

1 His eyes were open several seconds before the alarm was supposed to go off. Beside him, his wife touched his arm. He knew what she was going to say.

2 "Are we still going?" she asked.

3 "Yes," he said and he felt her fingers grip his arm even more tightly.

4 "You're certain we can get on the spaceship without anyone noticing?" she asked.

5 "They'll think it's just another test flight. Nobody will be checking."

6 "I'm afraid," she said.

7 "So am I," he replied, "but we'll be safe."

8 "You're sure we don't need anything else with us?" she asked.

9 "No, I put all the supplies we'll need on the spaceship. Anyway, we can't carry anything past the guard. He has to think that you and the children are just coming to see me take off."

10 "But won't the guard think it's funny that the family next door is coming to see you off, too?"

11 "We'll just have to take that chance," he replied.

## Third from the Sun

by Richard Matheson



Reprinted by permission of Don Congdon Associates, Inc. Copyright © 1950 by World Publications; renewed 1977 by Richard Matheson.

1989 Edition  
© 1978, Science Research Associates, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America. All rights reserved.

12 In the next room he heard the children's voices. At least they don't know what's happening, he thought. They think they're going to take me down to the field. They don't know they're never coming back.

13 It seemed so difficult, but there was no other way. In a few years there would be another terrible war, and the entire planet would be destroyed. If they escaped now, they could begin all over again on a new planet. He sighed and went down the ramp to join his family for breakfast.

14 "Pretty soon, dad?" the son asked.

15 "Yes," he answered, "very soon."

16 A dish shattered on the floor. His wife bent down to pick it up.

17 "What's the matter?" asked her daughter.

18 "Nothing, dear," she said. "Drink your juice. Our friends will be here soon."

19 Outside a bell sounded, and he saw the other family waiting for them by the ground car.

20 He turned to his wife. "Should we lock the house?"

21 "Does it matter?" she replied, turning away.

22 The two families rode in silence through the deserted streets. At the entrance to the field he warned, "Remember, not a word from any of you."

23 The guard recognized him as the chief test pilot for the new spaceship. "My family and some friends are coming down to watch me take off," he told the guard.

24 "That's fine," the guard replied and waved them through.

25 As they hurried to the spaceship, he stopped a moment to look back. Then he leaned down and picked up some dirt. "Goodbye," he whispered, putting it in his pocket.

26 The elevator rose and then came to a stop. The doors opened and they all scrambled into the spaceship. The children gasped when they saw how high up they were.

27 "Shouldn't we tell them now?" asked his wife. "Shouldn't we let them know it's their last look?"

28 "Yes," he said, "go ahead and tell them."

29 As he touched a switch, deep in the spaceship a spark ignited the rockets. He reached his trembling hand toward the control button and saw that they were all staring at him. He pressed it. The ship quivered for a second, and then they felt it rush up into the air, faster and faster.

30 He watched the children turn to the windows. "Goodbye," they said, "goodbye."

31 He sank down wearily at the controls. "You know where we're headed?" his friend asked him.

32 He leaned over the chart and pointed to a planet far away in another part of space. "Yes," he replied, "that small one over there, the one near that moon."

33 "This one, third from the sun?"

34 "That's right," he said, "the one third from the sun. I call it Earth."

## How Well Did You Read?

Write the letter of the best answer for each question.

- 1 Why were the parents worried?
  - a They were about to do something that they weren't supposed to do.
  - b They were afraid someone would try to stop them.
  - c Both a and b
- 2 Why had no one told the children what was going to happen?
  - a The children might tell others.
  - b The children didn't want to go.
  - c The children were being naughty.
- 3 Why did the woman drop a dish?
  - a She was probably angry.
  - b She was probably frightened.
  - c She was probably careless.
- 4 Why did the daughter ask "What's the matter?" in paragraph 17?
  - a She could tell that her mother was nervous, and she wondered why.
  - b She meant "Why aren't my eggs ready?"
  - c She was always asking "What's the matter?"
- 5 Why was Earth the destination?
  - a There was no danger of war.
  - b The people had cousins there.
  - c It was the farthest planet.
- 6 What was the purpose of the last sentence?
  - a To frighten you
  - b To surprise you
  - c Both a and b

## Learn about Words

### Vocabulary

A You can often tell the meaning of a word by reading the words around it.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

- 1 vehicle for travelling between planets (4)
- 2 broke into pieces (16)
- 3 rang; made a noise (19)
- 4 empty; without people (22)
- 5 set on fire (29)
- 6 shook; trembled (29)
- 7 in a tired way (31)

B A word may have more than one meaning. Its meaning depends on the way it is used. The word *band* is an example.

The *band* will play a march.

The hat has a wide *band* around it.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. See how the word in **heavy type** below is used in the paragraph. Decide whether it has meaning a or b. Write a or b.

- 8 **alarm** (1)
  - a bell on a clock
  - b warning
- 9 **funny** (10)
  - a amusing
  - b odd or peculiar
- 10 **scrambled** (26)
  - a mixed together
  - b climbed quickly

## Word Study

**C** Chris ran to the car.

The word *ran* is a verb. It tells what Chris did. Words that tell what someone or something did are generally verbs. Look at the group of words below. Then read the sentences. Write the verb that completes each sentence best.

|        |        |          |
|--------|--------|----------|
| row    | hurry  | share    |
| served | hopped | nest     |
| rusty  | rained | whimpers |

- 11 The rabbit \_\_\_ across the field.
- 12 Do birds \_\_\_ in these trees?
- 13 Please \_\_\_ the boat to shore.
- 14 It \_\_\_ hard Saturday night.
- 15 This puppy \_\_\_ when it's lonely.
- 16 He \_\_\_ the dinner at six o'clock.
- 17 Please \_\_\_ our dinner with us.
- 18 Please \_\_\_; I am late.

**D** Shirley seems angry.  
That book is mine.  
Jane became president.

The verbs in the sentences above are called linking verbs. Linking verbs do not express actions; they express states of being. They *link* the subject of a sentence with a noun, pronoun, or adjective that describes or identifies that subject. Some common linking verbs are these: *to be*, *to become*, *to look*, *to seem*, *to sound*, and *to taste*. Read the sentences below. If a sentence contains a linking verb, write that verb. If it does not, write *No*.

- 19 Janet became a teacher.
- 20 I was afraid you couldn't come.

- 21 Trees shed their leaves in the fall.
- 22 Thank you for the gift.
- 23 Ana is thirsty.
- 24 He was a student.
- 25 The sky looks clear.
- 26 He whispered the secret to me.

**E** Present tense: I **walk**. I **buy**.  
Past tense: I **walked**. I **bought**.

To form the past tense of many verbs, we simply add the ending *ed*. Thus *walk* becomes *walked*. But some verbs have irregular past tenses—for example, the past tense of *buy* is *bought*. There are two verbs in the past tense in **heavy type** in each sentence below. Write the one that is irregular.

- 27 Dan **chuckled** when he heard the joke.
- 28 I **caught** the thief after he **robbed** the store.
- 29 I **met** Jon as I **gathered** seashells.
- 30 He **said** that he **worked** until five.
- 31 The dog **came** to me when I **called** it.
- 32 When the water **froze** we **skated** on the pond.
- 33 I **wrote** the letter and **mailed** it.

## Use Your Imagination

The pilot, his family, and his friends were going to fly to Earth. Let's suppose that something went wrong with the flight and they had to land on another planet. Imagine what adventures they have. Write down your ideas. Share them with a classmate.