

SOLAR FORCE FIVE

SCENE: Three astronauts have just returned from a space mission. They are reporting back to mission control about their discoveries.

ROLES (5): Patrick (astrophysicist), Jemima (astrophysicist), Katrina (astronaut), Simon (astronaut), Luke (astronaut)

READER AGES: 8 years and over

PATRICK: Welcome back to Earth, my talented team of astronauts - Commander Katrina, Commander Simon and Commander Luke! We've all been waiting to hear about your adventures in our neighbouring solar system. I haven't been able to sleep for weeks!

JEMIMA: Yes, welcome back to you all. What amazing adventures you've had! I have so many questions for all of you. But firstly, the most important question: How are you all? Are you all fit and healthy?

KATRINA: We're all doing very well, Jemima. We're very tired, though - it was a long journey out to Solar Force Five and back. I feel like I could sleep for a year!

PATRICK: (*amazed*) Solar Force Five... our neighbouring solar system! You must tell us everything that you have learned about it. We can't wait to start going through all the samples you have brought back to Earth for us!

SIMON: Well, you already know that Solar Force Five is a five-planet solar system that orbits around a star. We managed to learn that the two planets closest to that star are made of gas. We don't really know much else about them.

JEMIMA: That's disappointing. Is there anything else that you can tell us about the two gas planets?

LUKE: We only saw them from a great distance - we couldn't risk getting too close. We can tell you that the planet closest to the star is a bright pinkish colour and the second closest planet is a lime green colour.

PATRICK: Fascinating! What about the other planets?

KATRINA: Well, we did manage to orbit the two outer planets. I must say, in all my years of experience, I've never seen anything like them before. They seemed to be made of a substance that I can only describe as... goo.

JEMIMA: *(looking confused)* Goo? What on earth do you mean, Katrina?

KATRINA: It sounds strange, I know. The surface of the two outer planets appeared to be covered in a sticky, stretchy goo-like material. We didn't dare to land on the surface, just in case the space module got permanently stuck.

PATRICK: *(disappointed)* Oh, well. I suppose you had to make sure you were safe.

SIMON: Not to worry, Patrick. We did manage to send one of our drones down to the surface of each planet to collect a sample. *(passes two specimen containers to Patrick)* Here you are. These are especially for you.

PATRICK: *(enthusiastically)* Oh thank you, Simon! How exciting! I can't wait to examine them!

JEMIMA: So, the two closest planets are gases and the two furthest planets are made of... umm... goo. What about the middle planet?

KATRINA: This is where it gets really interesting.

PATRICK: Why? What did you find out about the middle planet?

LUKE: As we journeyed around Solar Force Five, we came very close to the surface of the middle planet. At first, we couldn't believe what we were seeing.

PATRICK: *(intrigued)* What? What were you seeing?

SIMON: Water. *(pauses for effect)* We saw water on the surface of the middle planet.

PATRICK: Are you sure?

JEMIMA: Are you positive?

KATRINA: We're super sure!

LUKE: We're absolutely positive!

JEMIMA: Do you know what this means? This is the biggest discovery in the history of space exploration! It means... it means...

Jemima is too excited to speak. Katrina comes to her aid.

KATRINA: It means that life might exist in Solar Force Five.

PATRICK: Life! On another planet! Oh, it's what we've always dreamed about! *(to Simon)* Please, please tell me you sent a drone down to the surface to take a sample of the water?

SIMON: Of course we did. *(passes a specimen container to Patrick)* Here.

PATRICK: Oh, good gracious! I feel like all my birthdays have come at once!

JEMIMA: Congratulations, astronauts! You have brought us information that will drive our explorations into space for the next 50 years, at least. We must start planning our next mission immediately!

LUKE: You're most welcome, Jemima. May I just ask for one small favour?

JEMIMA: Of course, Luke. Anything!

LUKE: Before we start planning any more missions, please... let us sleep first!

THE END

