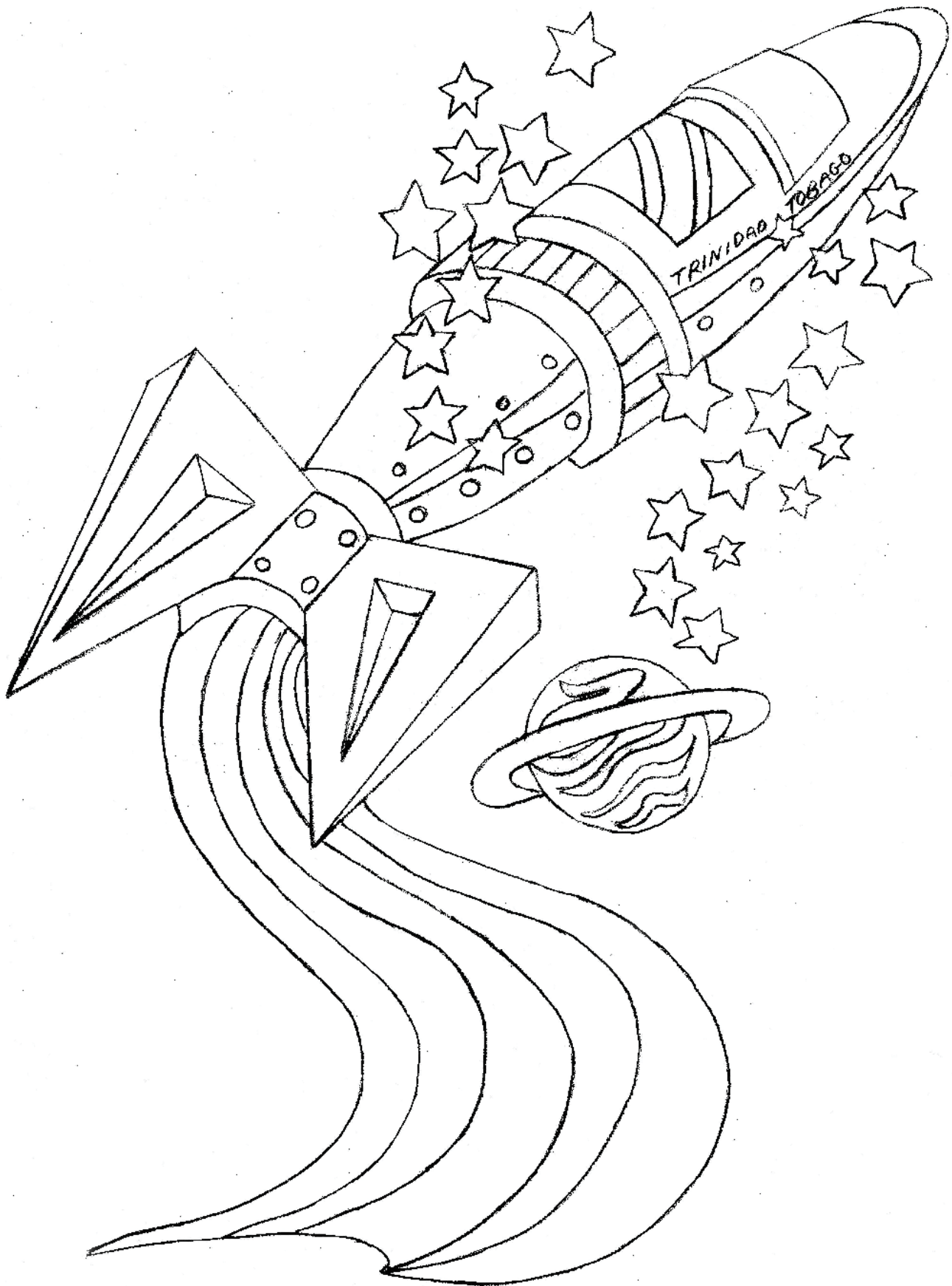


The First Trini On Mars



Andrea, the astronaut, packed her clothes and her diary. She had to reach the space station at 10:30 a.m.

"I'm so late," she thought, "That gas station was really crowded."

But she had been forced to wait in the long line because her car's gas tank was almost empty, then she had a flat tyre, and now bumper-to-bumper traffic. She had the car's air-conditioning on and her windows up because of the heat.

On the last stretch of road Andrea took a risk. She accelerated deeply and the car shot forward. She was going very fast, faster than the legal limit.

Suddenly a police car swooped in behind her; then another came from a side road, but Andrea kept speeding towards the Space Station with the police cars' sirens howling behind.

As she approached the gates, she grinned. She had one minute to spare. Dr Eric Jeffrey, the space station manager, heard the sirens and went outside. He stood in front of the entrance gate. The twirled moustache in his stern face and the look on his face were scary.

Andrea stopped at the gate. She looked in her rear-view mirror at the police cars that had been following her.

"What's all this noise?" Dr Jeffrey demanded when both cars stopped at the gate.

"She was speeding," informed an officer.



"She was late," Dr Jeffrey answered coolly. "This is Andrea, an astronaut, who is about to be the first Trini on Mars."

"I'm sorry. I was focused on the time of the launch," said Andrea.

"Okay, but don't speed again or you'll get a ticket," said an officer.

"Thanks!" she yelled as she ran towards her room. Her red, white and black space suit was lying on a bed. Dressing quickly she headed for the spaceship.

Once she was seated in the spaceship's control chair, she snapped her seatbelt and a smile spread across her face. She was proud that she, a Trini, was going to Mars.

She flicked switches and the countdown began, "5, 4, 3, 2, 1... Blast off!"

The spaceship soared through the sky and pierced the atmosphere. The spacecraft detached from the rocket. It travelled for several weeks on the way to the big red ball.

When she finally arrived, Andrea did not hesitate to go exploring. She floated in slow motion above the icy landscape. Soon, she came across a green creature with big ears, friendly black eyes and a blue mouth.

"Ahhhhg!" she screamed and turned back towards the spaceship.

"Hello there, I'm friendly, don't be afraid." He beamed at her.

Shocked that he could speak English, she cautiously approached him.

"Hi, I'm Andrea, from Trinidad and Tobago," she said.

"Pleased to meet you. I wonder if you can help me. I'm lost and I need a GPS, do you have a spare one?" he asked.

"Why, of course I do; I can give you one to keep," Andrea responded.

She pulled one out of her pocket and handed it to him. In return, he gave her a pen.

"It's a magic pen. It can write any story by itself, and can bring drawings to life," he explained.

"That's amazing. I can draw the Trini flag and plant it on Mars!" she said excitedly.

She pressed the pen and commanded it to draw
the Trinidad and Tobago flag. It lit up and spun around,
danced in the space, then drew a rectangle and some inner lines.
The familiar red, black and white flag appeared.
She reached out to touch it and found
that it was real. She grasped it.

"I'll plant it on Mars when we land there." she told the friendly alien.

She took a selfie with the flag and her new friend, there, hovering above freezing Mars.

When she was getting ready to return to the spaceship, the alien called his friends to see her off.

“Eeeeeee,” he called, and they appeared out of empty space. They waved goodbye to her, with their own special pens.

When she got back to Trinidad, she used the pen to write down her Mars adventures.



THE END
