

The Secret of the Cardboard Rocket

Final Draft - 8/19/01

Marcus

Wow! What a neat box! Where'd you get it?

Bonnie

Mom gave it to me. It's from the new 'fridge. Wanna help me make it into a castle?

Marcus

No way, not a castle! I wanna make it into a fort!

Bonnie

I know. Let's do something really different!

Bonnie whispers something which we can't quite hear.

Marcus

Yeah! That's a far-out idea! Let's do it!

Bonnie

I'll get the stuff so we can fix it up.

(SFX-rummaging sounds)
(SFX-aluminum foil sounds)

Marcus

Why do we need all that foil?

Bonnie

That's our heat shield. Hand me the tape. Where's the glue?

Marcus

Over there. I'll cut out some windows.

Bonnie

Remember, don't run with the scissors in your hand.

(SFX-sounds of cardboard cutting)
(SFX-sounds of masking tape and paper)

Mom

Hi, kids! What are you making?

Marcus

We're not telling. You'll have to guess.

(SFX-more construction sounds)

Bonnie

There! It's all done. What do you think, Mom?

Mom

Wow! You kids have done a wonderful job. It's beautiful. But I still don't know what it is.

Marcus

M-m-m-o-o-o-m! It's a rocket!

Bonnie

We're going to fly it to the Moon!

Marcus

And Mars and Jupiter and Pluto!

Bonnie

And the stars!

Marcus

And all around the universe!

Bonnie

Millions and billions of miles away!

Mom (repeating)

Well, if you're only traveling "millions and billions" of miles away, I'm afraid you won't get much farther than the planets of our solar system.

(Bonnie & Marcus, disappointed)

Awww!

Mom

Oh come on now. Visiting the planets will be a lot of fun, and besides, I don't want you going too far from home.

Bonnie

Mom, can we spend the night outside in the rocket?

Mom

Well, the weather looks okay.

(pauses)

Sure. You'll have a lot of fun. Just be sure you have everything you need.

(fading)

Have good time!

Bonnie & Marcus (excited)

Wow! Thanks, Mom!

(to Marcus)

Well, we'd better get the supplies and load 'em up.

(SFX-sounds of loading rocket)

Bonnie

Gummy bears?

Marcus

Check.

Helmets? Bonnie

Hey-that's my football helmet! Marcus

We'll need it for the trip. Sleeping bags? Bonnie

Check. Marcus

Onboard computer? Bonnie

Hey! That's just an old shoebox. Marcus

Yeah? Well, every rocket ship needs a computer. Bonnie
(pause)
Air supply?

Check. Marcus

(SFX-sounds of balloons squeaking & bursting)

Be careful with those balloons! That air has to last us all night. Astronomy book? Bonnie

Check. Marcus

I guess that's our supplies. We're ready to go exploring the planets. Bonnie

Marcus

Aye, aye, Captain!

Bonnie

Close all the hatches and start the countdown!

Bonnie & Marcus

Five! Four! Three! Two! One! Blastoff!

(SFX-Bonnie & Marcus make rocket sounds which dissolve into to real rocket sounds. Over the transition, we hear a lion's roar; during the real rocket sound we hear a magical twinkling sound)

Marcus

Wow! How did you make those rocket sounds? They sounded real.

Bonnie

Me? I thought you were making those sounds!

(pause)

Wow! Look at all the stars! I've never seen them look like that before! What's happened to us?

Book (muffled)

Open the book!

Marcus

Did you hear that? It sounded like it came from the book!

Book (muffled)

OPEN...THE...BOOK!

Bonnie

It did come from the book. Quick! Open it!

(SFX-sound of book opening)

Book

Thank you. That's ever so much better. Allow me to introduce myself. I am The Student's Astronomy Guide, 172 pages, wonderfully illustrated with full color photographs and containing a complete index and glossary.

Bonnie

You're the what?

Book

I'm the astronomy book. Don't you remember? You checked me out of the library last week.

Marcus (amazed, but with certainty)

Books don't talk!

Book

Well I do. Now then, about our trip through outer space. I think we'll be fine if we're careful not to get too close to any of the planets.

Bonnie

But how? This is only a cardboard rocket. How can we be travelling through space?

Book

Now, that's my secret! But I do need your help. Are you ready?

Bonnie & Marcus

We're ready!

Book

Good! I must say, you two did a first rate job with our launch. Most impressive! So, where would you like to go?

Bonnie

We wanted to see the whole Universe, but Mom says we can only go as far as the planets.

Book

Very sensible. Yes, very sensible indeed.

Book (to himself)

The planets of our solar system...hmmm.

(to the children)

If you were going to explore the solar system, where would you begin?

Bonnie

The Sun! It's in the middle of our solar system.

Book

That's not a planet. Besides, it's extremely hot there. Not really a pleasant place at all. I would highly suggest against it.

Bonnie

Well, I really want to check out the sun. Prepare to approach the sun.

Marcus

Aye, aye, Captain!

Book (annoyed)

Well, fine then ... just be careful. And don't get too close.

(SFX-rocket sounds)

The cardboard rocket approaches the sun.

Computer

Warning! Warning! Brightness alert!

Book

Now see ... what did I tell you?

Bonnie

Don't worry. It's not that hot.

(to Marcus)

Why is the computer giving us a warning?

Marcus (concerned)

It's because the sun is so bright. My teacher says you should never look directly into the Sun because it will hurt your eyes.

Book

Your teacher is right. You should never look at the Sun. If you want to see the Sun, you'll have to look at the pictures on my pages. Now then, where to begin? Sun ... Sun ... Sun ... ah yes, page 17 ... here we are ...

(throat clearing, a lecturing tone of voice)

The Sun is a giant ball of hot gas. It is the biggest, heaviest thing in the solar system. The Sun is so large, that if it were a tennis ball, the earth would be the size of a grain of sand!

We must be careful to keep a safe distance ... the Sun is extremely hot. In fact, the Sun is so hot that if we get too close to it, it would turn our rocket ship into gas! Did you know that the Sun is a star just like the other stars you can see in the sky at night? The Sun is the star we know best. Can either of you tell me why the Sun looks so much bigger and brighter, while the other stars look so much smaller and dimmer?

Bonnie

Is it because we're closer to it?

Book

That's right. The reason our Sun looks so big and bright is only because we are so close to it. If our Sun were as far away as all the other stars, then it would look dim and small, too.

(pause)

The sun is over a million times bigger than Earth. In fact, the Sun is so large and its gravity is so powerful that it keeps all the planets in orbit around it.

Computer

Warning! Warning! Change course! We're getting too close to the Sun!

Book

I knew it. I knew it. I should never have agreed to go to the sun. If anything happens now, it's not my fault!

Bonnie

The Computer's right. It's time to leave this place.

Marcus

No wait, There's so much more to see—storms on the Sun, and flares . . .

Bonnie

Well, there are still nine planets to explore. We need to move on.

Book

So now can we go to the first planet from the Sun?

Bonnie

Start the engines! Fire the rockets!

Marcus

Roger! Ready to move out!

(SFX-rocket sounds)

The cardboard rocket leaves the sun and approaches Mercury.

Bonnie

Are you sure this is the first planet? It looks just like the Moon! It's gray, and it has craters all over it.

Marcus

I'm sure I've found the right place. Let's check the book.

Book

Thank you. Yes, we are at the first planet, the one closest to the Sun. I'll bet you don't know its name.

Marcus (matter-of-factly)

It's Mercury.

Book

Exactly! Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun, and you're right, it does look like the Moon, just a little bigger. Both are covered with craters and have no air. Mercury has the shortest year in the solar system. It only takes eighty-eight days to travel around the Sun.

Marcus

I bet Mercury gets hot from being this close to the sun.

Book

You're half-right, half-wrong. When a side of Mercury faces the Sun, it gets very hot--hotter than molten lead! But when it is facing away from the Sun, it gets cold—colder than the coldest day at Earth's North Pole! That's cold enough to freeze us solid!

Bonnie

Wow! That's a crazy planet! It's always either too hot or too cold.

Book

Right now we are near the daytime side of Mercury. The temperature is as hot as an oven! We should be leaving now.

Computer

Warning! Warning! High temperature alert! The book's right. Let's go before we burn up!

Marcus

We can't leave now. It says in the book that Mercury has strange hills and a gigantic crater.

Bonnie

Start the engines! Fire the rockets. We really need to get going!

Marcus

Roger! We're on our way!

(SFX-rocket sounds)

The cardboard rocket leaves Mercury and approaches Venus.

Bonnie

Hey! This second planet is pretty cloudy.

Book

Correct. And if you thought Mercury was "crazy" ...

Bonnie

... Venus is even stranger.

Book

How did you know that?

Bonnie (giggling)

I peeked at the next page.

Marcus

Well, it's is so cloudy I can't see a thing.

Book

We can't see the surface of Venus because the entire planet is covered with thick clouds. Venus is only a little smaller than Earth but Venus is quite different from it.

Marcus

I wonder what it's like under the clouds?

Book

Let's just say that Venus is not a very nice place to visit.

Bonnie

But I want to see what it's like down there. Let's put on our helmets and prepare to land on Venus!

Book

I really wish you wouldn't do that. It would be a very dangerous thing to do.

Bonnie

Lights on! Landing gear down! Here we go!

(SFX-rocket landing sounds)

The cardboard rocket lands on Venus.

Bonnie

Wow! Venus looks spooky.

Book

And dangerous! The air on Venus is much thicker than on Earth so its air pressure will crush our rocket. Not only that, the clouds and air trap heat from the Sun. It gets hot! Venus is even hotter than the hot side of Mercury!

Computer

Warning! Warning! Temperature alert! Pressure alert! The rocket is getting too hot and is starting to collapse. We've got to get out of here or we will burn up and be crushed!

Marcus

But we can't leave yet. There is so much more to see. It says in the book that Venus has volcanoes and canyons.

Bonnie

The computer's right. It's getting too hot and our rocket is only made out of cardboard! Quick! Start the countdown and let's get out of here!

Bonnie & Marcus

Five! Four! Three! Two! One! Blastoff!

(SFX-rocket sounds)

The cardboard rocket lifts off from Venus and leaves the planet behind.

Bonnie

Wow, that was exciting.

Book (slightly indignant)

We really need to be more careful. Some of these planets can be very dangerous! Now, this third planet looks much better.

(SFX- sound of page turning)

Book (continued)

See if you can tell me what planet is next after Venus. Hey! No peeking at my pages! I'll give you a hint.

This next planet is about the same size as Venus, but it's not nearly as hot. Water covers most of this planet. Water also makes clouds, which cover about half the planet. And frozen water makes ice caps that cover the north and south poles. Have you got it yet?

The cardboard rocket approaches Earth.

Bonnie

That's just Earth. We already know all about Earth--we live there. We're here to see the other planets.

Book

Are you sure you know all about Earth? Earth is a very special place you know. It is the only planet that we know of that has books! And as you know, books are truly amazing things!

Marcus

Wait a minute. That's not the only thing that makes Earth special. Earth is the only planet we know of that has life!

Book

Well, that true enough. Both books and life are truly amazing.

The air on Earth allows plants and animals to breathe, and the air and oceans also help to keep the surface from getting too hot or too cold. What a truly awesome planet we live on!

The thing to remember is that all life on Earth needs food, water, and warmth in order to survive. In a way, Earth is like our rocket ship. Do you know why?

Marcus

Is it because it goes through space like our rocket ship?

Book

That's right. And like our rocket ship, it must carry all the supplies it needs to keep all the plants and animals and people on it alive.

Earth has a partner as it travels through space. This smaller world is called the Moon. While Earth has air and many things living on it, the Moon has no air and no life.

Bonnie

Cool! Let's explore the Moon. We've got our whole lives to explore Earth, but Mom only gave tonight to explore the solar system.

Marcus

You're right, let's go to the Moon. But I'm gonna explore Earth when we get back!

The cardboard rocket moves away from Earth and heads for the Moon.

Book (exasperated sigh)

All right, the moon it is. But I'm warning you, it's not a very safe place. It's not made out of cheese. There's no cows jumping over it. There's not even a man in the moon.

Book (continued)

Unlike Earth, the Moon doesn't have any air. The moon is also quite a bit smaller than Earth. It's about the same as comparing a baseball to a basketball. Did you know that the same side of the moon always faces Earth?

Bonnie

Helmets on! Prepare to land on the Moon.

Book

Hey, wait! I just told you it's not safe there!

(SFX-sound of book slamming shut)

Book (muffled)

All right! Who did that? Who closed me up? Open me up right now!

(SFX-rocket landing sounds)

The cardboard rocket lands on the Moon.

Marcus

Right on! We've landed on the moon.

Bonnie

Let's go outside and walk around.

Book (muffled)

Stop! Wait! Don't go out there! Open me up!

(SFX-sound of book opening)

Book

Whew! That was close. You can't go out there without a spacesuit.

Book (continued)

When astronauts from Earth landed on the Moon they had to wear spacesuits and take air along to breathe. Their space suits also protected them from the intense heat and cold here. Where the Sun shines, it gets really hot--as hot as an oven. But in the shade, it gets cold--colder than the coldest day at the coldest place on Earth!

Computer

Warning! Warning! Temperature alarm! The side of the rocket in the sunlight is too hot and the side of the rocket in the shade is too cold!

Book

Oh my! My pages are freezing and roasting at the same time! I feel like a frozen pepperoni pizza. Now that's a truly appalling state to be in. I insist we leave!

Marcus

Oh come on! Let's just stay a little longer. There's a lot of interesting things on the Moon. There's Moon rocks, big craters, mountains, and "mo-o-o-onquakes"...

Bonnie

Moonquakes? Quick! Prepare for liftoff. Right now!

Book (suspiciously)

Hey! Don't you dare trying closing me again.

Bonnie & Marcus

Five! Four! Three! Two! One! Blastoff!

(SFX-rocket sounds)

The cardboard rocket takes off from the Moon.

Bonnie

We're now on our way to the fourth planet.

Book

Ah yes, Mars, The rusty Red Planet. Mars is sort of an “in between” planet. It's bigger than the Moon, but smaller than Earth. And unlike the Moon, which has no air, and Earth, which has lots of air, Mars only has a little air.

Marcus

Captain, captain! We're now closing in on Mars.

The cardboard rocket approaches Mars.

Book

Let's just look at Mars from a distance. From here, you can still see mountains, canyons, and craters.

Bonnie

No! Strap on the helmets! Prepare for landing on Mars!

(SFX-rocket sounds)

The cardboard rocket takes off for Mars very, very quickly.

Book

Whoa! Slow down! Not so fast! Yeow!

(SFX-rocket landing sounds)

The cardboard rocket lands on Mars.

Bonnie

Oh! It looks like we landed in a desert.

Book

Try to take it easier next time. As you said, our rocket ship is only made out of cardboard.

(pause)

You're right. We are in a desert. Mars is mostly covered with desert. It's a desert planet. But instead of being dry and hot, like a desert on Earth, Mars is a dry, cold desert. Now, that big mountain over there is a volcano.

Bonnie

A volcano? Will it erupt?

Book

Not likely. But it is big. It's so big, that if we brought it back to Earth, it would cover the entire state of Utah!

Mars has a huge canyon, called the Mariner Valley, which is much deeper and bigger than the Grand Canyon in Arizona. The Mariner Valley is so long that if we brought it back to Earth, it would stretch across the entire United States.

Marcus

Let's go outside the rocket and explore!

Book

No, you can't! Don't you remember? You didn't bring any spacesuits. And you definitely need spacesuits to survive on Mars. The air out there is much too thin. And besides, it's very cold out there, even during the daytime in summer. You would freeze in no time!

Bonnie

Right! Let's stay in the rocket. Why do all the rocks look red and rusty?

Book

It's because they are rusty. The rocks on Mars have iron in them, like nails. And just as nails rust on Earth, the iron in the rocks here has also rusted.

Mars has some unusual weather. The wind can sometimes blow at nearly 100 miles per hour! These high winds often create dust storms that can cover most of the planet!

(SFX-wind sounds)

Computer

Warning! Warning! Martian dust storm! Let's get out of here!

Marcus

We can't leave yet. It says in the book there's a lot more to see—ice caps and dried up riverbeds.

Bonnie

The dust will wreck the rocket!

Book (with dignity)

Not too mention ruining my pages!

Bonnie

Prepare for liftoff from Mars!

Bonnie & Marcus

Five! Four! Three! Two! One! Blastoff!

(SFX-rocket sounds)

The cardboard rocket lifts off from Mars.

Book

The winds on Mars can really kick up a storm, but if you thought those winds were strong, wait until you see the fifth planet, Jupiter. Jupiter is quite different from the planets we've seen so far. First of all, it's huge! It's the largest planet in the solar system. In fact, it's so big, that if it were hollow, more than a thousand Earth's could fit inside.

Because Jupiter is so big and made mostly of gas, we call it a Gas Giant. Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars are so small compared to Jupiter, we call them the Rocky Midgets.

Marcus (giggling)

You live on a Rocky Midget.

Bonnie (giggling)

Yeah, well, you are a rocky midget!

Marcus

Hey!

The cardboard rocket approaches Jupiter.

Marcus

Look! We're approaching Jupiter now! Wow! It is huge! And it's covered with clouds. It doesn't look like any of the other planets we've seen so far.

Bonnie

Prepare to land on Jupiter!

Book

No, by Jupiter! We can't land here. We were able to land on the Rocky Midgets, because they all have hard ground to land on. But there is no ground on Jupiter. It's just a big ball of gases with thick clouds.

Bonnie

So let's just fly through the clouds of Jupiter!

Book

Fly through the clouds? No, no, no! These clouds may look pretty, but they're pushed along by winds that move faster than those in a hurricane on Earth. See that big red cloud swirling down there? That's called the Great Red Spot. The Great Red Spot is actually a huge storm—a gigantic storm! Sometimes the Great Red Spot becomes so large that all the rocky midgets could fit inside it—with room to spare!

Marcus

Can we get closer to that big red spot?

Bonnie

Great idea, little brother! We can always turn around if it gets too rough. Here we go, into the clouds of Jupiter.

(SFX-rocket sounds)

(SFX-wind sounds)

(SFX-lightning crashes)

Bonnie

What was that?

Book

Oh, that was just the lightning. The clouds of Jupiter sometimes have lightening.

(mildly sarcastic)

Did I forget to mention it? I am so sorry. I do, however, recall saying this was a bad idea.

Bonnie

Well, that's just great.

Book

You know, we really should turn around while we still can. As we go deeper into the clouds, the air gets thicker and the temperature goes up. We're in too deep as it is.

Computer

Warning! Warning! Lightning warning! High temperature warning! The deeper we go, the hotter it gets! Storm warning! It may already be too late!

(SFX-wind sounds get more intense)
(SFX-lightning crashes are louder and more frequent)

Marcus

Captain, the computer's right! The winds are picking up! I can't pull out of the storm!

Bonnie

Hold on. Don't panic. Book! Book! Do you have any ideas?

Book

Yes! In situations like this, I always look for the red button?

Bonnie & Marcus

The red button?

Book

Yes, the red button! You know, the improbable story device that always gets people in stories out of trouble. Look, there it is. Push it! Quick!

The cardboard rocket takes on a burst of speed and clears the storms of Jupiter. The sounds of the storm recede.

(SFX-rocket sounds)

The cardboard rocket leaves Jupiter behind.

Bonnie

Now that was intense! It was like a ride on an wild roller coaster!

Marcus

I wasn't sure we were going to make it.

Book

Wow! That was really brave of you two!

Bonnie

Well, we sure couldn't have done it without you. Thanks, Book!

Book (beaming with pride)

You're welcome.

Bonnie

Let's see what's next.

Book

Now this sixth planet is one of my favorites. It's called Saturn. Saturn is a little smaller than Jupiter, but it is still much larger than Earth. The curious thing about Saturn is that even though it is quite big, it is very, very light for its size. In fact, Saturn is like a giant marshmallow.

Bonnie

A giant marshmallow? You're an astronomy book, not a cookbook.

Book

I'm being perfectly serious. If you were to put a marshmallow into a cup of hot chocolate, it would float, wouldn't it? Well, Saturn is so light for its size that if you had a large enough cup of hot chocolate and put Saturn into it, Saturn would float, like a marshmallow.

Bonnie

Well, that would certainly be a pretty big cup! What would you call it, the big dipper?

Book groans.

Marcus

Wow! Look at Saturn!

Book

Beautiful, isn't it? Saturn is another Gas Giant, like Jupiter. That means that it has no solid ground where we could land. We could fly through the cloud tops of Saturn, but the winds there are even stronger than those of Jupiter. So if you don't mind, let's not. I don't think my binding can take much more shaking around. However, we can take a closer look at the rings of Saturn. Saturn's rings are made of thousands of tiny pieces of ice and rock all going around and around the planet. Each piece is just like a tiny moon.

Marcus

We're about to fly through the rings of Saturn! Hold on everybody!

The cardboard rocket flies through the rings of Saturn.

Book

What a lovely sight. From here, you can see the shadow of Saturn on its rings. This is a view of Saturn you can't see from Earth.

Bonnie

On to the seventh planet! Prepare to fire the rockets!

Marcus

But we haven't explored the moons of Saturn. They are made of rock and ice. One is light on one side and dark on the other, and there is even one moon that has air!

Book

The air on that moon is so cold, it would freeze you from the inside out. And we really should be moving along. I am due back at the library tomorrow, you know.

Bonnie & Marcus

Fire the rockets!

(SFX-rocket sounds)

The cardboard rocket leaves Saturn and moves on to Uranus.

Book

We're traveling through the outer reaches of the solar system now. Beyond Jupiter and Saturn are two planets that are nearly twins ... Uranus and Neptune. They are both Gas Giants, but neither one is quite as large as Jupiter or Saturn. But like all the Gas Giants, these two are still much larger than Earth. Let's look at Uranus first.

The cardboard rocket approaches Uranus.

Book

The curious thing about Uranus is that it is tipped over on its side. Uranus also has a small set of rings. These rings are not as big or bright as the rings of Saturn.

The cardboard rocket moves on to Neptune.

Book

Neptune is the eighth planet and last of the gas giants. Neptune, like the other gas giants, has no solid ground. You could not land our rocket on Uranus or Neptune.

Bonnie

Let's go visit the ninth planet!

Marcus

But there is so much more to see here at Neptune. Its largest moon orbits Neptune backwards. And Neptune has rings, too. And, and ...

Bonnie

We're running out of time. We want to see all the planets, don't we? Start the engines and fire the rockets!

(SFX-rocket sounds)

The cardboard rocket blasts off from Neptune and arrives ... where?

Bonnie

We're supposed to be at the ninth planet, but I don't see anything.

Marcus

There it is!

Bonnie

It's truly tiny.

Book

I can tell you what planet that is! So far, we have seen that the planets that are close to the Sun are small and made out of rocks. And the planets that are far from the Sun are big and made out of gases. The Rocky Midgets are part of the inner solar system. And the Gas Giants are part of the outer solar system. But now we've arrived at this strange planet. It's called Pluto.

Pluto is small. It's the smallest planet in the solar system. Pluto is even smaller than Earth's moon.

Bonnie

Can we land on Pluto?

Book (hesitantly)

Well ... we could. But it's terribly cold down there.

Bonnie

Break out the helmets! Prepare for landing on Pluto!

(SFX-rocket landing sounds)

The cardboard rocket lands on Pluto.

Marcus

Awesome. We've landed on Pluto. Whoa! ... everything looks frozen. And look! Pluto has a tiny moon. A tiny moon for a tiny planet.

Bonnie

What's that VERY bright star up there?

Book

That is the Sun. We are so far from the Sun, that it looks as small as the other stars. Pluto doesn't get much warmth from the Sun. That's why it's so cold and frozen here.

Marcus (getting tired)
We're so far from home. I miss Earth. Can we go home now?

Book
To get home, we need to know where Earth is among the planets. Let's see how much you remember. There are two kinds of planets. What do we call the big planets that are far from the Sun?

Bonnie & Marcus
Gas Giants!

Book
Correct. Gas giants are far from the Sun and we can't land on them because...

Bonnie & Marcus
They don't have any hard ground!

Book
The Gas Giants are Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. And what do we call the small planets that do have hard ground where we can land?

Bonnie & Marcus
Rocky Midgets!

Book
Correct again! The Rocky Midgets are closer to the Sun and much smaller than the Gas Giants. The Rocky Midgets are...

Bonnie & Marcus
Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars!

Book

Let's see if you can remember one important thing about each of the planets. Let's start with the Rocky Midgets.

Bonnie

Mercury has the shortest year.

Marcus

Venus is the hottest planet.

Bonnie

Earth is the planet full of life.

Marcus

It's the planet we live on.

Bonnie

Mars is a cold, red desert.

Book

Let's see what you remember about the Gas Giants.

Marcus

Jupiter is the biggest planet in the solar system.

Bonnie

Saturn has beautiful rings around it.

Marcus

Uranus lies on its side and has rings, too.

Bonnie

Neptune is the last of the Gas Giants.

Marcus

And Pluto is the planet we've landed on. Pluto is the smallest and the coldest planet.

Book

That was very good! But, what about the Sun?

Bonnie

The Sun isn't a planet. The Sun is a star.

Marcus

The Sun is the star we know best.

Book

And from here on Pluto, the Sun looks as small as the other stars. Would you like to visit another star?

Bonnie

We promised Mom we would only go as far as the planets. Besides, we're all out of gummy bears and we're down to our last balloon. We should be heading back.

Marcus

I'm freezing. My feet are getting cold. I want to go home.

Computer

Warning! Warning! Cold feet alarm! Prepare for blast off from Pluto and let's return to Earth.

Bonnie & Marcus

Five! Four! Three! Two! One! Blastoff!

(SFX-rocket sounds)

The return to earth is a long roller-coaster ride back through the solar system as we narrowly miss each of the planets and the moon.

As we approach Earth, we transition into a morning scene.

(SFX-roosters crowing or other morning sounds)

Mom

Wake up kids. It's time to get up. How was your trip through outer space?

Bonnie

Oh Mom! Dad! It was great!

Marcus

We got to land on Venus and see a desert on Mars!

Bonnie

And we flew through the clouds of Jupiter!

Marcus

And the rings of Saturn!

Dad

Sounds like you two had quite a trip. How were you able to visit all those planets with only a cardboard rocket?

Marcus

I dunno. I think it's a secret.

Mom

A secret! Well, some day you'll have to tell us what that secret is.

Dad

Right now, breakfast is almost ready. Come on into the kitchen.

(SFX-screen door slamming)

Bonnie

You know, we never did find out what Book's secret was. Hey, do you think it was all a dream?

Marcus

I don't know. It could have been...

Book (muffled)

Excuse me. Could you please open the book!

Bonnie

Book! Book! So our trip wasn't a dream. But tell us, what was the secret? How were we able to go to all the planets?

Book

That's the secret of the cardboard rocket! You were able to travel to all the planets because you used your imaginations! Having a book like me helped, of course. Books are a great help for the imagination. Now that you know the secret, you can use books and your imaginations to travel anywhere!

Bonnie

Wow. Thanks book. We'll take you back to the library so other kids can visit the planets too.

Book (cheerfully)

You're right, its time to be getting back. And I can use some rest.

Bonnie & Marcus

Goodbye book. And thanks! We'll miss you!

Book

Goodbye, kids. And don't worry. You can always visit me at the library.

END