

Preface

The students of Class 2As set off on an interesting journey to visit some of the planets of our solar system and this collection of sci-fi short stories is the result of their adventures and of the experience acquired while exploring the rich culture of the universe.

As teachers we were more than proud to welcome their remarkable outcome.

“Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.” Einstein

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THE MINERS OF MERCURY

Year 2102: the overpopulation on Earth causes pollution and problems of cohabitation: governments all over the world want to try to colonize other planets to send there a part of the people in their countries. The governments decide to colonize Mars and Mercury. A team of spacemen is sent to Mercury to drill the surface of the planet and create a first centre underground (because the surface temperature changes from -183°C to +427°C) where workers will live to build up the cities of the future.

“Is there anyone here?” Jim was screaming and looking for someone on the planet. All the NASA missions on Mercury hadn't found any sort of life, but some of the spacemen - like Jim - believed in aliens.

“Yes, here we are ... and a lot of work to do: stop chattering and come to help us! In an hour it will be too cold to work... and we haven't discharged the drill yet!” Alfred, the commander of the mission, wanted to finish the mission as soon as possible: he wanted to leave that planet because he didn't like it at all: craters and deserts wasn't his favourite landscape; he wanted to return to his house on Earth and spend the rest of his life in England, in a village near Dover.

“ We have been working for hours, Alfred; if we discharged the drill now, it would be exposed to too cold temperatures and probably could break down.” “You're right, Ryan, it's too cold. We will use the drill when the temperature is 'good' again” says Alfred.

“But we'll have to wait for about 15 Earth days! I have an idea: let's discharge the drill now and dig a little part of the shelter, large enough for us. Then we'll close it with the steel-plastic cover they gave us to close the tunnel and we'll put the hooking system of the shuttle on the cover so that we can go in and out of the shuttle through it. So we will be able to work with any temperature!” William was the most ingenious spaceman of the mission, always ready to solve any type of problem. “That's good... the drill can dig 70 metres of tunnel in 45 minutes, so we can use it for half an hour, then we put the cover on the entrance and the insulating cement on the walls of the tunnel, so that we will be in a good environment to work”. “You must be given a Nobel prize, William. Have you heard, guys!? Discharge that drill!.”.

Group: Arrows

Members: Macrì Matteo, Scavetta Matteo, Vignola Daniel, Wittkowski Kevin

The team began to work hard and in less than one hour the first part of the tunnel was built. They closed the cover and joined the hooking system of the shuttle. So now they were able to work as they could have done on Earth: they didn't lack oxygen and they opened the hooking system of the shuttle so that it could reach the tunnel.

They spent a lot of time working: they dug and covered the tunnel with insulating cement, then they started to put in some furniture and air filters; fortunately Mercury is made above all of silicates and they weren't too hard to dig using the drill. William and Alfred controlled if the digging was in accordance with the projects. Sean and John, other spacemen, used the drill and removed the rubble from the tunnel. Then the walls were squared using an automatic laser machine that dug the rocks but was too powerful to be used to replace the drill and so the rest of the work was done using a very little excavator. Jim usually drove it. The diggers had usually to wear their space suit because of the temperature of the rocks.

One day they found something unexpected: there was a tunnel of about a meter of diameter and it was covered with a strange fresh gluey substance. Suddenly a scream: "Alfred, come with me" shouted Jim. "There's something strange you have to see. I was digging in the tunnel with John, Sean, William and Ryan when we saw something that moved. We tried to take that strange thing out of the rocks but it was too big. It looked like the tail of a snake but its diameter was about one meter." The two men, after wearing their space suit, entered the tunnel and reached the end of one of them, that would have given hospitality to the buildings of the future Mercury's cities, where Jim had seen the strange thing but there wasn't anything; the creature had disappeared and Alfred thought that Jim was mad. A lot of scientists had studied the planet with artificial satellites and rover on Mercury's surface, but they didn't find water or other element that would have favored the life on it. So he ordered to continue to digging out. After some days the workers found in the tunnel another strange creature in the tunnel. They immediately called Alfred who could not believe his eyes; the creature was long about twelve meters and the color of its skin was brown. It moved very slowly and to move itself, used using four big teeth like the tusks of the elephants that were instrument used to hole the rocks of the crust of the planet. It had a big head but it hadn't got any eyes, nose or ears, but a big mouth surrounded by the four teeth, like the mouth of an octopus that is surrounded by tentacles. It was the first alien who was found in the Universe. The "monster" was sensitive to high temperatures and always moved towards fresher places. Then, he was burnt by oxygen. Alfred, who had studied biology at university, wanted to take this creature to the Earth to study it, so decided to close him in a cemented part and remove oxygen from it. He informed some of the greatest scientists of the Earth to prepare a spaceship to transport this creature to Earth.

Group: Arrows

Members: Macrì Matteo, Scavetta Matteo, Vignola Daniel, Wittkowski Kevin

The most important researchers and scientists from all over the world decided to meet and discuss about the big information coming from Mercury. They met at the NASA headquarter in Washington D.C.. The most important questions were:

1. How can we bring the creature to the Earth?
2. How big is it?
3. Where can we put it and in which lab?
4. Is it dangerous?

After a long discussion the scientists decided to prepare the mission, so they built a huge spacecraft with a big room without oxygen for the monster and the best NASA's equipment and the most excellent astronauts. The launch of the spacecraft was established on 28th June of the year. So that two months later the spaceship could reach Mercury during the period between the "night" (-183°C) and the "day" (+427°C). While, the astronauts were preparing the mission and the scientists were building a suitable lab on the Earth, on Mercury Alfred and his team were able to capture the monster (to carry it on the Earth). After some months and a lot of preparations, the day of the launch arrived. Everything was ready! The spacecraft took-off and after two months' travel it landed on Mercury's surface. Immediately after the monster was carried on the spacecraft and while Fred and his team continued their mission, the spacecraft left Mercury and landed on 28th August among a lot of curious people and excited scientists who were looking forward to study the monster and writing a surprising report.

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THE STRANGE LIGHT

Once upon a time on Jupiter there was a civilization which was more intelligent than the human one.

They were able to fly from a planet to another with incredible space-crafts equipped with weapons. But they were peaceful with other populations. They spoke as humans do, but an unknown language. Their food was on Pluto, which is millions of kilometers far from Jupiter. With these spacecrafts they brought this food to their planet and in this way their civilization could survive.

But, one day, all changed.

One evening, while they were loading their spacecraft with food, they saw a strange light in the sky and, after a while, all became blind. When the boss realized what was happening, he immediately decided to leave the planet and come back to Jupiter. Unfortunately, few people could come back without being blinded by the strange light. After some days, the boss ordered all the scientists of Jupiter to discover the source of the light and look for something which could turn it off.

All the scientists went to work and together discovered that the strange light was another star which was approaching the Solar System very quickly. When they showed their discoveries, all people were afraid and many of them went away in their spacecraft in the universe, looking for a new house. As you can imagine many of them died as soon as they left the atmosphere of Jupiter, blinded by the light. The people who remained on Jupiter collaborated with the scientists to build a shelter to repair their eyes from the strange light. At the same time the scientists were trying to find a solution to turn away the star and to save all people who had remained on the planet.

Many months went by /passed, and their hope was about to vanish when a scientist, whose name was Jalyleus, discovered that Jupiter, together with the Solar System, was about to join another Solar System, and the only way to save all people was to build a new, awful(?) overlay, which would cover the surface of the planet. Jalyleus discovered also that the atmosphere would evolve according to the new System in a few million years, and said that the overlay would be "temporary".

The problems were two: the first was the material, which had to be soft and easy to position. The second was the size of the overlay. It had to be as large as the surface of Jupiter! Immediately all people thought that it was impossible to build such a big 'building', but, after a while, they knew it

Group: Fun

Members: Bozzi Alessandro, Costa Edoardo, Grollero Riccardo, Salvatico Nicolò

was the only possibility to survive. Then each person went to work and began to build the FANL Overlay (For A New Life Overlay). The work was divided into two phases: the first consisted building the overlay ashore and the second phase was to put it in a point where the gravity of the two Suns and the gravity of Jupiter didn't affect each other. In this way, the FANL Overlay was able to "float" in the space and protect Jupiter's population.

The construction lasted a year and, when it was completed, all people cheered because of the results obtained. The boss decided to position the overlay immediately to verify if it really worked. In fact, the next day, all the people took to the streets to watch the 'lift-off' of the FANL overlay.

After fixing a big magnet on each square kilometre on the overlay, some spacecrafts would fly in the space bringing other large magnets and they would attract the overlay (with them).

During the operation all the people hoped that it would work. Finally, after two days of hard work, the overlay was positioned as it had been theorized and all the scientists studied for many days its behavior and discovered that the overlay was fixed in the initial position and it wasn't moving.

In this way this civilization (or rather, what was left) survived by its apocalypse.

Group: Fun

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INVADERS WHO AREN'T INVADERS

Saturn, which is a beautiful and rich planet, has got seven rings. Once upon a time there was a scientist on the planet. He was the only human being on Saturn. He wasn't just a scientist, but also an astronomer, a farmer, a physicist, a psychologist, an engineer etc., so he was able to know many things about everything. He was getting very old, before dying he wanted to protect Saturn from invaders because he had never agreed with the idea of leaving the planet under the control of other creatures. He decided that for each ring there would be a test which invaders had to pass to reach the surface of Saturn. There were as many trials as the number of rings of Saturn, on the whole seven. A population is arriving on the planet and is starting the challenges:

1) The Invaders want to 'enter' Saturn. This is a difficult task because in front of them the rocks are arranged to form a maze. In this the spacecraft flies very fast seeking the end of the maze with no results because the maze is very long. When they arrive at the end they see a big wall with a squared equation: $5x^2 + 20 = 0$. They find a solution thanks to a baby who exclaim: "What's this? It is impossible to solve it in Real numbers!!"... The wall crashes and they can pass to the next ring.

2) To conquer the second ring they have to pass a test that is quite tempting and which may seem easy. They have to eat 400 hamburgers in 5 minutes. The huge, hot, tasty 'mountain' is standing in front of them, waiting for them. Luckily they are quite hungry because finding the solution to the squared equation of the previous task needed a lot of energy and this stimulated their appetite. All of them are eager to take part in the 'banquet' and the 400 hamburgers end in less than 4 minutes. But the trial isn't valid...the cook realizes that he hasn't put any ketchup in them and so they have to repeat it. They are too full to eat another 400 hamburgers and even if they are very greedy they have to postpone it to the following day.

3) The scientist who has decided all the tests, has invented a very difficult trial. The most fearless among the invaders has to fight against a very big and ferocious tiger that is the result of one of his old unpremeditated experiments. Actually when he 'created' it, he was nearly tore to pieces by it since it was a cross between a tiger and a white bear. Fortunately he managed to find a big cage where he locked it and took it to the fourth ring. He decided to free it because he thought that nobody would like to fight against it and would run away so his planet would be safe. It was not a single person who fought against it but a whole population and since unity is strength they killed the tiger. The scientist was upset and he started to worry because he didn't want his planet to fall into enemy's hands.

Group: M & G

Members: Furgeri Martina, Gallo Gabriella, Salsano Gabriella, Torri Marco

4) After the test about the fight against the tiger they are waiting for the fourth trial. Then they find two shuttles: the first is for one of the invaders and the second doesn't have a seat. It is piloted by a computer. The scientist created it to prevent invaders from colonizing Saturn. The race is going to start but they don't know who they have to compete against. They are strange people and all of them, apart from children, want to pilot the shuttle. They talked about it for some hours until they decided to draw who should have the honor of trying to win the competition. A slim man is finally chosen by lot and he starts the race against the computer. The other people are discussing about the incorrect result of the lot, meanwhile he is doing the competition. He is very fast and he can win it. That's what happened. Nobody saw the race but all of them were glad of him. So they succeeded in passing the fourth test.

5) In the fifth test the population has to run along the orbit with a bag full of sand on their back. The race consists of four phases: the first one is a hurdle-race, in the second one people have to run as fast as they can, in the third one they have to wade in the mud and in the last one they have to swim in a swimming pool for an hour without stopping. The whole race has to be completed in 2 hours.

6) The following test is an intelligence test. The population has to overcome difficulty levels; such as: -reading a text in 10 minutes and learning it by heart then they have to answer some questions regarding the text in a very short time.

7) After various adventures the most courageous arrive where they can see the planet. They are very happy and with a sigh of relief exclaim with joy a hearty cry: "hip hip hurray!!" because they don't know that there is another test they must pass... it is the 7th ring and they don't know it.

When they try to put a foot on the planet the 62 satellites (prevent them the step and the satellites) stop them and form a riddle that is: "there are three brothers in a house sometimes are ugly and sometimes are beautiful. the first isn't there because he has gone out, the second isn't there because he is coming, there is only the third, the youngest, but when he leaves, nobody is left there. who are they?". A man thinks about the tenses of each sentence so he says: "the first has gone out so he is the past, the second is coming so he is the future and the one who is in in the house is the present..." when the ring hears these words: past, future and present the satellites move and the colonizers can put their feet on their new planet.

They reach the scientist's house and lab. When he sees them he suddenly remembers some of them were part of his family emigrated into other galaxies. He always thought they had died but

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they were trying to come back home on their planet. They succeeded in passing the tests because they knew his mentality and his way of thinking. Once again there is a population on Saturn.

Group: M & G

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PLUTO

The World was in trouble and only a hero could save the Earth from this terrible catastrophe., in fact the world was infected by an apocalyptic epidemic/plague caused by the lack of food and water during the 3° world war. it was almost time for the extermination of the world, the heads of the most important states of the world came together to solve the situation and thought that a man had to go to Pluto to collect the essential medicine for the survival of humanity. This drug was only on Pluto because it was a combination of water, methane and rocks present only in its core. This medicine could prevent men from dying for lack of food and water.

Now they had to decide which brave man would go to the dwarf planet risking his life. In the world there was only a person who could do this mission , his name was Liut. He was the only person that had the necessary characteristics to go to Pluto. Liut was born in the U.S.A. but now he lived in Tibet with his 'Sensei' who had taught him to face all difficulties in the world. The American president decided to send Liut to Pluto. He left in a supershuttle equipped by NASA. Supershuttle because it was the fastest and the most powerful on earth: in fact it could do the mission in about two months. At first the journey was simple but when he approached Jupiter the big asteroids began to damage the shuttle.

Fortunately Liut was able to reach pluto's atmosphere. Now he had to do the most difficult thing: collect a sample of water , methane and rock on Pluto. When he reached the core of this planet he saw that this planet wasn't uninhabited , in fact he saw a group of strange animals. They were the 'aliens' who lived on Pluto. They were very strange because they had a very big head and a lot of hands and legs and they were able to fly because they had two wings, too. They were protecting the rare rock(s) in Pluto's core because it was very important for their life.

Liut had to wait for the right moment to steal the rock. A month later he took advantage of the fact that the 'aliens' started fighting for the succession of the kingdom. He managed to put (a sample of)the rock into a special case and left the planet very quickly. The alien realized that Liut had stolen the rock, but they weren't able to cross their atmosphere. Liut was very happy because he thought he could save the world from the epidemic/plague but when he got to the earth he saw that there was no one there. Suddenly he noticed that an alien had been able to hide in his shuttle but before he could realize the danger of the situation the alien pulled out his special weapon and killed Liut. So this was the end of the human race.

Group: IES

Members: Durante Lorenzo, Lualdi Martina, Munisteri Marta, Odasso Jacopo

THE LAST HUMAN

21st August, 3113

it's nearly two hundred and twenty-three days after the Earth's explosion, and our transfer to Neptune is now complete.

We are sure that Neptune won't receive the radiations sent from the Earth's explosion.

Many years ago because of the third world war, we were obliged to move to another planet, and Neptune was the only one which was far enough not to be radiated.

When we arrived on Neptune, we built a very big dome, where inside we placed an atmosphere generator, and we started another life.

After building the dome, we explored the planet.

After few weeks we found some strange green buildings, and we discovered we were not alone on this planet.

The authority decided to destroy the Alien race to avoid a possible attack by the Aliens, so a group of fifty soldiers went to the Aliens' city.

When the soldiers attacked the Aliens, in some way, they knew that they had arrived and they defended themselves but without killing anybody because they were peaceful, at first.

The war continued for about four months when the humans decided to use a bomb which destroyed the Earth, the atomic bomb.

Now I'm the only one who survived the explosion, I know that I'm the last human destined to die on this planet so I'm writing this letter hoping that somebody will find it to discover how the humans were able to destroy themselves (finally...).

Group: No Name

Members: Bogliolo Nicolò, Gastaldi Irene, Piccioni Alessio, Vannucci Lorenzo

MARS ATTACK

21/12/2012. The day when the end of the world was predicted, none believed that but I, Steve, expert in astronomy, saw a celestial object coming towards our planet, we only would have had a week before the impact. Due to the world alert, people started escaping including myself. The most important people escaped in a spaceship built in Russia, with a troop of elite soldiers. While we were leaving from the terrestrial atmosphere, we could see the Earth disintegrating before our eyes. We were directed to Mars where there might have been water and we could have survived. When we got out of the spaceship, the atmosphere was similar to the Earth's so it was possible to breathe, and we could begin a new life there. Some years later, we were able to settle down there, even if we were unable to colonize all of it. So an elite of soldiers and I decided to go to the part of Mars that we hadn't explored yet. After many months of walking we arrived in a strange place where there were giant walls of a strange material like metal but rougher and more resistant. Walking around this huge building we were able to find the main entrance. We knocked and we saw some creatures similar to us, which had a tail and whose physical abilities were superior to ours. When we got in the structure we observed that their technologies were superior to ours. Then they told us to leave the planet because if we hadn't gone away they would have exterminated us. We moved to our base and we reported everything to the rest of the settlers. The commander in chief told us to attack the aliens saying that we would do it using our military strategy. If we hadn't moved away they would have attacked us within 30 days. I was against having a war so I returned to their base and I tried to convince them not to attack us, but they didn't accept because my companions wanted to kill all of them, so they banned me from their base. When I returned to my base I saw them preparing for the battle and when I told them that I had been in the enemy camp they tied me to a pole. When they were ready, they attacked the aliens. After 3 months of fighting both factions were halved and they prepared for the final fight. The aliens attacked the humans by surprise and killed all of them except me, so they freed me and took me away with them. So I was the only survivor of the human race.

Group: As Soon As Possible

Members: Alessandri Daniele, Amato Matteo, Pesce Riccardo, Schifanella Lorenzo