

Lost in Space

One night, when William was in his bed and looking at the stars through the window, somebody tugged his sleeve. William turned to look and saw an old tin soldier standing in front of him. Dad had given him to William as a present a long time ago.

“How did you get here?” William asked. “You’ve been lost for a long time.”



“I was in space,” the tin soldier replied. “Do you remember when your Dad asked where the tin soldier was and you said he was lost in space?”

“But I was joking,” William said.

“Some jokes come true, you see!” The tin soldier adjusted the gun on his shoulder and looked at the stars.

“If you only knew how exciting it is out there!” he said with a sigh. “Would you like to see?”

“But how?” William wondered. “Will I also have to fly into space?”

“Sure,” the tin soldier smiled. “Take my hand!”

William grabbed the tin soldier by the hand and off they went, shooting towards the stars. The city lights were shining down below, finally melting into one big bright spot.

“First I will take you to the Moon,” the tin soldier said. “I’m in the middle of growing cucumbers over there.”

“But I didn’t send you to sell cucumbers on the Moon, did I?” William tried to remember.

“No, you didn’t. It’s just that I really enjoy growing cucumbers on the Moon,” the tin soldier explained.

They landed on the other side of the Moon – the one you can’t see from the Earth. The tin soldier clapped his hands twice and an entire city of greenhouses lit up.

“Wow!” William marveled. “You’ve got an entire ocean full of cucumbers here!”

“Indeed,” the tin soldier said proudly. He stepped into one of the greenhouses and picked a big cucumber for William. It tasted really good.

“And what are you going to do with the cucumbers?”

He sold Jumbo two cucumbers and got a waterpark ticket for that.

“I’m running a waterpark on Mars now,” Jumbo explained. “I’ve got all sorts of creatures coming there – from hippos to aliens.”



So they flew to Mars and William spent an hour splashing in warm water with rubber frogs, camels and dinosaurs.

“This is really fun!” robots and aliens shouted.

“Cool!” said the Spider Man who was racing on the water with a motor sleigh.

“Now let’s all go to Saturn!” the tin soldier shouted and everyone got out of the water. On Saturn, this motley crew climbed on the rings of the planet and the rubber giraffe used his head to add speed to the movement of the ring. In the end they were going so fast that smaller creatures fell off and got scattered around space.



William was holding onto the inner side of the ring as hard as he could and felt how he was being stretched longer and longer.

“That’s enough!” he thought at some point and let go of the ring. Saturn was left far behind, then he passed Mars, finally the Moon, and then he came crashing down into his own bed, so that the springs were squeaking.

“Huh!”

William sat up and looked out of the window. The sun had just risen and the stars could no longer be seen.

William got up, went to the attic and searched for the tin soldier from his box of old toys. Once he had put the tiny man standing on the book shelf, Dad peeked into his room.

“You’re up already? And where did you find that old tin soldier? I thought he was supposed to be lost in space?”

“I know,” William said. “I went to sell cucumbers with him on the Moon.”

Dad gave William an odd-looking glance and smiled strangely. Then he asked as if incidentally.

“Did you also go to the waterpark on Mars? And did you ride the merry-go-round on Saturn?”

“We sure did,” William nodded, not knowing how Dad knew all this in the first place.

But the tin soldier adjusted the gun on his shoulder and smiled. He knew everything.