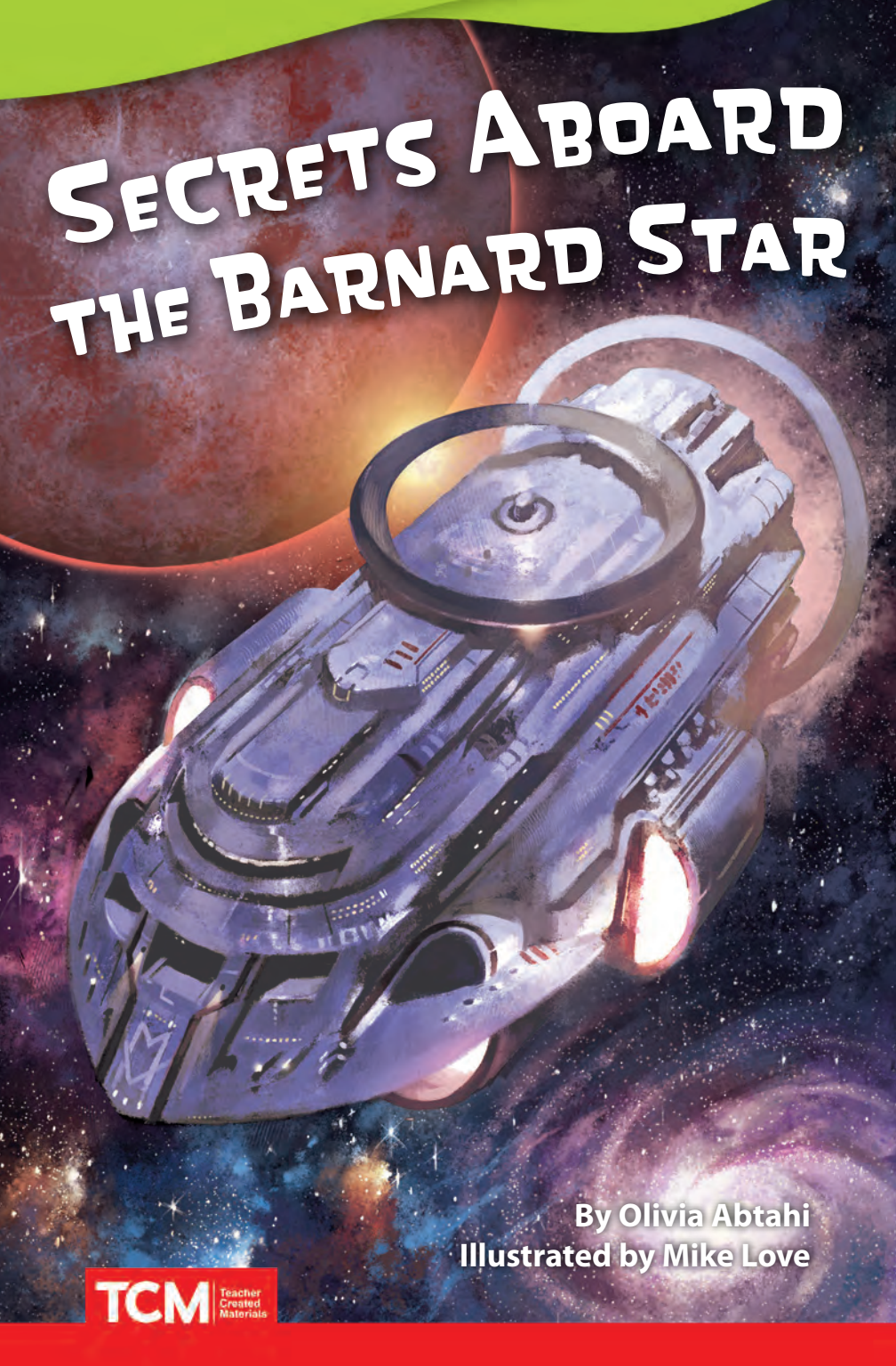
Secrets Aboard the Barnard Star



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TCM Teacher Created Materials

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CHAPTER ONE



Welcome to the *Barnard Star*

Sohrab and Bruno didn't live in a house, or an apartment, or a cabin somewhere in the woods. They lived on the *Barnard Star*, a spaceship named after the sun at center of what would soon be their new solar system.

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Both boys were born on the spaceship, and so were their parents. They had only known a life in space.

All their grandparents had been born in Earth's gravity. Bruno's told him mouthwatering stories of delicious foods like *asados*, *mollejas*, and *empanadas*. Sohrab's grandparents spoke in a mix of Persian and English, describing the beautifully woven rugs, the expertly written calligraphy, and the famous poets of Iran. They all liked to tell the boys about how, on Earth, the sky was so blue and the grass was so green that it looked different from the endless black night sprinkled with stars outside their spaceship.

According to Bruno's grandparents, they grew up in a country called Argentina. As fascinating as pictures and stories of Earth were, Bruno's favorite activity was learning more about their new home, Ophiuchus, the planet that circled Barnard's star. *Ophiuchus* was kind of a mouthful

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though, so everyone on the ship just called it Ophi. Bruno would stare at photos of Ophi for hours, looking at the icy veins of the planet, which held water, and the rocky surface that looked more like Mars than Earth. He couldn't wait to land.

Sohrab, on the other hand, loved living aboard the *Barnard*, where he could watch people in close quarters and observe their habits.

Why did he love people watching? Because Sohrab loved solving mysteries, and humans were more mysterious than any planet would ever be.

Almost a thousand people lived on their ship, and it was one of hundreds that had left Earth almost 40 years ago. People from countries all over Earth had boarded different spaceships. Everyone was headed to planets near different suns with names like Proxima Centauri, TRAPPIST-1, and Kepler. People didn't really come

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from countries anymore—they came from spaceships.

If you asked Sohrab, life aboard the spaceship was way more fun than life on a planet. With so many people aboard the *Barnard*, he had a lot of opportunities to watch everyone, learn from them, find out what they were hiding, and (more importantly) find out why they were hiding it.

Every morning, the entire ship met in the auditorium to go over daily announcements. They announced things like the menu of the mess hall, maintenance updates, and volunteer opportunities to help in the greenhouse or the school. On a Monday morning that seemed like any other, Bruno was half-listening to the announcements. His mind began drifting when the captain ended the announcements with a warning.

They had never heard a warning before.

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CHAPTER TWO



The Water Thief

"There have been several thefts of water credits lately," the captain began. "Whoever is stealing water from other passengers, please stop. Stealing water is a serious crime aboard the *Barnard*, and rest assured, we will get to the bottom of this."

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The whole room filled with whispers. Who would steal *water credits*? Water was very scarce on a spaceship, and every milliliter had to be accounted for. To steal someone's water credits meant you were stealing water from someone's shower or their morning teeth cleaning. *Nobody* had ever stolen a water credit before.

Sohrab turned to Bruno. Bruno groaned. He knew what was coming.

"Bruno, I believe we have a mystery on our hands."

"Not again," Bruno sighed. He had learned an expression from his grandpa: *estar remando en dulce de leche*. He had neither rowed nor tasted the sweetness of *dulce de leche*, but he knew what his grandpa meant. Every time he went along with one of Sohrab's ideas, he ended up in a sticky situation, trying to row his way out of it.

Last week, Sohrab had insisted on finding out why the carrots in the greenhouse had turned blue. It turned

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