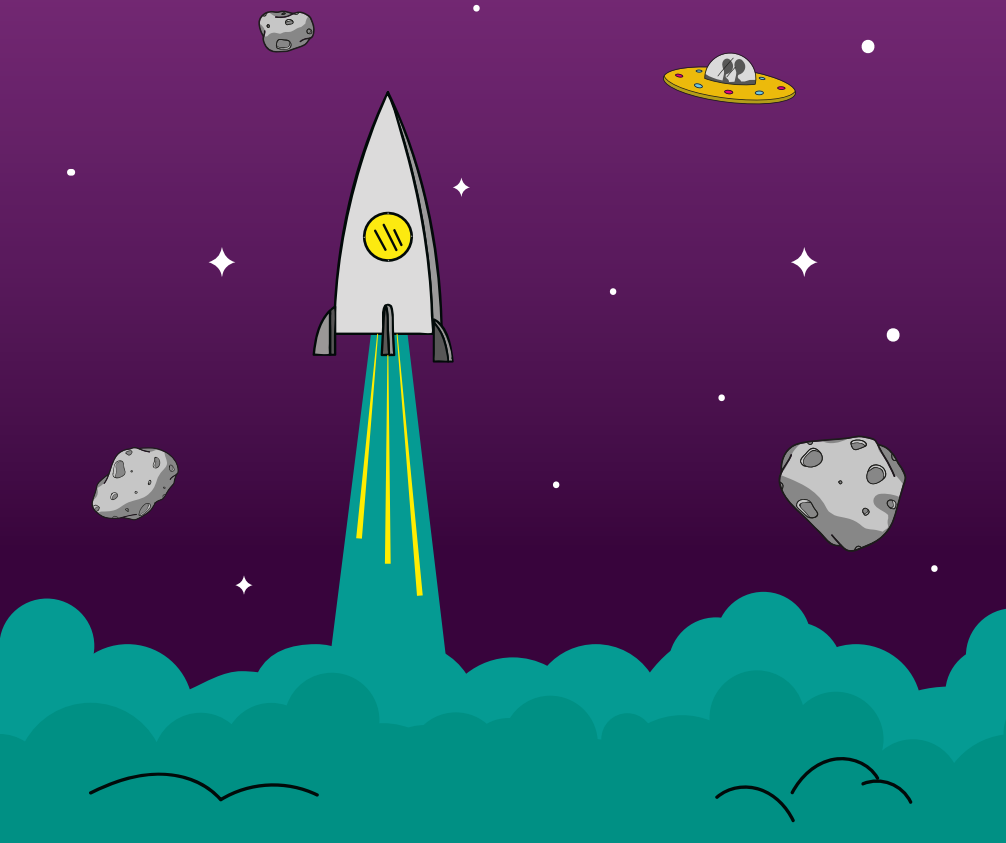
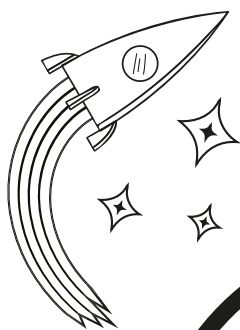
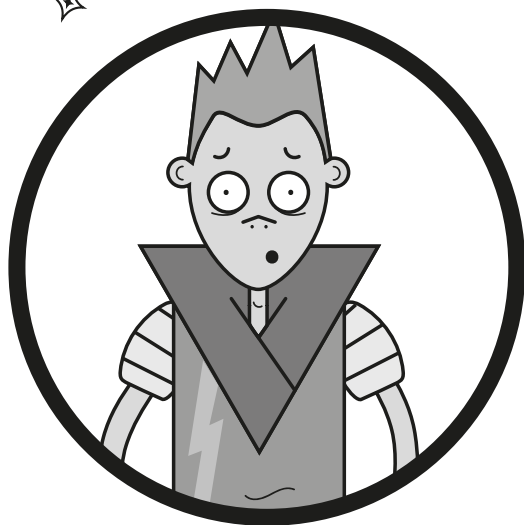


# HOME PLANET





MEET THE



SAM

**Age:** 12

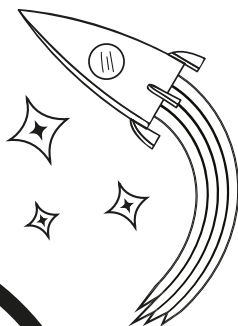
**Hobby:** learning about outer space

**Biggest Fear:** animals

**Favorite Way to Have Fun:** playing chess in the metaverse

**Best Quality:** adapts to change, but slowly

# CHARACTERS



Linn

**Age:** 14

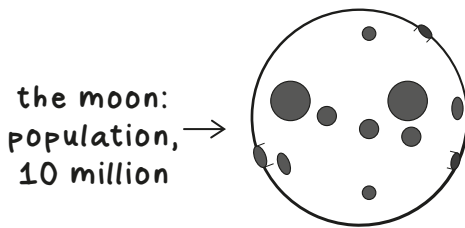
**Big Secret:** is afraid of snakes

**Favorite Place:** the Pacific Crest Trail

**Career Goal:** opening her own hiking tour company

**Best Quality:** adventurous

# BREAK TIME!



Sam Greenly ran on the rolling walkway to his home. He was thrilled. The time for his quarterly break had come. School would be out for a month. Sixth grade was over for Sam too.

He liked school on the moon. Breaks were every two months. Sam knew it was different on Earth. His family was from there. Earth had seasons. The moon did not.

Students on Earth had summer break and holidays too. When they didn't, school was nonstop. This sounded awful to Sam.

Soon he was home. He keyed in the front door code. The door opened.

Sam stepped inside. He dropped his school bag on the floor. "It's break time!"

His dad wore a headset. It covered his eyes. Mr. Greenly was at work.

He took his headset off. Then he smiled at Sam. "So, sixth grade is all done?"

Sam nodded. "Yep!" He walked to his family's foodbot. "Favorite snack, please."

The foodbot lit up. "You've got it, Sam." A snack strip slid out of the bot.

Sam grabbed the strip. He plopped down on the sofa. "Nothing to do. No place to go. A whole month of this." Grinning, he bit into his snack.



“Well,” his dad said. “That is not quite true.”

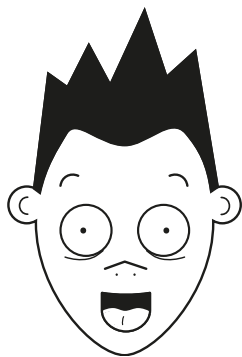
Sam stopped eating. He stared at his dad. *Oh no. Please don't give me work to do.*

Mr. Greenly continued. “There is a place you can go. If you want.”

“What do you mean?” Sam asked him.

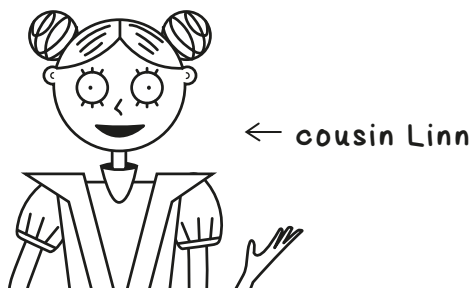
“Your Aunt Meg and Uncle Ed called. They want you to visit.”

Sam jumped up. His eyes were wide. He had never left the moon. Aunt Meg and Uncle Ed lived on Earth. Finally, Sam could travel into space.



Woo-hoo!

Mr. Greenly continued. “Your cousin Linn visited you last year. Now it’s your turn. Meg and Ed want you to stay a week. Linn is excited too. She can’t wait to show you around.” Sam’s dad smiled. “This is wild. My niece is about to start high school. A 14-year-old. On her way to ninth grade.”



“Wow, Dad,” Sam said. “The trip sounds so cool. I really want to go. But what if I don’t like Earth?”

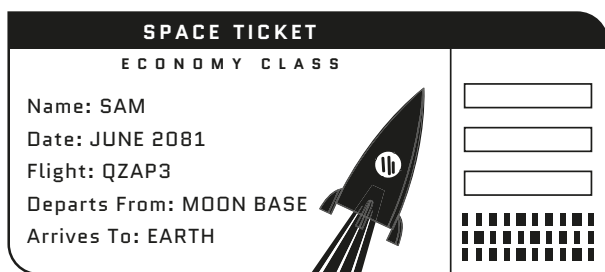
Sam’s dad shook his head. “You will love it. Where your mom and I grew up is great. Meg and Ed are still there. Plus, you need

to get to know Earth. You were born on the moon. But Earth is our home planet.”

Sam nodded. “Yeah, I know. When would I go?”

“Anytime. Even as soon as tomorrow. Your mom wants this for you too. What do you think?”

Sam took a moment to decide. Then he smiled at his dad. “Sure, I’ll go. Look out, Earth, here I come!”







## 2

# SPACE TRAVEL

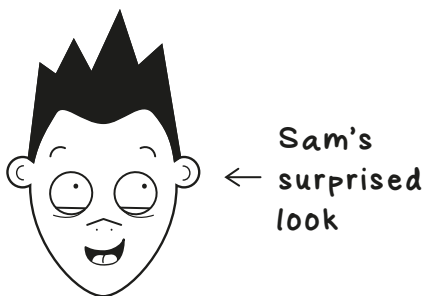
Sam's mom came home. She was glad to hear that he wanted to visit Earth. "You will love it there, Sam! California is the best. I can't wait for you to breathe the fresh air! The mountains are my favorite. Oh, and the trees and blue skies. It's all so wonderful."



Mr. Greenly chimed in. "She's right, Sam. I know you like the metaverse. But Earth is even better."



Sam looked surprised. “Really? I’m sure Earth is great. But I’m not sure it’s *that* great.”



Mrs. Greenly smiled. “Your dad and I miss Earth. You were almost born there. Then my job moved to the moon.” She looked away. “Part of me feels guilty. Maybe I should have found another job. One on Earth. Life would have been so different for you.”

Sam sighed. “Oh, Mom. I love life here. Earth kids don’t get quarterly school breaks.” He chuckled.

Mr. Greenly put his arm around his wife. “Honey, we did what was best. No regrets.

And Sam is right. Life is nice on the moon base. For all of us.” He looked at his son. “But Sam, just wait. You’ll see why we miss Earth so much.”

Mrs. Greenly perked up. “You have to go hiking, Sam. Linn is great at it. I’m sure she’ll take you.”

“I know hiking,” Sam said. “My teacher told us about it. I’ve seen it in the metaverse too. Maybe it’s fun. But don’t you have to walk a lot?”

His dad laughed. “Yes! Hiking is all walking. You’ll be in nature too. That makes it fun.”

Sam thought more. Hiking was not indoors. He was used to staying inside. There was no air outside on the moon. People had to stay indoors to breathe. Being outside on Earth could be weird.

*Should I still go?* Sam wondered.

His mom waved him over. “Come on. I’ll help you pack.”

Sam looked at her. She seemed so happy. His dad did too.

“Okay,” Sam said. “Let’s pack.”

Later, he and his mom had finished. But Sam did not sleep well. He was anxious about space travel. Sam would leave for Earth tomorrow. It was better for him not to wait longer. His fear could stop him if he did.



It was the next morning. Sam and

his parents were ready. They left for the spaceport. A rolling walkway took them there.

On the way, Sam's parents talked about Earth. His mind wandered. He thought about how long the trip was. It took a whole day to get to Earth. Then he thought of finally seeing space. Now he could visit Earth too. These were his dreams coming true. But why was he nervous?

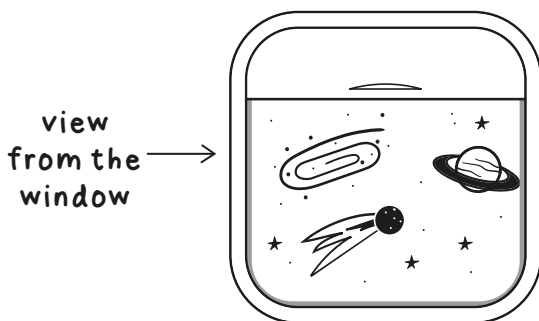
Sam waved goodbye to his parents. He boarded the ship. Then he found his seat. Passengers secured their safety harnesses. The ship took off.

His nerves calmed. The takeoff was exciting. Sam was glad to have a window seat. Outer space was beautiful.

He grabbed his bag. Then he pulled out his headset. Going to the metaverse would

relax him. Sam put on his headset and pressed a button. The place he explored was Earth.

His flight became fun. Sam enjoyed the metaverse. He took breaks too. Sometimes he stared out the window. Other times he ate. Earth was looking better to him. Maybe his parents were right about it.



Many hours passed. Sam felt tired. He took off his headset. Soon he fell asleep.

Later, Sam opened his eyes. The ship shook. It was landing.

Sam felt good. His rest on the flight had paid off. Finally, he was ready for Earth. He was happy to be there.

Everyone exited the spaceship. Sam stepped onto a rolling walkway. It carried him through the spaceport. He searched for his aunt and uncle.

“Sam!” someone called.

He looked around. Sam saw his Uncle Ed and Aunt Meg. Linn was there too. They all waved at him.

Sam waved back. Then he stepped off the walkway. But he stopped. Something felt odd. His feet did not lift off the ground. He couldn’t walk.

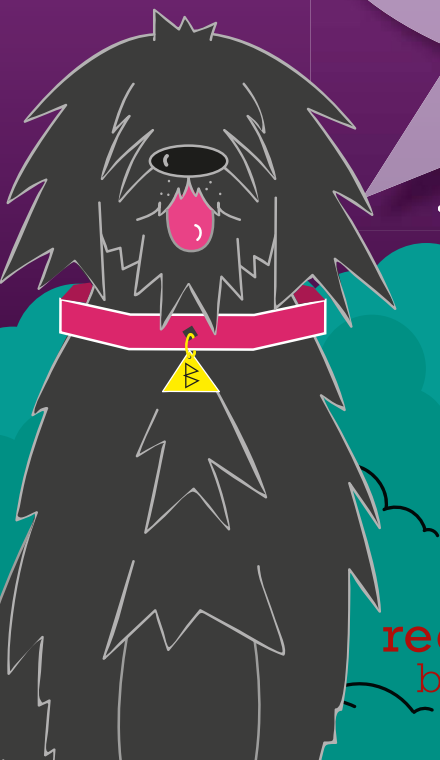




# HOME PLANET



No dogs allowed on  
the moon? That's not  
fair. I bet I could have  
some fun there!



  
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