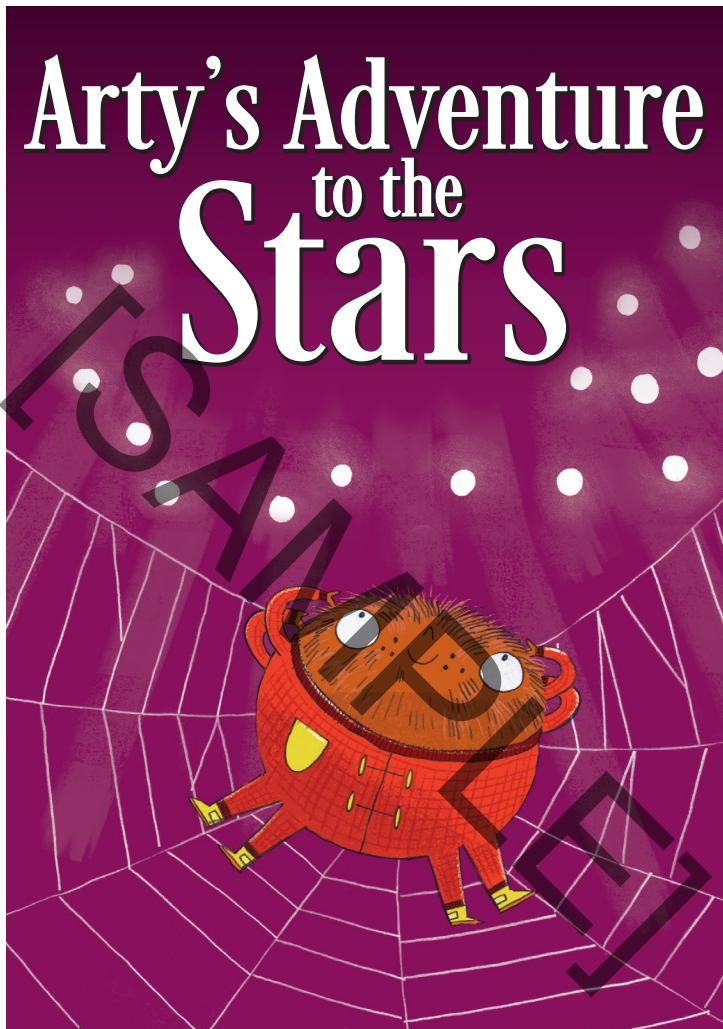


# Arty's Adventure to the Stars



By Shirin Shamsi  
Illustrated by Pauline Gregory

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## Chapter One



# ARTY'S WISH

Arty spun his web skillfully and swiftly. He felt as light as air when he was swinging on his web.

“Look at me,” he called out as he spun fast, flying past his sisters, Itzy and Bitzy.

“Stop showing off,” said Itzy.

“We all know you’re the fastest web spinner,” said Bitzy.

“Arty, what are we going to do with you?” Mama spider said as he zoomed by. “You need to slow down.”





SAMPLE

SAMPLE



“Look Mama,” Arty called, feeling adventurous, as he flew even higher. “I’m so quick! See how high I can swing?”

The spider family lived near a dark tunnel, which Arty loved to stare at. Every once in a while, the stars came out and shone brightly. Then, floodwaters would gush down from the tunnel. When the waters subsided, the stars would stay on for a while, but then they would blink out as quickly as they had appeared.

Arty loved to see the stars. He had learned the sounds that came before a flood and was quick to move out of the water’s path before it came rushing down.

When all was quiet, he waited to see the stars.

As he admired them, he whispered, “I wish I could go up and see the stars.”



“It is much too dangerous,” Mama said. “There are great dangers out there. There are giant aliens beyond the tunnel.”

Arty’s eyes lit up with excitement. “That’s awesome! I would love to meet aliens. Please Mama, can you tell us more about the aliens?” Arty asked.

Itzy, Bitzy, and Arty went to lay in their nest. They settled down to listen to Mama’s tales of giant aliens in the big darkness of the tunnel.

*One day, I will go to the stars and meet the aliens,* Arty thought, as his eyes sparkled with excitement.



## Chapter Two

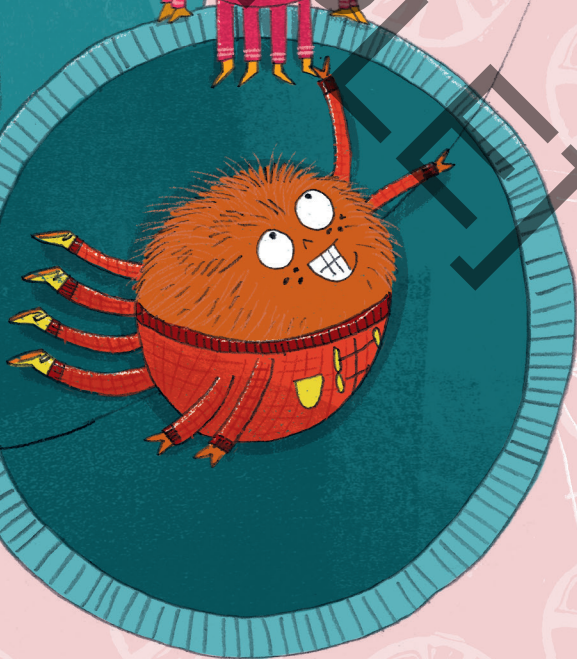


### ***CHORES FIRST***

One morning, Arty woke up as always, ready to go. He slid down and swung every which way. He climbed high on his web and jumped across the gaps with ease.

“Hey, Itzy, hey, Bitzy, come race me!” Arty yelled gleefully. “I’ll give you a head start and still beat you!”

Itzy rolled her eyes. Bitzy smiled at her brother. He was still lovable even though he bragged about his speed. Everyone loved Arty for his love of adventure.



The only time Arty stopped was when he looked up at the stars. Then, he would linger for a long time, just watching quietly and wishing.

“You need to be thankful for what’s in front of you rather than what’s out there,” said Mama. “Now, get your chores done. Off you go now with your sisters.”

Itzy and Bitzy cleaned and mopped. They worked slowly, taking their time with their chores.



Arty whizzed around the house, tidying and dusting. In the distance, he could hear the sound of the floodwaters coming out of the tunnel.

He knew he didn't have much time! He quickly finished all his chores and zipped back to his favorite spot—the long, dark tunnel that led to the stars.





The water was already subsiding when Arty got there. He knew the stars would blink out soon, so he had to enjoy them while he could. He told himself that one day, he would become an adventurer. He would make discoveries as he explored the great unknown. As the stars went dark, he looked longingly at the dark tunnel, and then he turned away with a deep sigh.



## Chapter Three



# ***THE STARS SHINE BRIGHTLY***

Arty could not stop staring at the stars. They were beautiful. Day after day, Arty would make his way to his perch to watch as the stars blinked on, the tunnel flooded, and the stars blinked off again.

On one particular day, the familiar rumbling noise announced the flood's arrival when Arty was still in the path of the water. Quick as a flash, Arty swung away to the safety of his perch. He watched from high up as the water gushed through the pipe.



SAMPLE

ARTY!



When the water subsided and everything was calm and still, Arty gazed at the stars and wished again, with a sigh, that he could visit them.

But today, something was different. Arty stood watching the stars, but they did not go out like usual. Bedtime came, and still the stars were shining. The stars continued to shine, and Arty continued watching.

Mama called him to bed, but Arty was restless and impatient. He wanted to take one last look before he settled down to sleep.

“I’ll just take one last look,” he said. “Then I’ll go to bed. The stars must have gone out by now.”



TSAMP



Arty looked up as his heart pounded. The tunnel would be dark as it always was after the stars went out. But there they were. The stars were still shining brightly. It was a sign. Arty shivered with excitement.

“I’ll just go up a little,” he whispered. “Mama won’t miss me. I’ll be back before she even notices I’m gone.”

## Chapter Four

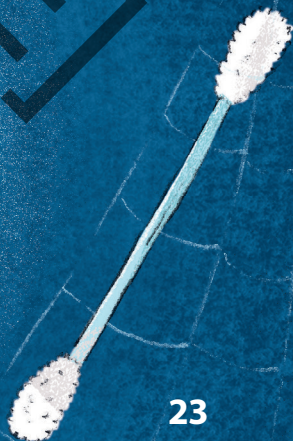
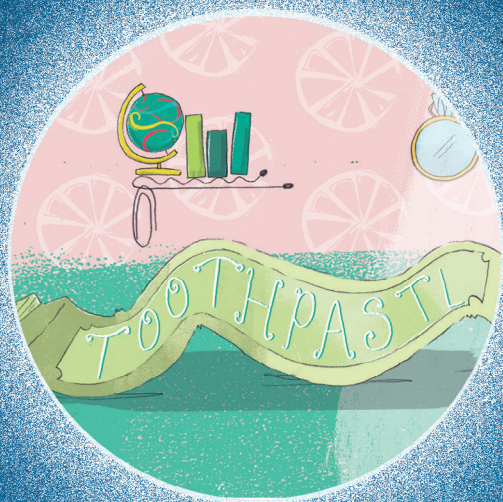


# ***SPACE AT LAST!***

Arty crept closer than he had ever been to the entrance of the dark tunnel and the stars beyond. He knew he should go back but couldn't stop moving closer. The stars looked so close, he was sure that he could make it to them and back in no time.

"I can do this," he whispered. He cast his web, swinging higher and higher up through the dark tunnel.

Up, up, up he went. He imagined himself as a brave explorer going on an exciting adventure. He stopped to turn around. His home was just a small speck in the distance.



There was no turning back now. He had never been this far from his home, his mama, and his sisters. He moved faster than ever. He spun his web quicker than ever.

Suddenly, he could see that the stars weren't lights at all—they were holes that led to someplace brighter than he had ever seen. He had come this far; he had to see what was beyond the dark tunnel.



As Arty came to the edge of the opening, the tunnel became brighter. Slowly, carefully, he crept through. He found himself at the bottom of a huge crater. Rivers of purple and blue water filled the crater. Arty cleverly avoided them and looked up in awe. It smelled so clean and fresh in the crater. It reminded him of flowers and lavender. Mama sometimes brought them back from her trips to the store. They made their nest smell so nice.



[SAMPLE]



Brightness filled every space. Arty blinked. His eyes were having trouble focusing. Arty froze when something loud thundered toward him.

The sounds came closer and louder—louder than the rumblings before the floods. A sound echoed as Arty shook and shuddered. He stopped in his tracks. Two giant aliens stood hovering above Arty.



## Chapter Five



# **GIANT ALIENS**

“Eli, you forgot to turn off the light after you put your dirty clothes in the washing machine,” boomed an alien’s voice. Arty shuddered at the sound.

“Rose, look! It’s a spider!” the other giant alien howled.

Arty shivered as he stared at their hugeness.

“A giant alien!” Arty yelled, but no one heard his tiny cry.

“Scaredy-cat,” the first giant alien said to the other. “It’s just an itzy, bitzy spider.”

“Hey, my name is Arty!” Arty yelled boldly, at the top of his lungs, but no one could hear him.

Two big pairs of eyes stared at him. Suddenly, Arty did not feel brave anymore. He looked back at them and thought that maybe he was not ready to explore yet. He shook and shivered.

“Arty!” Mama’s comforting voice came from behind. Arty turned to see Mama had followed him out of the tunnel, and his fear disappeared. “I’m with you, Arty. Don’t worry. We’ll get home safely,” Mama assured him.

“I’m sorry, Mama,” Arty said with a sigh of relief.

“There’s another spider—look!” yelled Eli. “They’re everywhere. Mom! Help!”



Another thundering sound rumbled toward them as a third giant alien appeared. This one was much bigger than the first two aliens. Arty trembled with fear.

“They mean no harm,” said the largest giant alien. “They must have come out of the drain. Maybe they’re exploring the laundry room,” she said gently. “They’re more terrified of you than you are of them, I’ll bet.”

The three giants watched as Arty scuttled down the drain with Mama and disappeared. They swung down fast through the tunnel, all the way home.

Back at home, Arty smiled with excitement and relief. He had a great story to tell Itzy and Bitzy!

# About Us

## The Author

Shirin Shamsi has lived on three continents and now resides in Illinois. She believes that writing stories to inspire empathy in readers is a step toward creating a kinder world. Shamsi has raised six children—three human and three feline—all of whom provide much inspiration for her stories.

## The Illustrator

Pauline Gregory lives by the sea in Devon, United Kingdom, with her English bulldog Jenson always at her feet. Animals are her favorite things to draw because they are so full of character and fun, so drawing Arty was a complete joy!

## Book Club Questions

1. How are Mama and Arty alike?  
How are they different?
2. What do you think Arty and his mom do next?
3. How is the setting important to the story?
4. How does the author help readers see the world from a different point of view?

# Arty's Adventure to the Stars

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