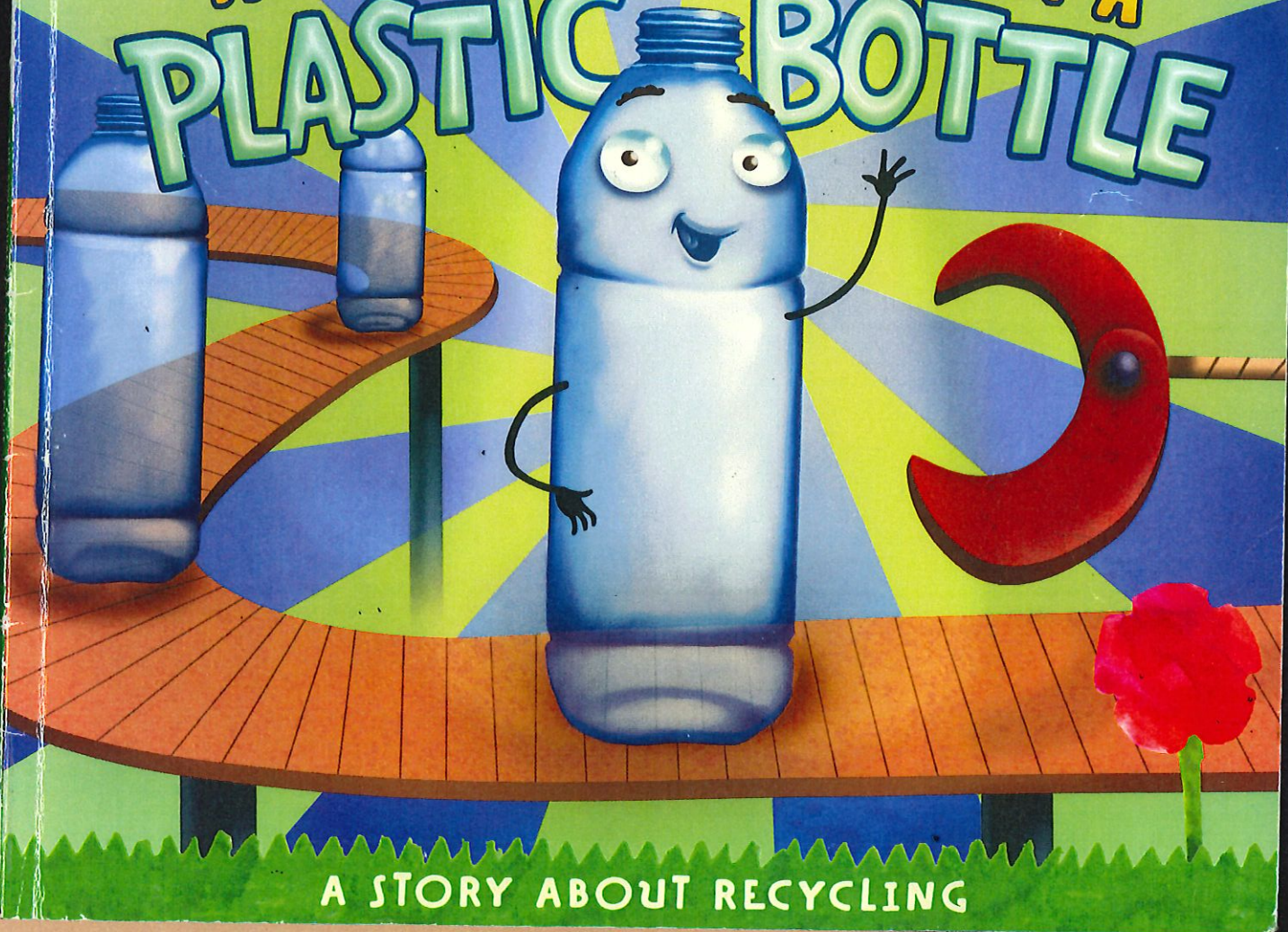


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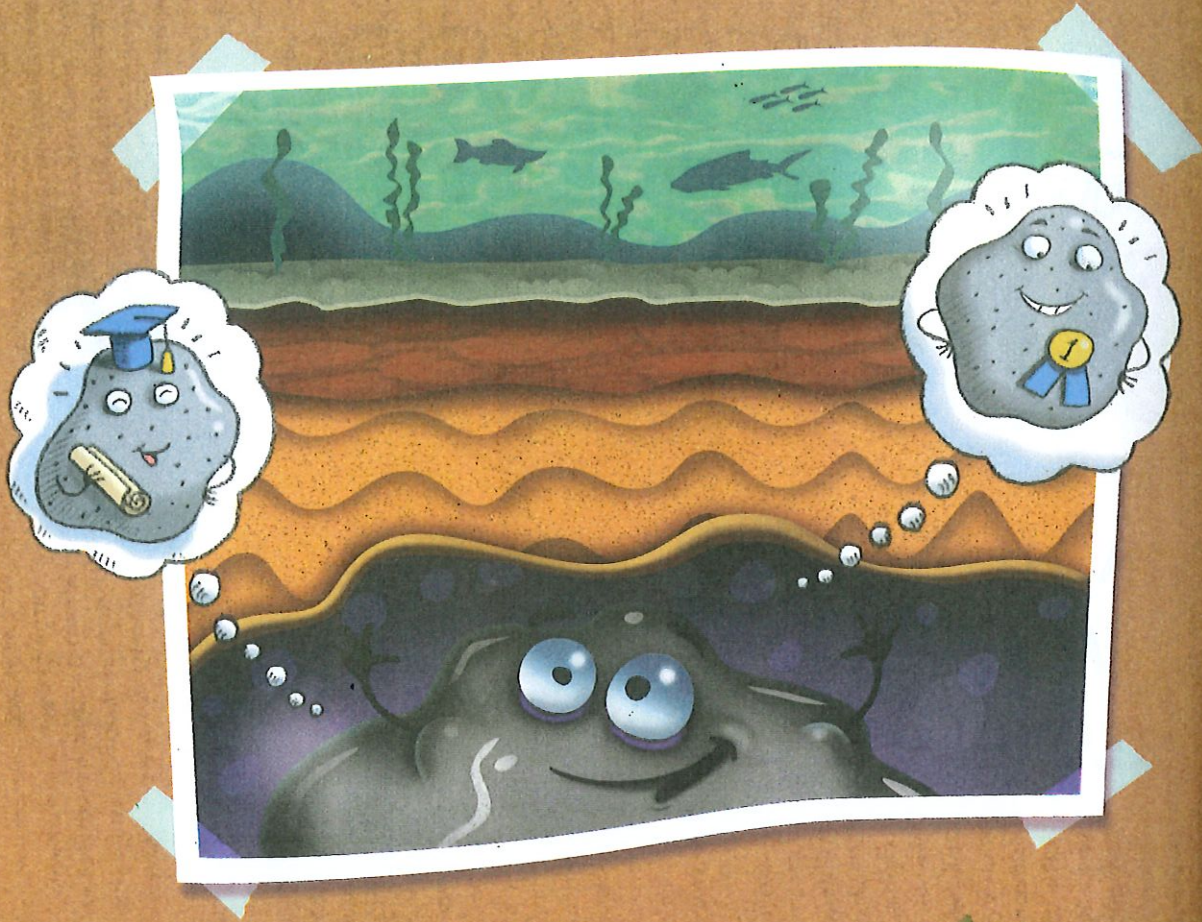
# THE ADVENTURES OF A PLASTIC BOTTLE



A STORY ABOUT RECYCLING

JANUARY 1

Dear Diary: Do you ever get the feeling you were MEANT to do something?



Right now I'm a thick, oozing blob of CRUDE OIL deep underneath the ocean floor, and I've been here for thousands of years.

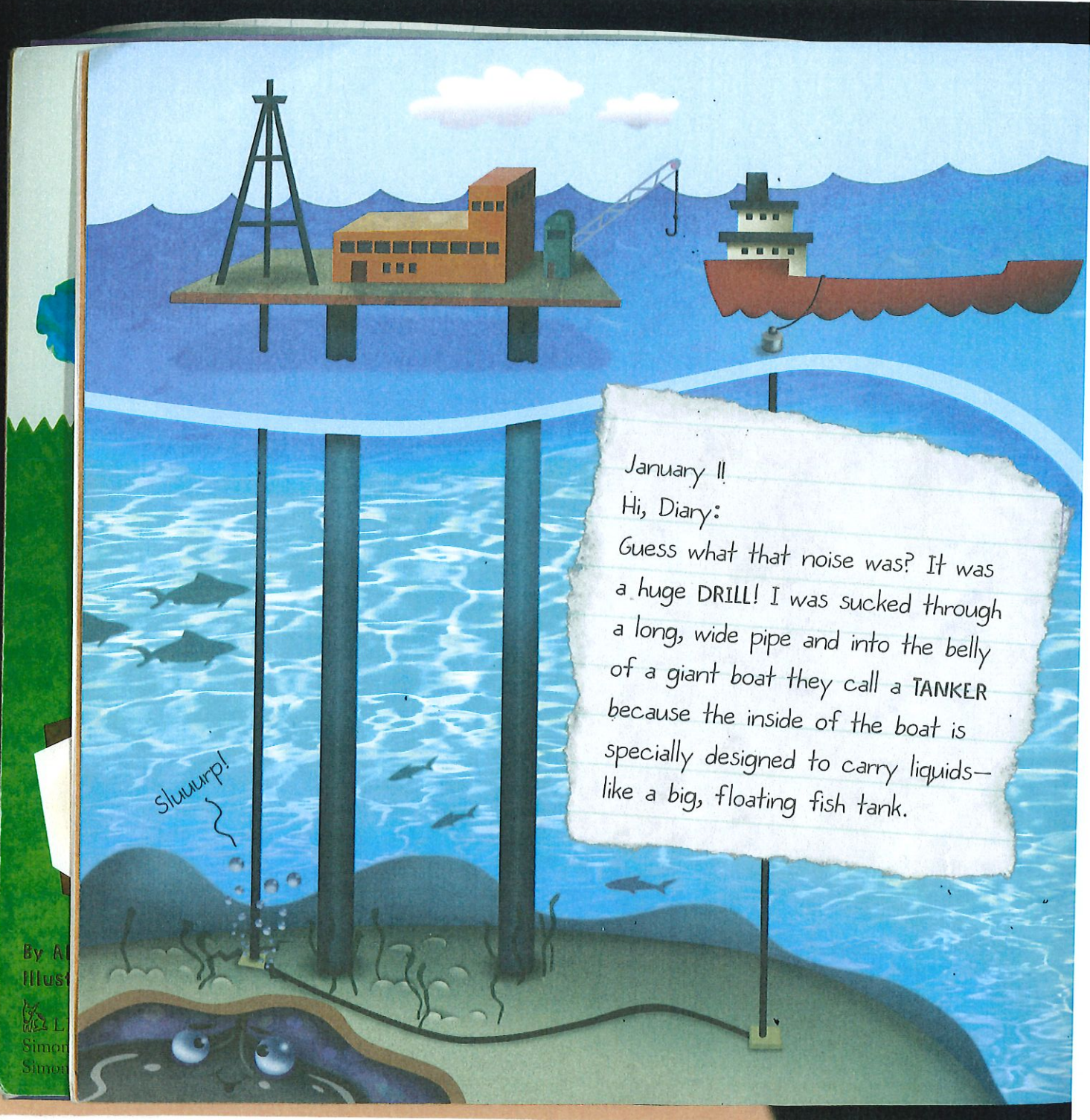
By AL  
Illustrated by  
SIMON  
Simon

But someday I could be made into fuel like gasoline for cars or jets, or I could even be made into tar or asphalt and help build roads.



I hear something cranking and clattering above. I better go check it out!

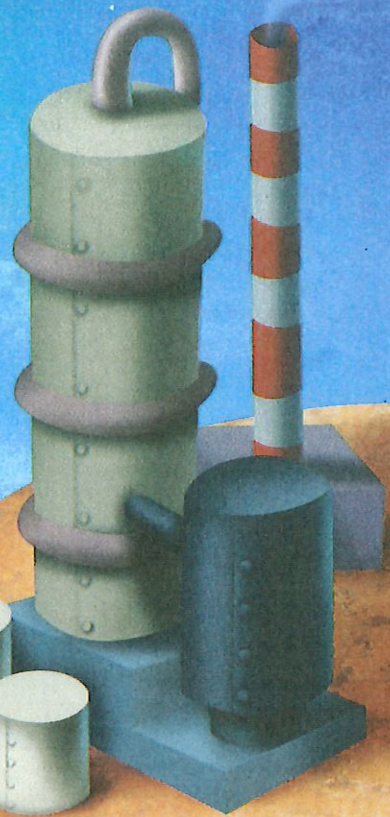
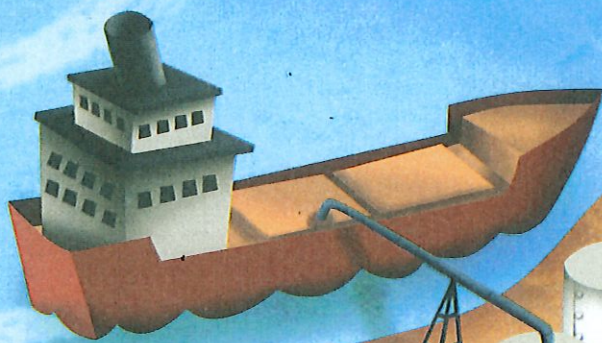




January 11.  
Hi, Diary:  
Guess what that noise was? It was a huge DRILL! I was sucked through a long, wide pipe and into the belly of a giant boat they call a TANKER because the inside of the boat is specially designed to carry liquids—like a big, floating fish tank.

By Al  
Illustr  
L  
Simon  
Simon

The ship sailed for more than one week, and when it stopped, I was pumped into an OIL REFINERY. Now I'll be put through machines that will clean me and change me into a form that people can use to make lots of things like gasoline, wax, oil, and, PLASTIC.



I wonder what's going to happen to me next,  
Diary? WHAT WILL I BECOME?

January 13

Dear Diary:

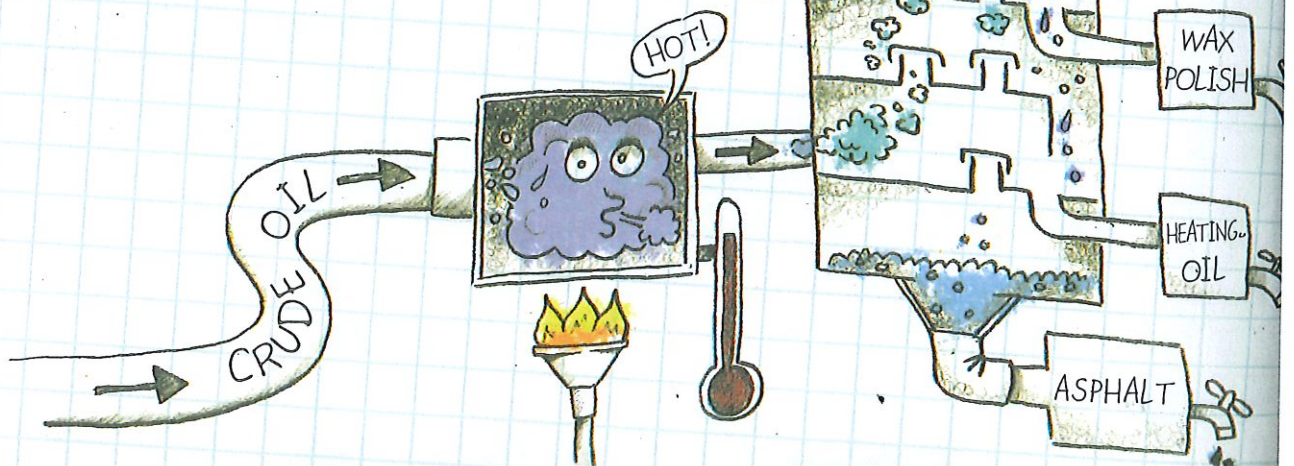
The oil refinery was amazing!

It whirred!

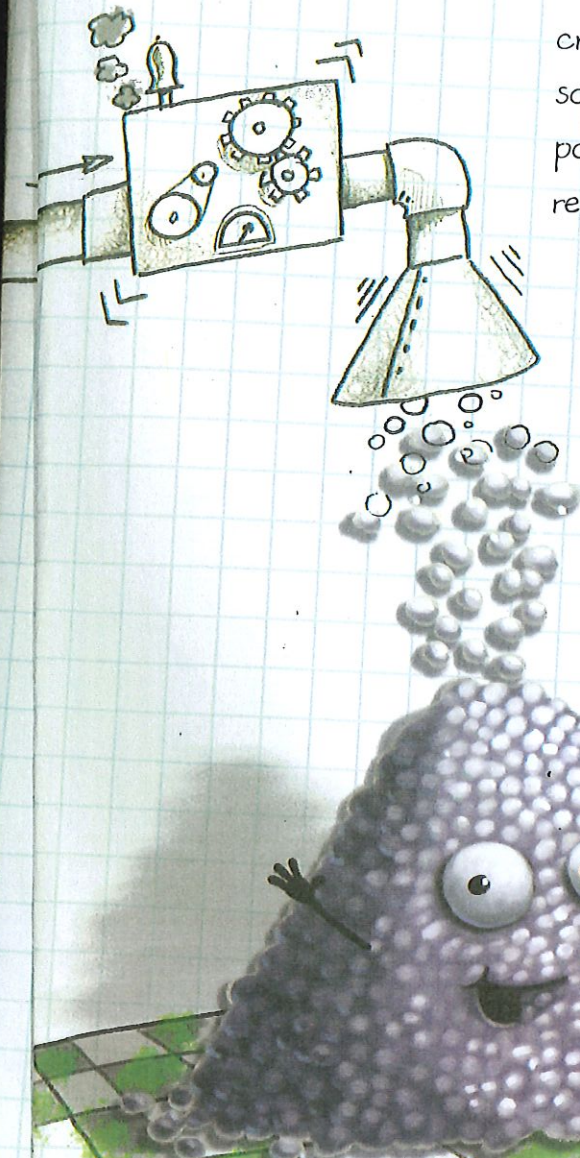
It rumbled!

It bubbled!


I went through a lot of changes. I got so hot that I just about disappeared when I turned into a light, misty gas! And just when things cooled down and I felt heavy again, it got hot and the whole thing started all over. The changes I went through were called, POLYMERIZATION.



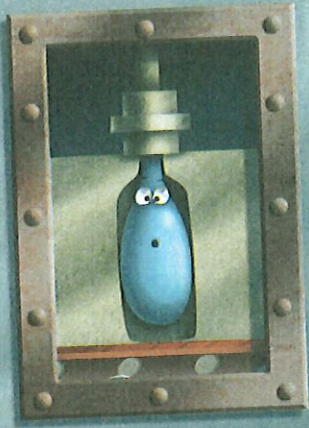
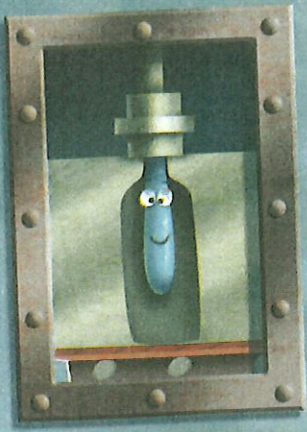
Before I knew it I had become a pile of plastic crumbs! Can you believe it? Plastic! Some of the other crude oil that I traveled with was turned into a paste, some into a thick, clear liquid, and some became a powder. But we have one thing in common—we're all ready to be molded into a new shape.



P.S. Hey, Diary! Did you know that plastic comes from the Greek word *plastikos*? It means easy to mold or shape.



Ah, highly fascinating!



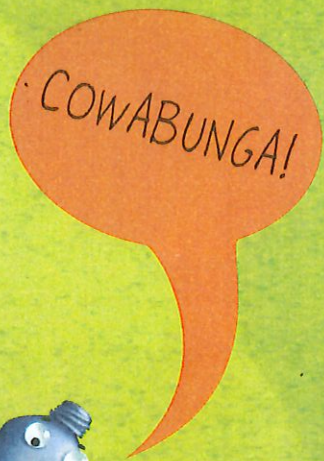
January 29

Hi, Diary:

Guess what? I was sent to a **MANUFACTURING PLANT**, and they heated me until all my little crumbs got nice and squishy. While I was still warm, a machine squeezed me into a mold shaped like a bottle. When I cooled off, I was a beautiful, clear plastic bottle. For **REAL!**

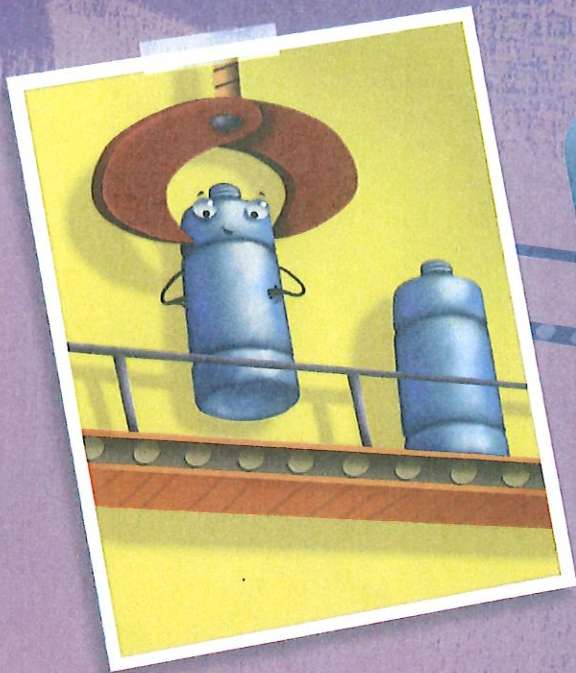


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I felt so light and sturdy  
as I tumbled into a bin with  
lots of other bottles. As  
many as ten million plastic  
bottles can be made in a  
day. That's a lot of bottles  
going out to see the world  
and never coming back!

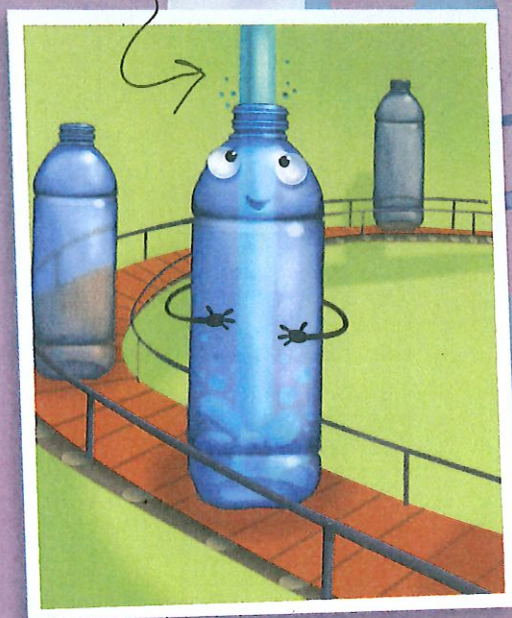




January 30

Hi-ho, Diary!

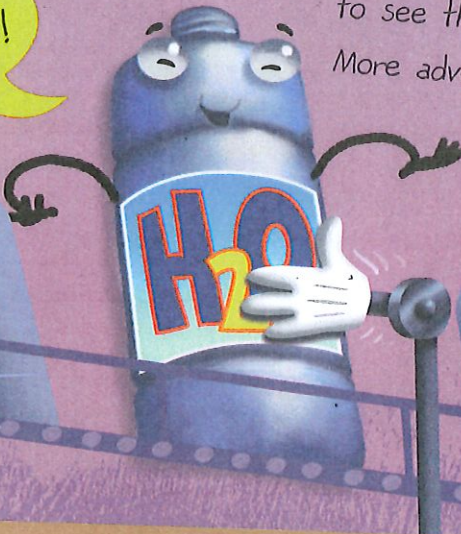
Today was so fun! Being a bottle is great! I was clipped onto a BOTTLING LINE. Wheeeeeee! I flew down the line and went round and round and up and down. Along the way I was washed and STERILIZED. Then I was filled with fresh water! I even got a spiffy label.





Tee-  
hee!

They're putting all of us bottles  
into boxes now. I can hardly wait  
to see the rest of the world!  
More adventure awaits me . . .



February 13

Hey, Diary!

Today I arrived at a grocery store. They loaded me into a refrigerator right in the front row where I had a great view of everything around me. The store was filled with plastic containers in all shapes and sizes.



# INKS

I wonder where we'll all go once we've left the store. . . . Maybe I'll find out soon!

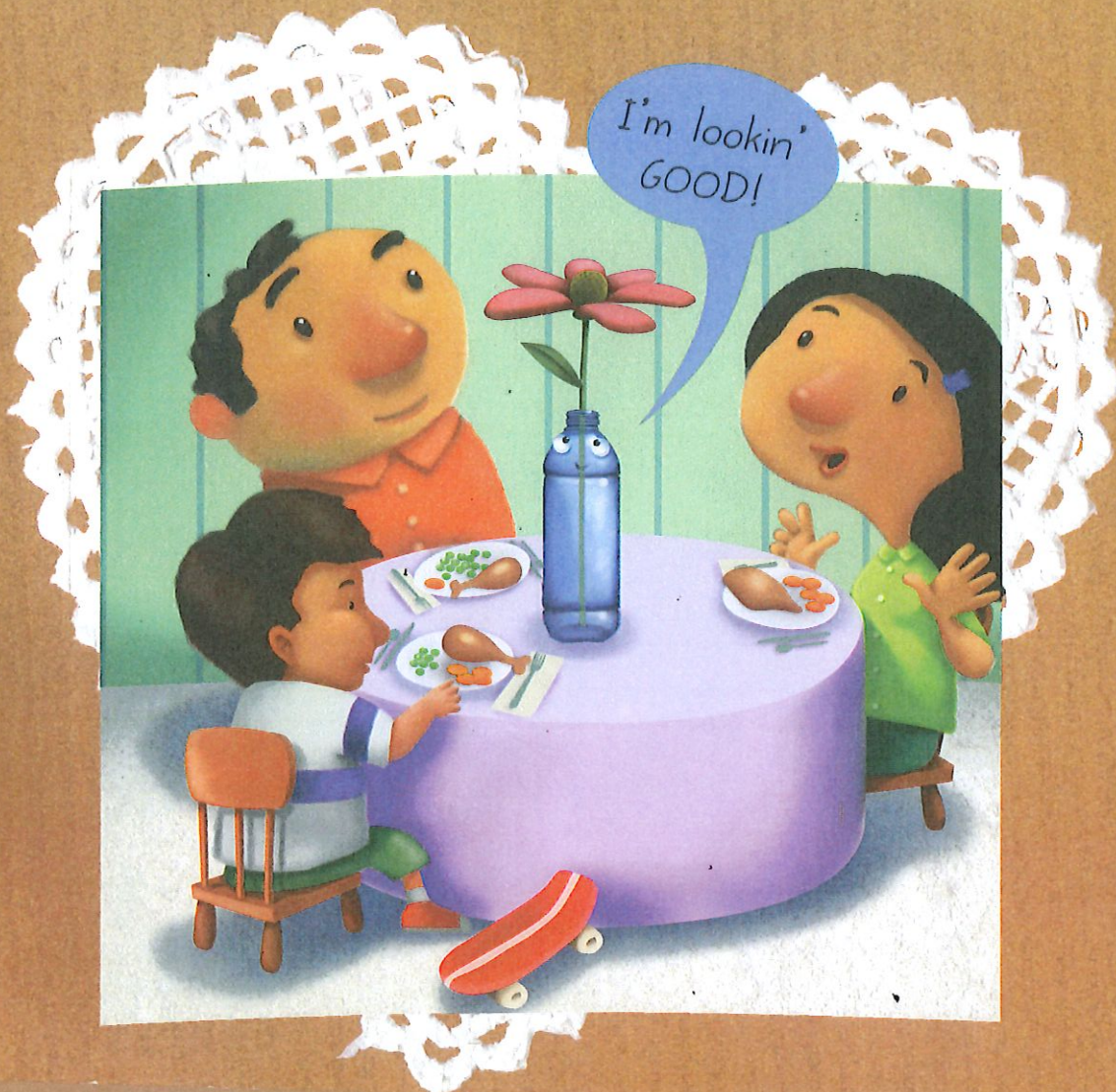




February 14

Guess what, Diary? A boy bought me at the grocery store and took me to a park bench where he gulped down the cool water. The sun sparkled on the side of my bottle. Birds chirped in the tree above me. There were pretty flowers all around. It was so beautiful that I didn't want it to end!

But then something even more wonderful happened! The boy rinsed and filled me with more water, put a flower inside me, and gave me to his mother. I had become a Valentine's Day present! She put me right in the middle of the dinner table. Nothing can be better than being a plastic bottle!



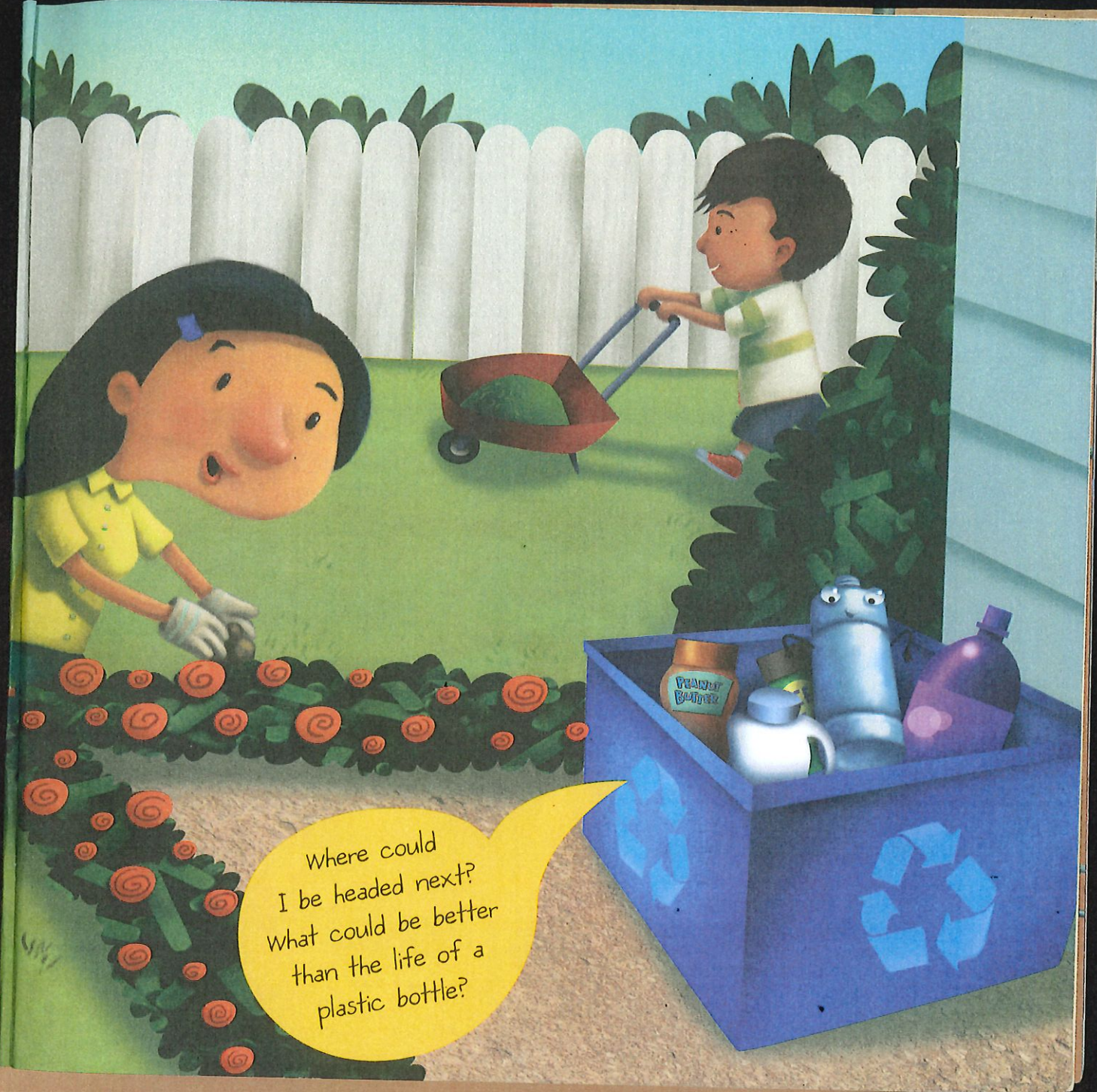


February 21

Dear Diary:

This week was so great, I wish it weren't over! I got to see so many interesting things like the grocery store and the park, and I was a great vase!

The flower wilted and was put into a **MULCH PILE** to become fertilizer. Now I'm in a recycling bin, but I have lots of company—a soda bottle, a peanut butter jar, and an ice-cream container.



Where could  
I be headed next?  
What could be better  
than the life of a  
plastic bottle?

February 23

Dear Diary:

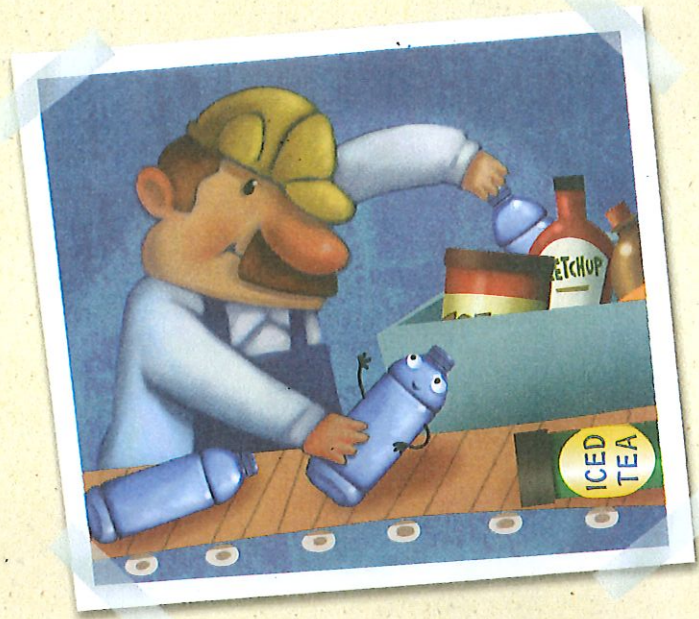
After I was picked up by  
the recycling truck,



I was brought to a  
**RECYCLING CENTER**  
where they sorted all of  
the different bottles and  
containers.

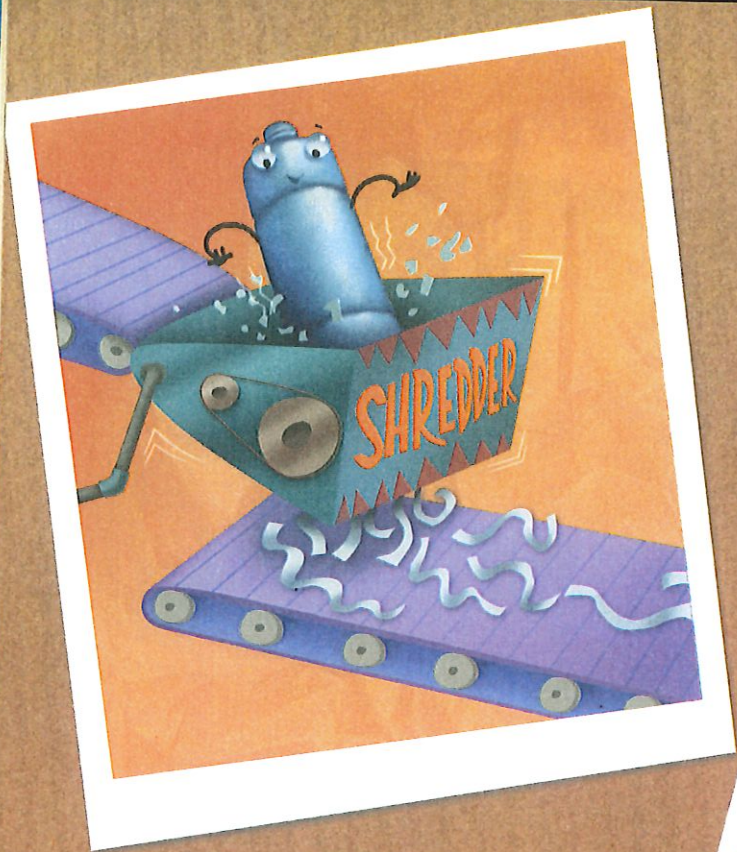


I landed in a mountain of plastic bottles—now I know where some of those other plastic containers from the store shelves ended up! Did you know we're all different kinds of plastics? You can tell what kind we are by looking at the number on the recycling sign on the bottom of the container.



This afternoon all of us plastic bottles got squished. Then we got stacked in big blocks called **BALES** and loaded onto trucks.

Here I go again!



March 16  
What a busy day, Diary! I  
arrived at the plastic reclaiming  
plant where I'll be made into  
something brand-new!

I was sent down a line where I  
got shredded, washed, rinsed, and  
dried. I'm not a bottle anymore!



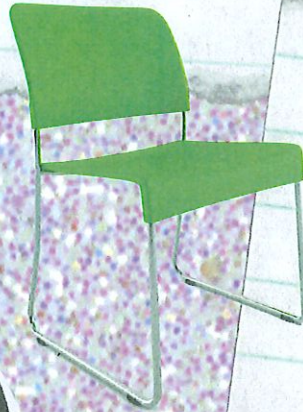
Things started to heat up, and pretty soon I got all soft and mushy. Then I oozed through an EXTRUDER where I was squeezed out into long, thin strands like spaghetti. After that I got chopped into small bits. I liked being a bottle, but I think I'm ready for new adventures!



July 10

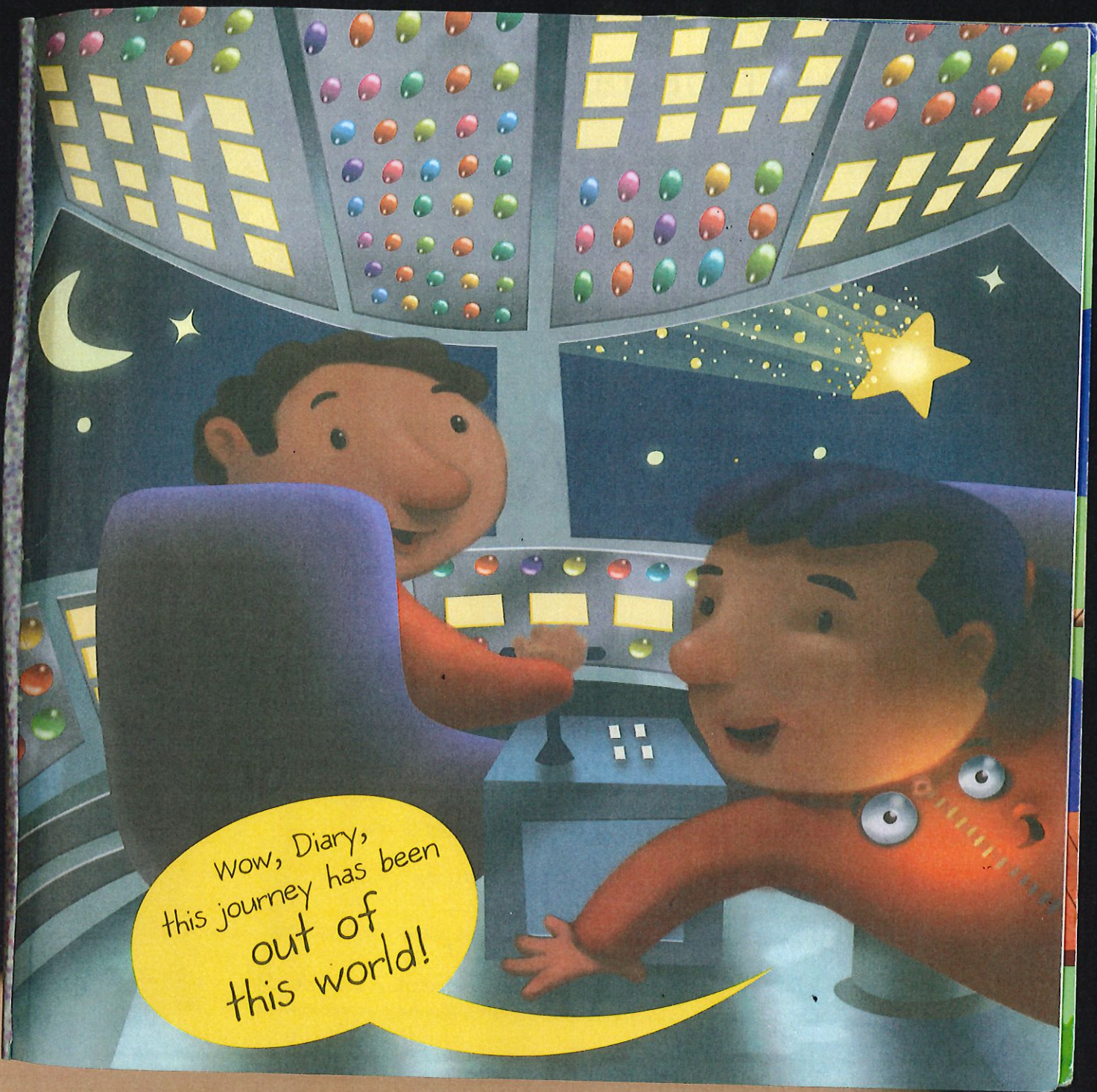
Hey there, Diary!

I never thought I could be happier than when I was plastic bottle, but I am! Can you guess what I am now?



Did you know all of these things are made with recycled plastic? Pretty wild, huh?

Did you guess, Diary? I'm a **SYNTHETIC FLEECE** sweatshirt! Can you believe something as soft and warm as synthetic fleece was made from recycled plastic bottles? I went from crude oil to plastic crumbs, to a plastic bottle, to a vase, and finally to a recycled fleece sweatshirt. I'm being worn by an astronaut headed to space.



Wow, Diary,  
this journey has been  
out of  
this world!

## NEW WORDS FROM THE PLASTIC BOTTLE'S DIARY

- BALE:** a large bundle of the same items that are usually tied together
- CRUDE OIL:** a black liquid found deep in the earth that can be made into gasoline or plastic
- DRILL:** a machine used to make holes in things
- EXTRUDER:** a machine that squeezes soft materials to create long strands
- MANUFACTURING PLANT:** a factory that takes parts and supplies, like plastic crumbs, and turns them into other items that can be sold or used; like plastic bottles
- MULCH PILE:** an area in the garden where fallen leaves, grass, and plants can be gathered to create fertilizer
- OIL REFINERY:** a place where crude oil is cleaned and treated to make other substances like gasoline, wax, and plastic
- PLASTIC:** an oil-based material that can be molded into items like bags, bottles, and toys
- POLYMERIZATION:** the changes that happen to crude oil when it's being made into plastic
- RECYCLING CENTER:** a factory that takes items like plastic bottles, newspapers, and aluminum cans, and turns them into new things that are usable
- STERILIZE:** to make something extremely clean
- SYNTHETIC FLEECE:** a type of cloth made from recycled plastics such as water bottles
- TANKER:** a big ship with a large storage area where things like crude oil can be stored and carried