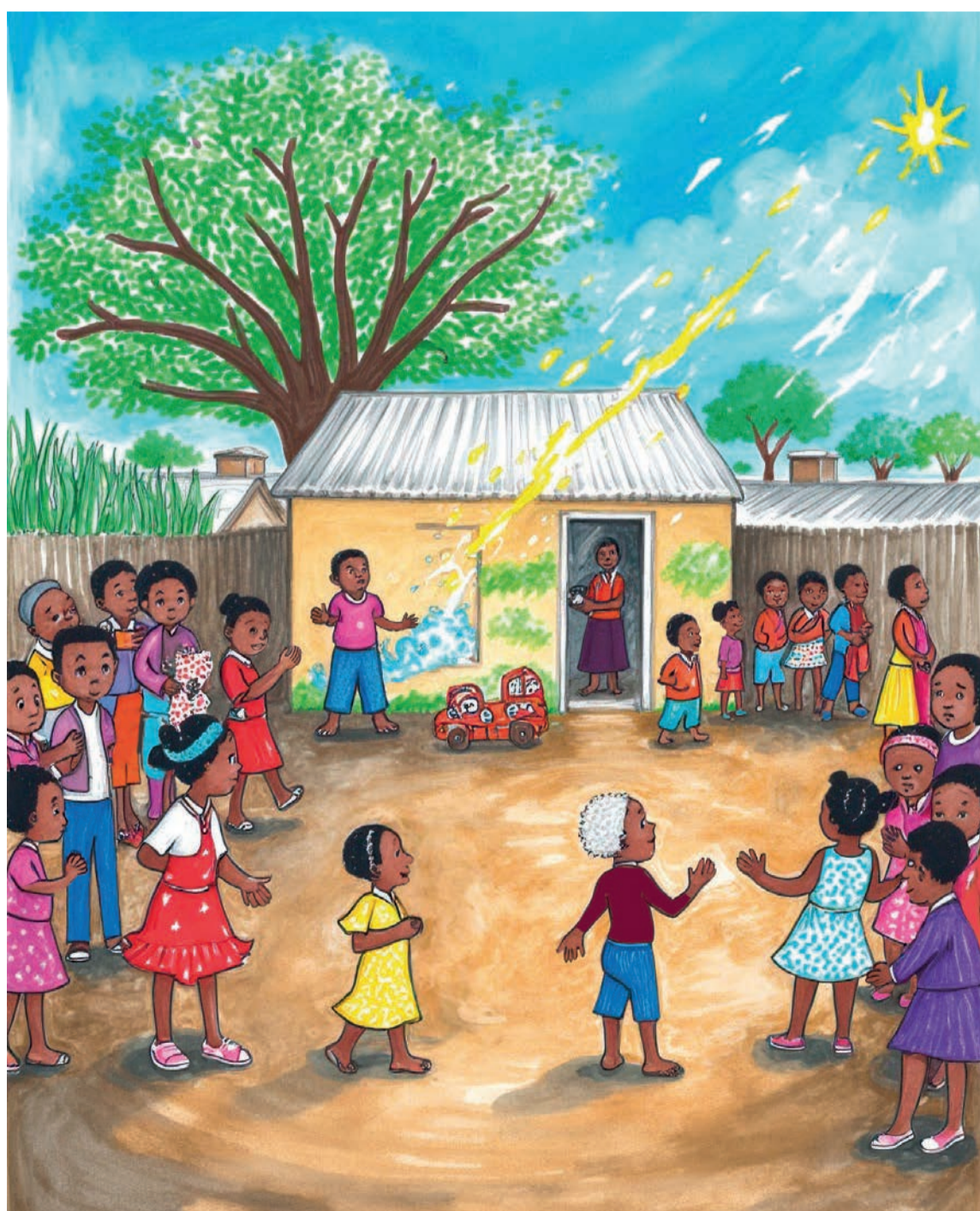
“For my third wish,” said Sasa,  
“I want everyone in Mabuya Township  
to have houses.”

With a final wave of the genie’s hand,  
a warm golden light spread across all  
the shacks.

The genie was moved by Sasa’s kindness.  
“Sasa,” he said, “everything that humans  
do out of kindness is a form of magic.”

As the light touched each shack, they  
began to transform. They were replaced by

sturdy bricks  
and strong  
foundations.



I wish for food  
in every hand,  
For crops to fill  
our land,  
A safe home for  
us to stay,  
A better place  
for all today!

The new houses were warm and safe from the rain. Inside, the living rooms were cosy. Other buildings popped up. A beautiful new school was built nearby.

The school had new classrooms and desks. There were new chairs for every child. It had a beautiful library with lots of books.

It had changed their township in so many ways.



Everyone was talking about Sasa's kindness. The neighbours were so happy. Children ran outside. They laughed and played in the safe, open spaces. Elderly people sat on their stoeps. It was a happy community.

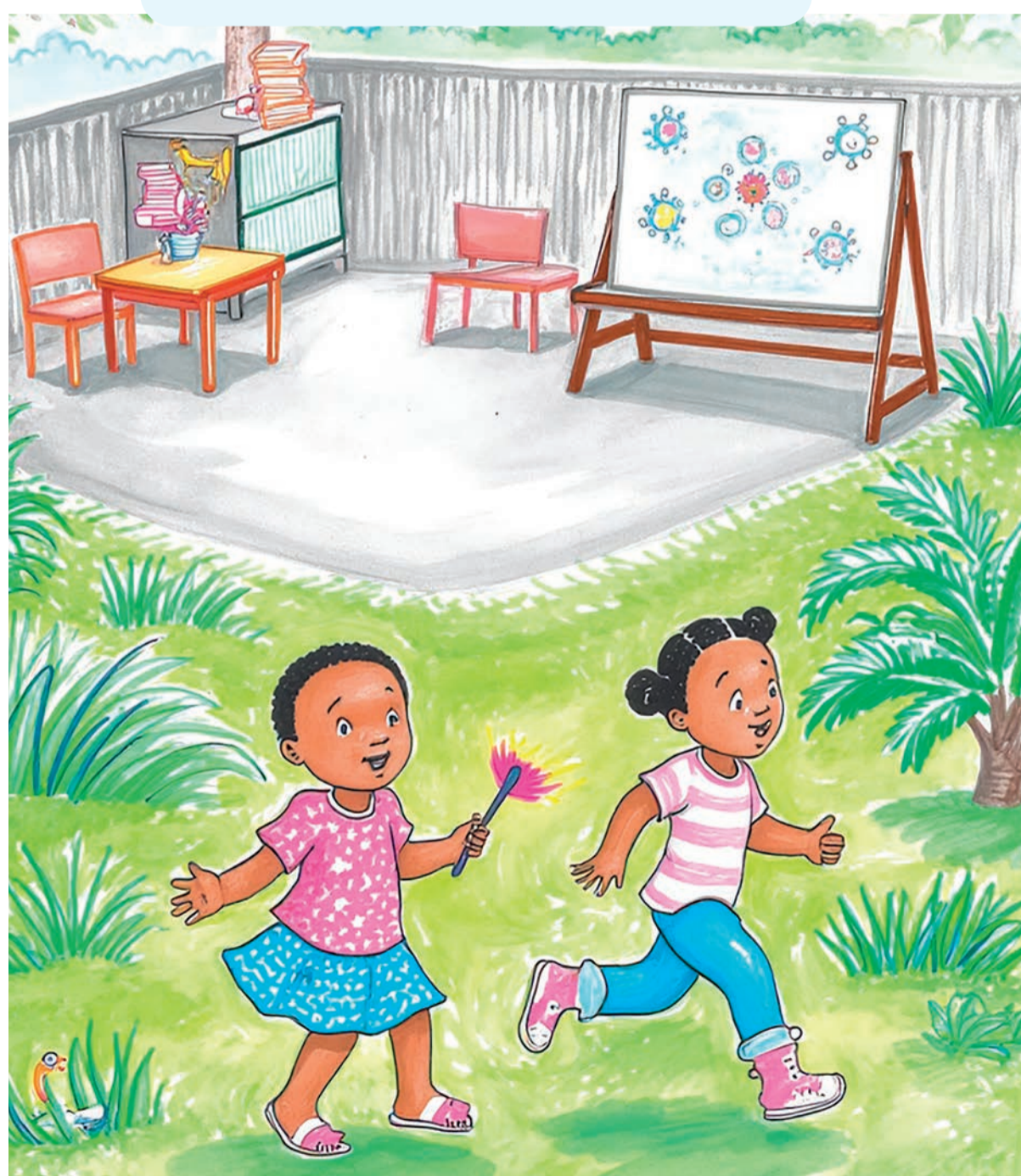
Sasa watched all the changes in Mabuya Township.

The genie was happy. He turned to Sasa and said, “You have shown great kindness, Sasa. Your wishes have provided homes and brought new life and hope to your community. Mabuya Township will be a wonderful place to live now. This is all because of your selfless wishes. You are a superhero for your community, Sasa.”

The genie took the magic wand back from Sasa. He disappeared. Sasa was left with a happy heart. He knew his kindness had changed people’s lives.



Do you think Sasa was selfless? Why or why not?



Sasa's community decided to ask the community newspaper to write an article about Sasa.

They wanted to share pictures of him and their new town.



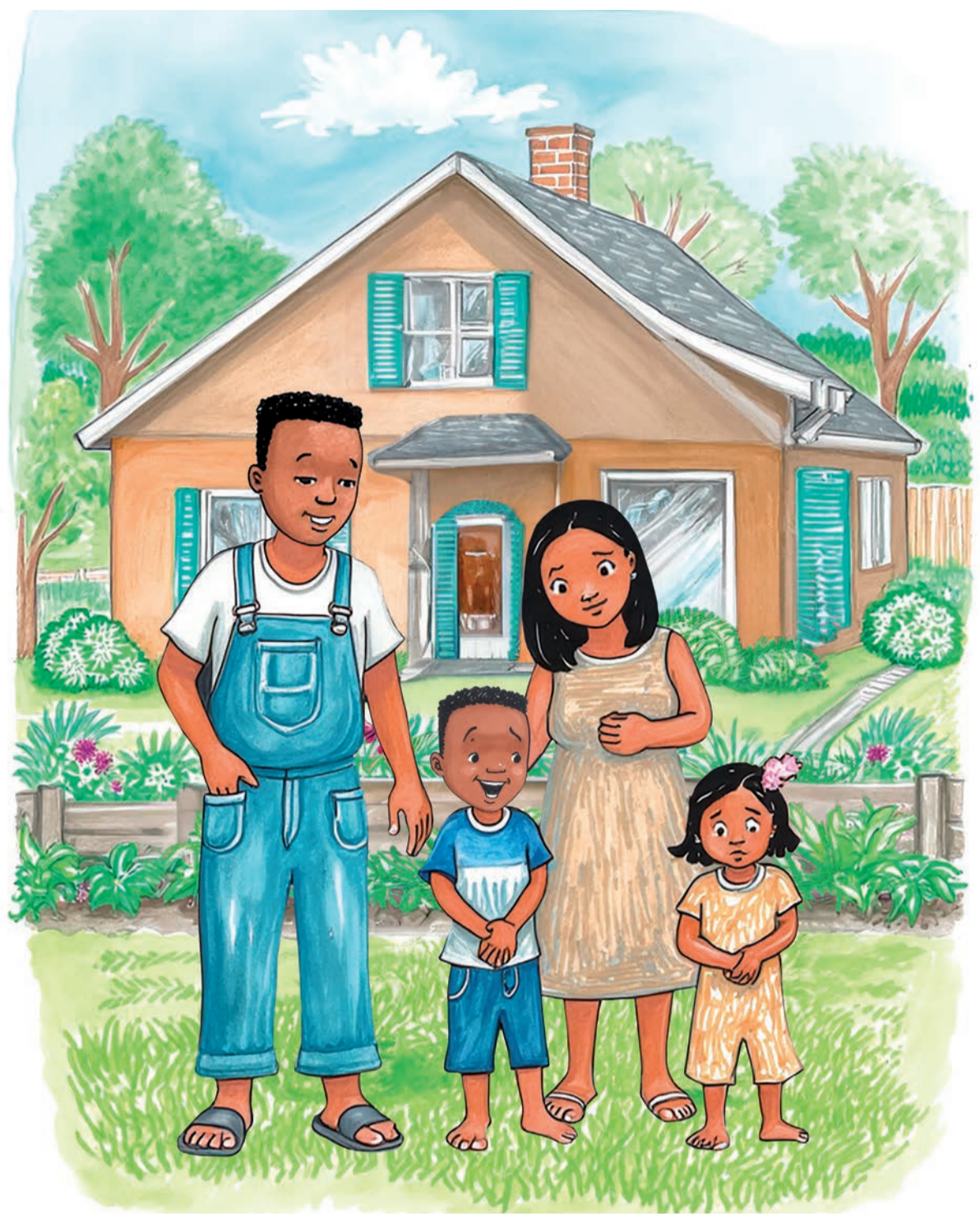
They went to speak to a journalist about all of Sasa's good deeds.

The journalist went to Sasa's home.

She took pictures of him and asked him questions. She walked around the beautiful new Mabuya Township.

From that day on, Sasa's family had enough food, a lovely house, and a happy life. The people of Mabuya Township lived happily ever after.

It was Sasa's kindness that brought everyone such happiness. He would never forget the genie who had helped him share his love for his community.



### Post-reading questions

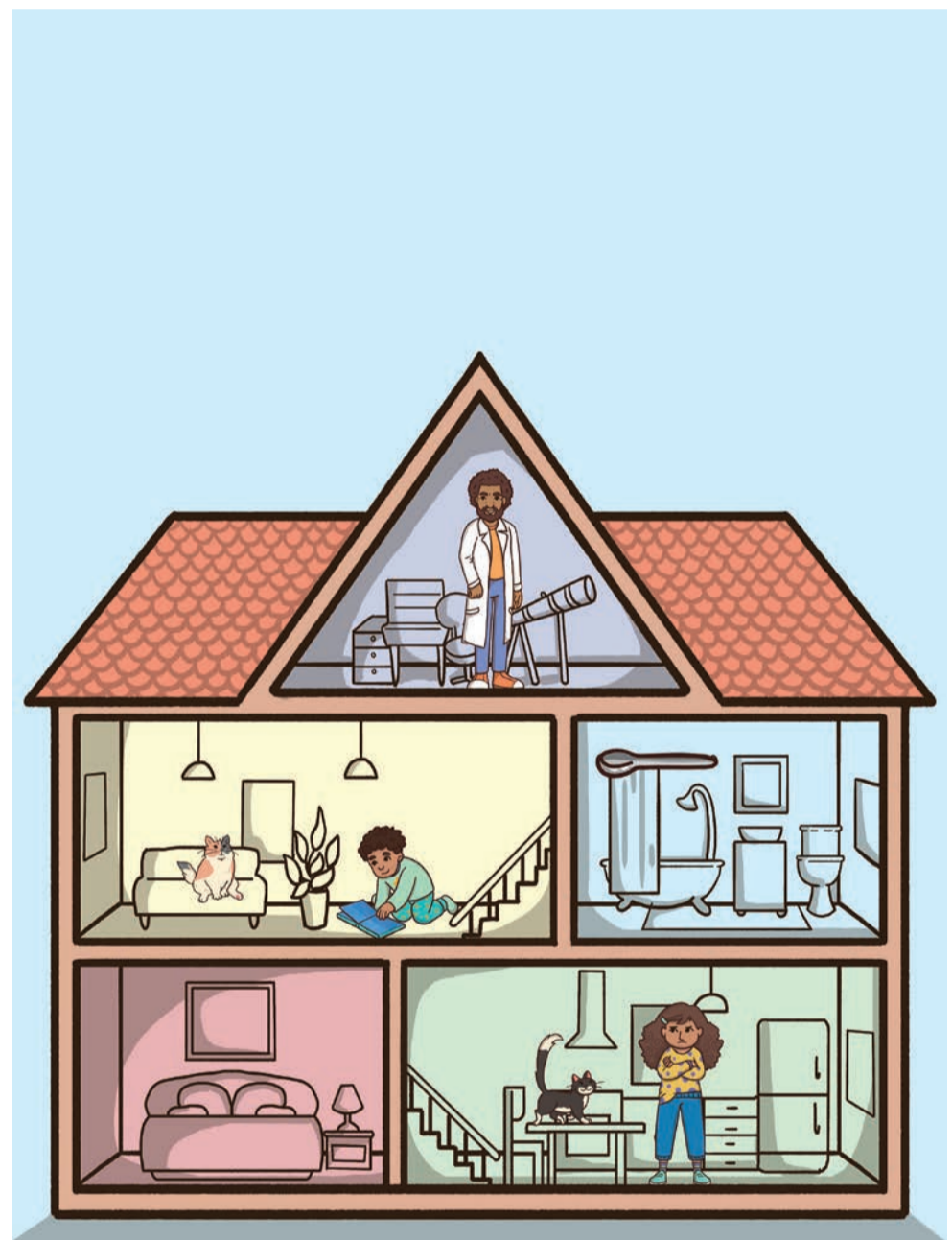
1. In your own words, tell a friend what happened in the story.
2. Imagine you are Sasa. What would you wish for?
3. What was your favourite part of the story? Why did you like it?

# Waking up on Mars

## Pre-reading questions

1. What is Mars? What do you know about Mars?
2. Would you like to go to Mars? Why? Why not?
3. Look at the pictures in the story. Who do you think is going to Mars?

Bruno's family looked normal from the outside. They had a house, a garden and two cats. Mom was a teacher. Dad was a scientist. He slept all day and spent the nights in his special room with a large telescope.



Mom told Bruno, “Your dad is a mad scientist.”

“Mars is one of the closest planets to Earth,” said Dad. “Soon we’ll be able to visit Mars.”