

Tuesday

MARS



I was so excited to get to class and see where else we were going. We learned the French word for Tuesday is Mardi. It was named after the planet Mars.

Mr. Abraham said, “In ancient Rome, Mars was known as the planet of war. It was a symbol for strength and might.” It made sense that if Mars was the planet of war, it would need those qualities.

“The soil on Mars is mostly red,” he continued. “The Egyptians named the planet ‘The Red One’. There are seasons just like ours. Before space travel, Mars was considered the best candidate for supporting life because it was believed to have water. When we finally explored Mars, we were expecting there to be a lot of Martians walking around but we did not see any.”

I giggled out loud. I had seen firsthand life on the Moon and it was amazing. During class, I kept daydreaming about Master Luap and it made it hard to concentrate. Mr. Abraham noticed.

“Mars to Onionhead, come in Onionhead,” Mr. Abraham said.

I turned a shade of red that closely resembled the picture of Mars on the wall. The other kids laughed and one said: “Look, he’s now a Red Onion!” Thankfully the bell rang.

By the time school was over, I was ready for my next countdown. After dinner and homework, my Mom tucked me in and I started counting down - 26, 25, 24 ...

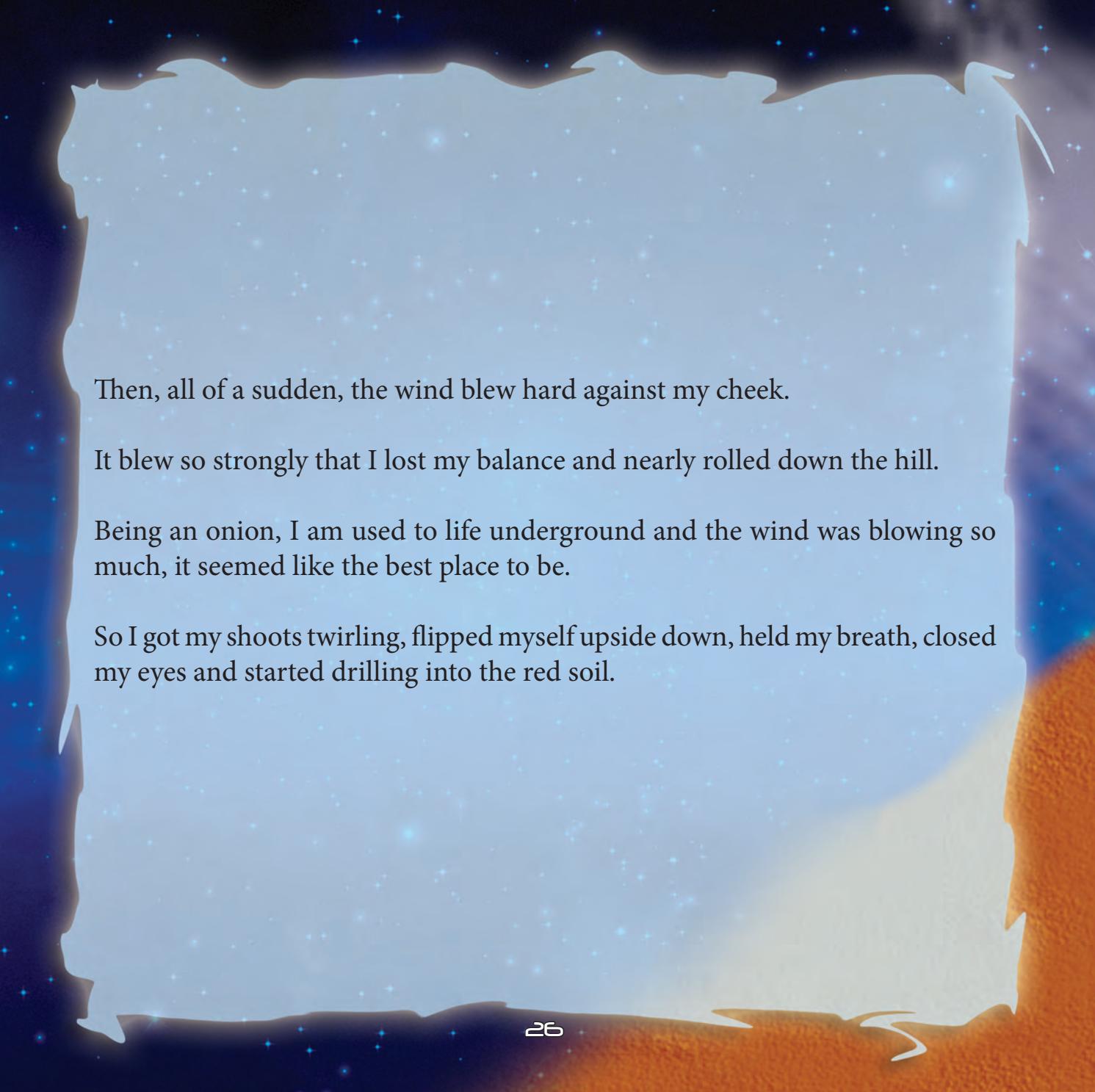




3, 2, 1...

blast off!

When I opened my eyes, I saw two moons in the sky and red sand beneath my feet. The landscape looked familiar and odd at the same time – kind of like being out in the middle of a red desert. I was a little nervous. Because Mr. Abraham said that Mars was red, I figured out where I was. However, he had also said that stuff about the war planet, so I kept my guard up as I started to wander around. I got to the edge of a cliff and the sight below me was a big canyon.



Then, all of a sudden, the wind blew hard against my cheek.

It blew so strongly that I lost my balance and nearly rolled down the hill.

Being an onion, I am used to life underground and the wind was blowing so much, it seemed like the best place to be.

So I got my shoots twirling, flipped myself upside down, held my breath, closed my eyes and started drilling into the red soil.



When I opened my eyes, I was underground. In front of me was a huge army of Martian warriors. They were blue and were all wearing some kind of high-tech sunglasses. After a minute of shock, I realized I was still holding my breath and turning a similar color!

I finally let out my breath and reached out my hand to the Martian that seemed in charge. Best to let them know I was friendly, I thought. The head Martian extended his blue hand toward me. Instead of shaking my hand, he took my hand and held it. I felt like he was looking into me, not at me, trying to figure out whether I was friend or foe.

“Hi, I’m Onionhead. Uhhh, how are you?” I said trying to force a smile to hide my fear.

“We are fine.” he replied. “We have much respect for you. You are afraid and yet you are brave - so brave that you made the journey under the surface alone.” He was still holding my hand.

“Uh yes, I’m a little afraid. There are many of you and only one of me. And, uhh, you are holding my hand awfully tight.”

“We are called Master Ayrom. You have nothing to fear.” The Martian smiled and released my hand.

“Nice to meet you,” I replied relaxing a little bit and shaking the sensation back into my fingers.

“How is it that you were able to get down here alone?” he asked.

I showed him how my shoots could be used as a drill, an antenna, or a hair style. I explained to him that I was seeded in the ground so it comes naturally for me to return there.

The Martian touched my shoots and laughed. He then pulled on his own head and managed to shape his head into shoots like mine!

One by one, the Martian army approached me, held my hand, touched my shoots, readjusted the shape of their own heads and introduced themselves.

“Hi, we are called Master Ayrom.”

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“Wait,” I asked. “All of you are called Master Ayrom? Don’t each of you have your own name?”

They all laughed but none of them answered. One of them called out and asked me to tell them about myself.

“I am 8 years old. I lived in a place called Onionhood on Earth, but we moved to town and now I go to school. I have a Mom and a Dad. I ride my bike. I like to play in the dirt.” I went on and on but the only response I got was confusion.



“What is this word ‘I’ you keep referring to?” one of the Master Ayroms called out.

“You know, me, myself … I,” I said, tapping my peels. Still no one seemed to understand.

Then the most elderly Martian approached me.

“We should sit,” he said and in perfect unity, the whole army sat. I, on the other hand was a little behind in the sitting and they all laughed. I laughed too as I tumbled to the ground.

“There was a time when we lived on the surface and were separated by the ‘I’ and we had many wars. We believed in the ‘We’ but only when we thought we really needed it.”

He went on to say, “When the second moon came, the tides changed and so did the weather. We had to seek shelter underground but none of us could get here on our own. We had to learn that the best solution to a problem was to join together as one. When we focused on working together, we all made it to safety. Each of us is gifted in our own way and we made each individual gift work for ALL of us. Then a miracle happened – all wars stopped! Life became more and more respectful and cooperative, so it became less and less important to use the word ‘I’. Eventually, we simply dropped it from our language.”

“Wow!” I said thinking of all the times I only thought of myself. “Why do you all wear those glasses?” I asked.



The old Martian laughed and removed his glasses. His eyes were deeply compassionate and a color I could not even name - like fire and water together. He passed his glasses to me. I put them on and fell backwards. I saw veins of gold connecting all the Master Ayroms to each other. It was the most miraculous thing I had ever seen. I had to catch my breath. It was like the best piece of music you could ever hear, with the best piece of chocolate cake you could ever taste, with the best fragrant flower you could ever smell, with the most amount of love you could ever feel. All of it was rolled into one.

He went on to say, “We are all a smaller part of a much bigger picture – something much higher and bigger than ourselves. We learned to always ask ourselves these three questions in order to keep the peace.

1. Are my thoughts for “Me” instead of the “We”?
2. Is my work in competition with others instead of in cooperation?
3. If not, are my thoughts or actions changed immediately?”

“I guess the big problem is between the ‘I’ and the ‘We’. We have a similar problem on Earth. Do you think I can teach this kind of cooperation to the people on my planet?”

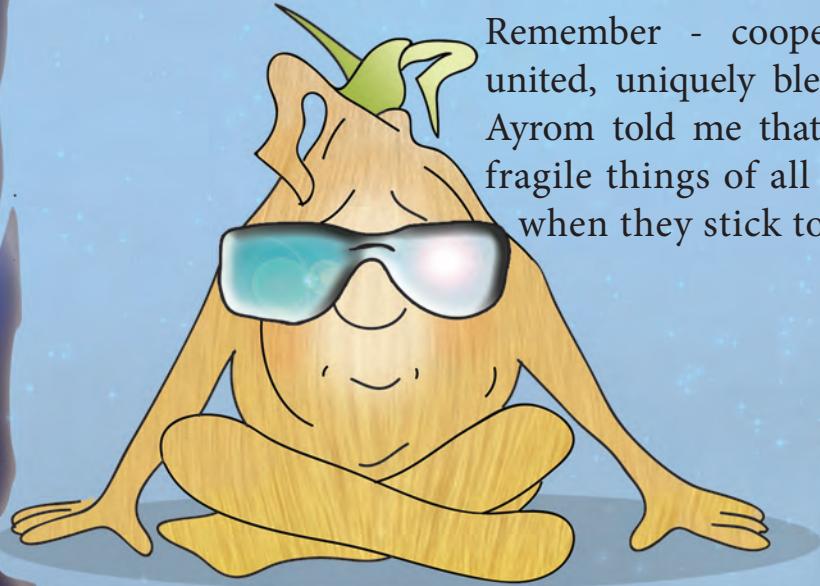
But as the words finished coming out of my mouth, I felt like I was being sucked into a wet vacuum.

Darkness was replacing the amazing view the Martian sunglasses provided me.

“Wait!”

But it was too late. I opened my eyes and all I saw was something that resembled pink sandpaper. It was Picaboo’s tongue. My Mom had sent the dog into my room to wake me up for school. As I hugged Picaboo and then pushed him off of me, something fell from my bed. It was a pair of Martian glasses. I could not believe they had made the journey home with me! I got up and quickly wrote ...

Lesson from Mars



Remember - cooperation comes from feeling united, uniquely blending all our gifts. Master Ayrom told me that “snowflakes are the most fragile things of all but look what they can do when they stick together.” If I forget, he said, “just put on the glasses!”