



Finding Pluto  
Mervat Al-Beltagi  
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The sun looked far out into space. "Is one of my planets missing?"

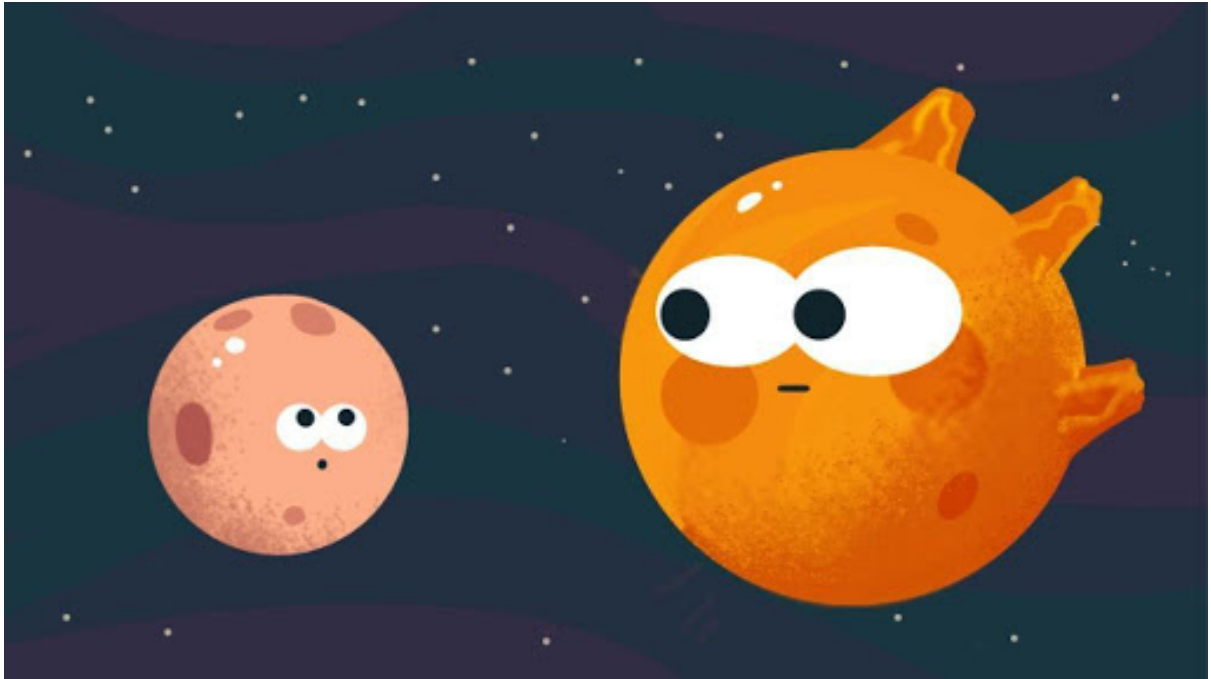
She asked the planets to line up, then put on her glasses and counted. "Oh no!" she cried. "Where did little Pluto go?"



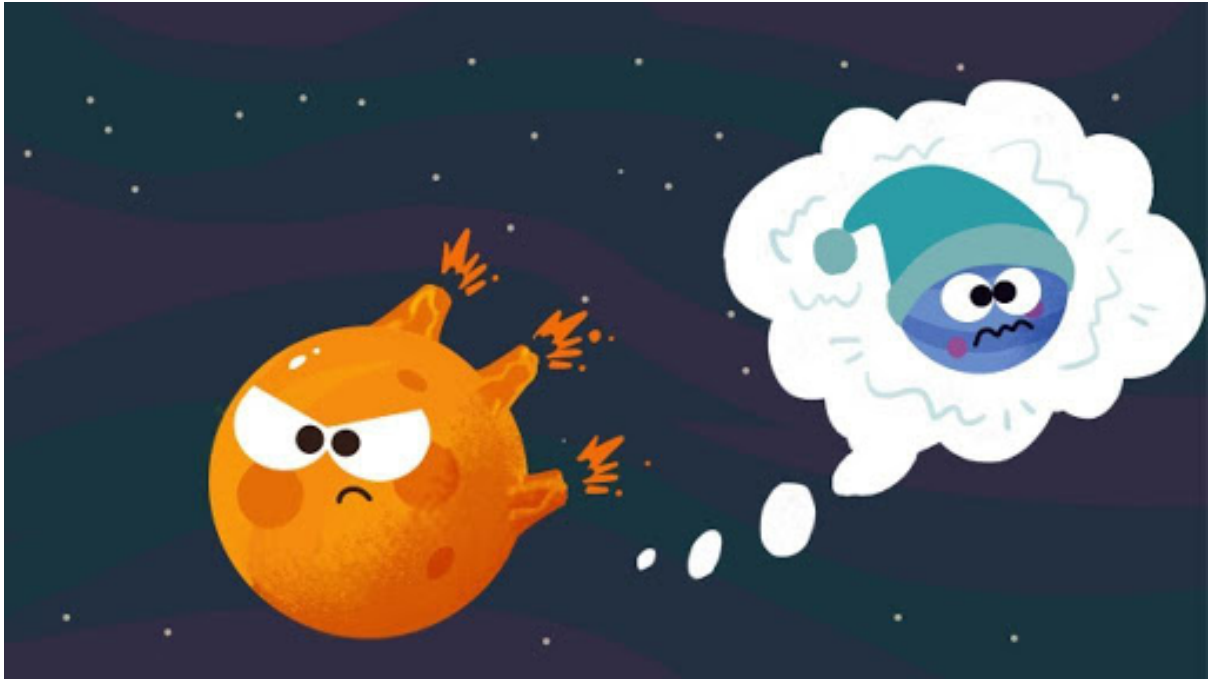
She reached out to Mercury with one of her rays. "Have you seen Pluto anywhere?"  
Mercury scratched his craters.



"Little blue Pluto? I haven't seen him, where did he go?" Mercury replied.



So Mercury went to Venus and asked, "Have you seen Pluto anywhere?"



"How should I know where frozen little Pluto has gone?" Venus answered, as a few of her volcanoes erupted.



So Mercury and Venus went to Earth and asked, "Have you seen Pluto anywhere?"



The ocean waves rose anxiously over Earth.  
"Pluto with the unusual orbit?" she asked. "I  
can't say I've seen him."





So Mercury, Venus, and Earth went to Mars and asked, "Have you seen Pluto anywhere?"



Mars turned really red, then answered sheepishly, "Pluto lives in the Kuiper belt doesn't he? I haven't seen him there lately."



So, Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars went to Jupiter and asked, "Have you seen Pluto anywhere?"



Jupiter rotated quickly, looking everywhere for Pluto. "Pluto's rotation is so slow, I haven't seen him in quite a while."



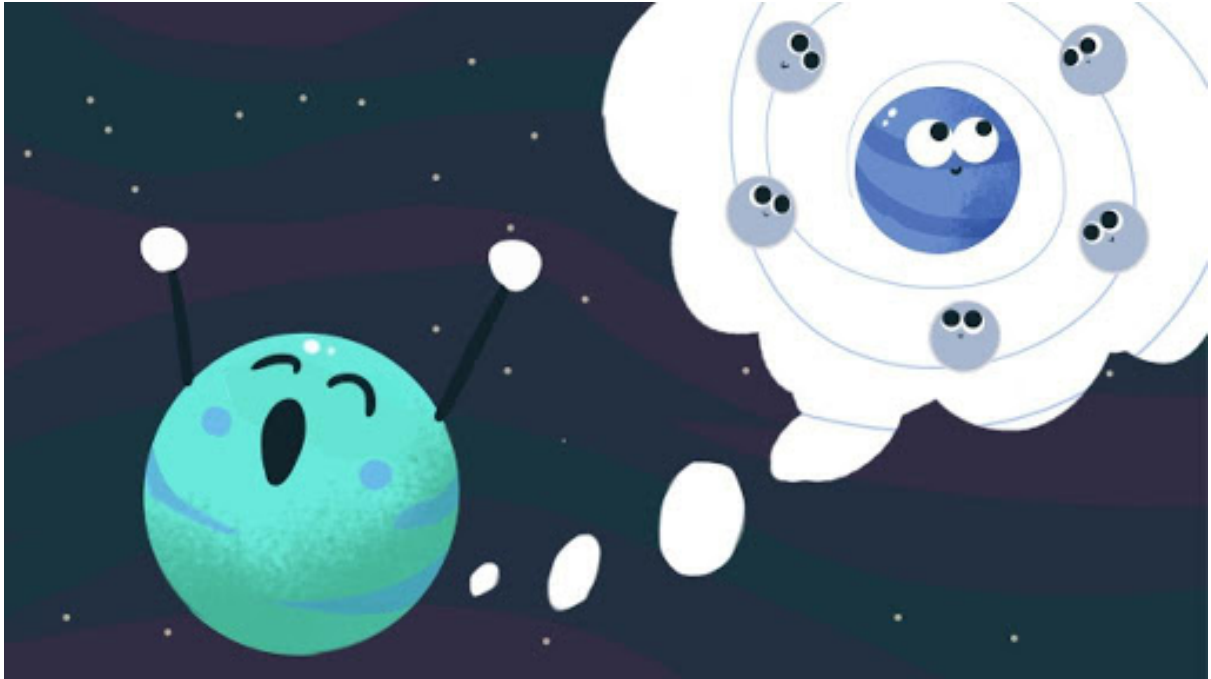
So Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, and Jupiter went to Saturn and asked, "Have you seen Pluto anywhere?"



Saturn spun around inside her rings before answering, "Oh, poor Pluto with the weakest gravity of all. I have not seen him anywhere."



So Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn went to Uranus and asked, "Have you seen Pluto anywhere?"

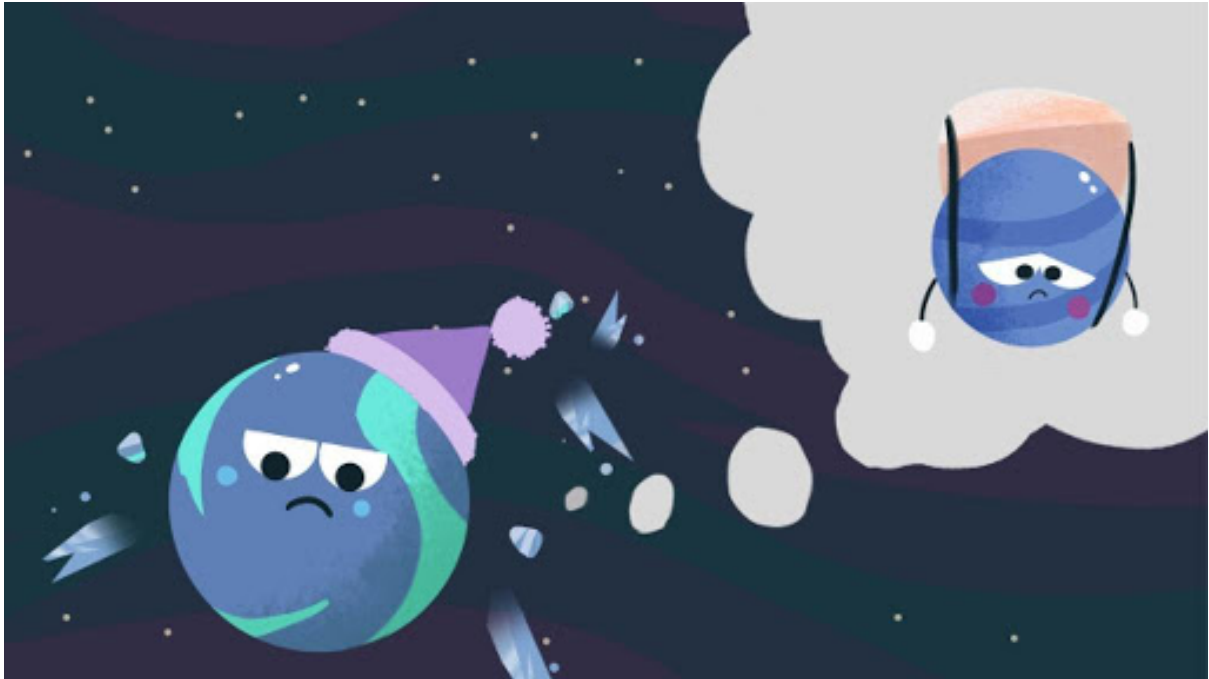


Uranus, who really wanted to go to bed, stretched and yawned, then finally said, "No, but I wish he was around, so I could count his five moons to help me get to sleep."

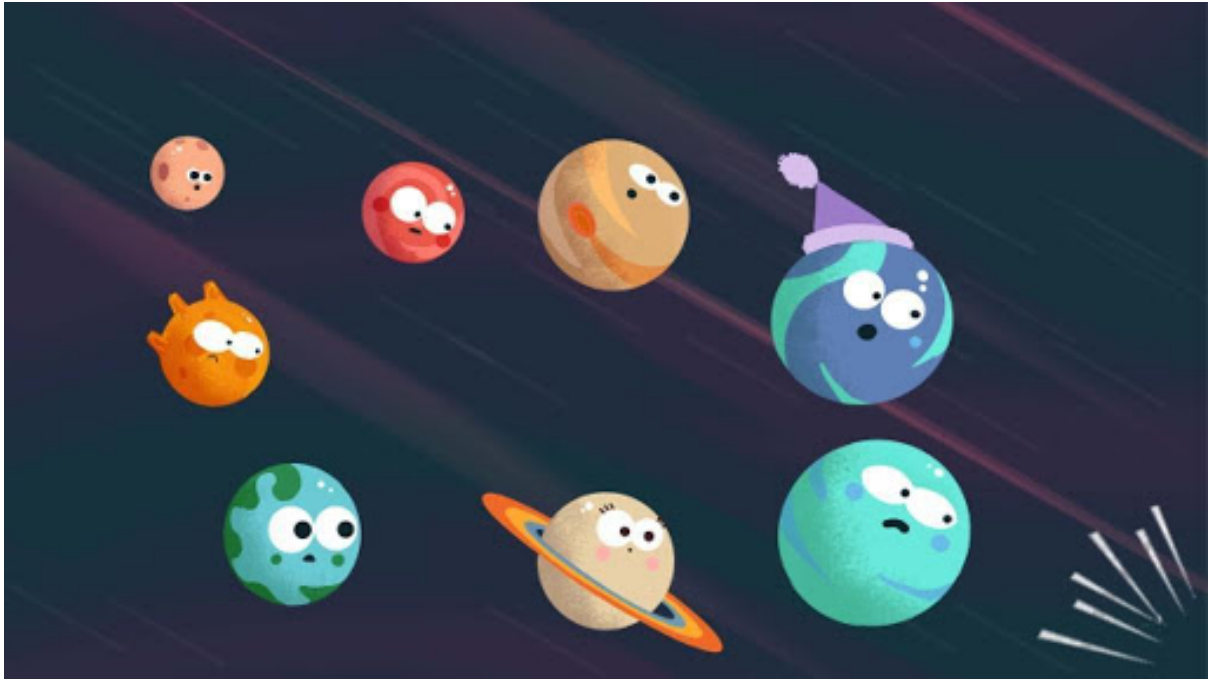




So Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus went to Neptune who was shivering cold and asked, "Have you seen Pluto anywhere? He's your closest neighbor. Surely you would know where he has gone!"



Neptune shook off some snow, then said, "I saw him pack his bags. He seemed so gloomy and sad. But he would not tell me where he was going or why."



Suddenly, the planets heard someone crying nearby. They all hurried to see what was going on.



Pluto was sitting alone, out of his orbit, crying. The planets were so happy to finally find Pluto! They asked him why he disappeared.

"The scientists banned me from being a planet because I am small and I can't clear large objects from my orbit."



Just then, Sun arrived. "That doesn't matter," she said with a warmth that reached all the way to Pluto's chilly heart. "You'll always be part of our family, the solar system family!"



The planets all cheered with glee, "We are a family! The solar system family!"



THE END

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### Original Story

Finding Pluto. Author: Mervat Al-Beltagi. Illustrator: Mervat Al-Beltagi.

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