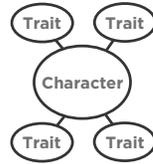


Comprehension Check

Summarize

Use a Character Web to record traits about the characters in the story. Then write a summary that tells what each character is like.



Think and Compare

1. Look back at page 14. What do you think about Shona's idea to give the alien a job? What does this decision say about Shona? **(Analyze Character)**
2. Would you like to be an astronaut and live on a space station for the summer? Why or why not? **(Apply)**
3. The children make friendly contact with an alien from another universe. Should people on Earth try to contact aliens? Why or why not? **(Evaluate)**

Summer in Space

by **Sunita Apte**
illustrated by **Jeffrey Lindberg**

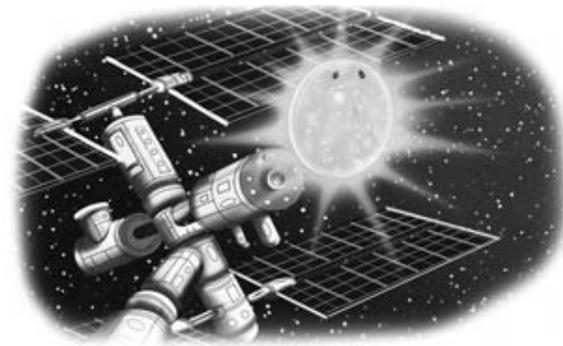


Table of Contents

Chapter 1 The Arrival	2
Chapter 2 What's Going On?.....	5
Chapter 3 Who Are You?.....	8
Chapter 4 A Job	12
Comprehension Check.....	16

Chapter 1 The Arrival

Rahul was staring anxiously out the spaceship window. "Mom, how long 'til we get there again?" he asked.

His sister Shona laughed. "Rahul, didn't you just ask her ten minutes ago? And she said two hours?"

From her seat at the control panels, Astronaut Amla Gupta smiled. "Now kids," she said, "there's no point in arguing about it. We'll get there when we get there. Why don't you play with the other kids? I thought I saw Carlos and Keisha and Fatima playing space tag on the landing."

The Guptas were on their way to Space Station 88 for the summer with ten other families. The station had been abandoned for 50 years.

A few weeks later, Rahul and Shona were once again looking out the spaceship window. This time they were leaving Space Station 88. Now the space station gleamed in the endless darkness. It was a working space station again. And, hovering over the loading dock, was Beta 225.

"Look," Shona said. "There's Beta 225. How sweet! It came out to say goodbye."

Amla Gupta looked up from the flight deck, smiling. She had worked hard to convince Mission Control to let the alien stay on as a caretaker. "Okay, you two, it's seat belt time. We're about to blast into hyperspace."

Rahul and Shona quickly settled themselves in their seats. The spaceship gave out a giant roar as it blasted off. They were heading home.

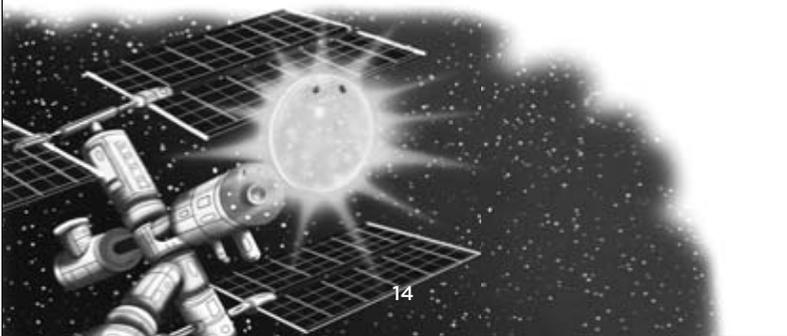


"Hmm, maybe not," Shona said.
"Hey guys, I have an idea. Remember when we got here, how we were surprised that so many things were still working?" She quickly typed, "*Did you fix all the stuff here at the space station?*"

"Yes," Beta 225 answered. "*I fixed many things here.*"

"Well," said Shona, "I'll have to talk to my mom, and she'll have to okay it with Mission Control. But I think maybe we've found a new caretaker for our space station."

To Beta 225 she typed, "*Maybe we can find you a job.*"



Now the space station was needed for research. So the families would spend the summer fixing it up. In the fall, a caretaker would live there.

Rahul and Shona had left Earth before. But they had never gone so far, and for so long. What were a few trips to the moon compared to this?

Two hours later, brother and sister were back at the spaceship window. Their noses were pressed against the display. Outside, floating in a sea of endless black, was Space Station 88. It looked a little old. Pieces had fallen off and were floating nearby.



"Wow, look at that junky old station!" Rahul exclaimed.

"Yeah, I can't believe how beaten up it looks," Shona replied. "I guess it was difficult to send people to take care of it. Can you believe that, in the old days, most people never left Earth?"

"Yeah, I'm sure glad I didn't live back then," Rahul said. "I mean, they thought flying on planes was really cool. How not cool is that?"

Just then, their mother called out, "Take your seats, we're docking."

Rahul and Shona belted themselves in. Then the spaceship slid into the landing dock with a loud "thunk."



"I was on a mission to explore the universe," it continued. "I became separated from my crew. I drifted in space for a long time. Then I found this station. I like it here."

"How long have you been here?" Shona typed.

"I've been here for more than 20 years. Then you monsters came. I think you might try to kill Beta 225."

"We're monsters?" Delores whispered. "What is he? Prince Charming?"

"Shh," Shona whispered back. "Go on," she typed into the computer.

"I am happy here!" Beta 225 continued. *"If more of your kind come, I will be forced to go away."*



Chapter 4

A Job

The alien looked like a large, clear CD. It was covered in strange lights. As the kids watched, a beam shot out from one of the lights, lifting a storage box into the air.

"I guess it heard our message," Shona remarked. "Or it wouldn't be hanging out here." She flipped open the computer and turned on the alien-language software. "*Who are you?*" she typed.

The alien began beeping very loudly. More beams shot out from its lights. The beams moved over the keyboard like fingers, typing very quickly. "*I am Beta 225,*" it answered. "*I come from Planet Beta Klox.*"

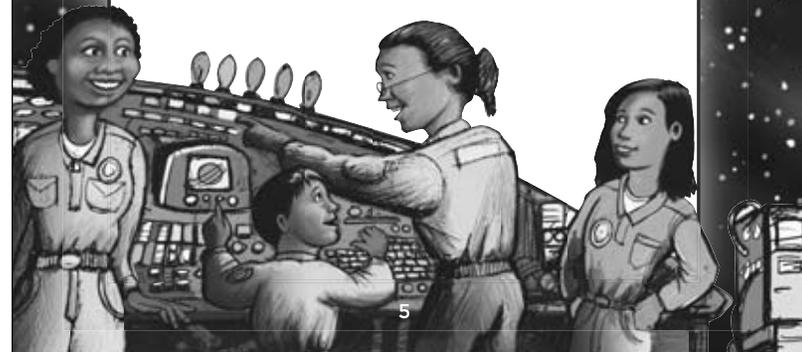
Chapter 2

What's Going On?

Everyone was pleasantly surprised once they had landed.

"The electricity works!" Amla Gupta exclaimed. "And so do the controls in the landing dock. Mission Control said the station was completely run-down."

"They can only guess from Earth," Carlos's dad, Astronaut José Vasquez, said. "No one has visited here for 50 years. Maybe things are in much better shape than we thought."





After unpacking Rahul and Shona set off with Carlos and his sister Delores to explore the station's inner hallway. They stopped when they came to the storage room.

"Wow! What did they keep in here?" Delores asked. "This room is huge."

"They probably kept spare parts and food and stuff like that," Carlos replied. "The astronauts on this space station used to stay for years at a time."

"Wow—years in space without coming home," Shona said. "That must have been tough. Space travel is so much more sensible now. No one has to stay away for years at a time."

Finally, the four kids could stand it no longer. "I'm going back to the storage room," Rahul told the others.

They all decided to go with him. Shona unhooked the computer and brought it. Everyone was quiet as they reached the storage room.

Carlos went in first and flipped on the light. That's when the kids realized their efforts had paid off after all. Hovering in the middle of the room, beeping and moaning, was the alien.



“Maybe the creature is an alien,” Delores said. “Let’s try using the alien-language computer software.”

Shona nodded her head. “You mean the software all astronauts carry in case they meet an alien? How sensible—that’s really using your head. We can use the software on Mom’s computer to broadcast a message all over the station. We can say something friendly, like ‘Hello. We mean no harm.’ Let’s go talk to Mom.”

The next morning, Amla Gupta’s computer was hooked up to the space station’s speaker system. The alien-language software was working. “Hello. We mean no harm. Please meet us” was being broadcast in the station.

Everyone hoped the idea would work. By afternoon, however, there was still no sign of what was sharing the space station with them.

“Yeah, I’m happy they finally discovered hyperspace travel,” Rahul said. “I wouldn’t want to be in space for five years.”

The kids walked around the storage room. Suddenly Delores jumped back and let out a scream.

“Carlos, it’s not nice to scare me like that,” she shouted. “I’m telling Mom!”

“I didn’t do anything,” Carlos protested.

“You didn’t?” Delores looked confused. “Someone was right behind me, just now, beeping and moaning in my ear.”

“It wasn’t me,” Rahul and Shona said at the same time.

“Well then, who was it?”

No one said anything. For a moment, everyone was paralyzed with fear. Then Carlos yelled, “Let’s get out of here,” and they all ran.

Chapter 3

Who Are You?

As the weeks went by, everyone settled into life on the space station. The adults did the major repair jobs, which were fewer than expected. The kids helped paint and cook and clean.

But something strange was going on. It had started that very first day in the storage room. Now it continued.

Other people began to hear beeps and moans too. The noises seemed especially noticeable from the storage room at night.

Then things began to disappear. Someone would take something out of the storage room. The next day it would be gone. Then someone else would find it back in the storage room. No one would admit to moving it.

The kids were worried. Did the station have a space ghost? Did someone, or something, want them out of there? Rahul, Shona, Delores, and Carlos were determined to find out.

"I say we take everything out of the storage room," Carlos said. "Then we can get rid of whatever is in there."

"Be realistic," Shona said. "We can't take everything out. Where would we put it? Maybe the creature is friendly, but scared. I think we should try to communicate with it."

"Yes, but how do we do that?" Rahul asked.

