

4 Look beyond

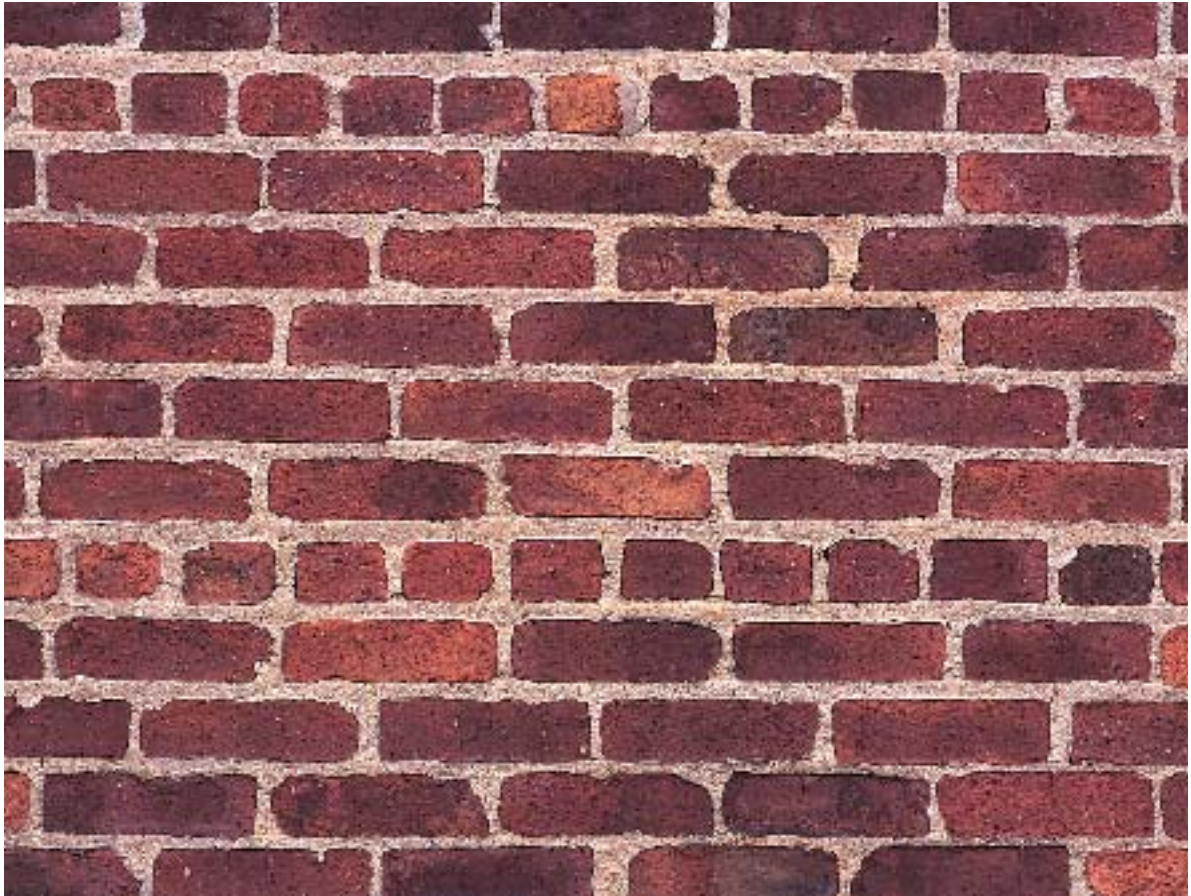


Where to from here?
Explore the possibilities!
Bring an open mind and a
hungry imagination as you
read these selections.
This unit looks beyond the
everyday to explore dreams,
technology, science fiction,
and the future of society as
seen by both artists and
scientists.



Walking Through a Wall

LOUIS JENKINS



Focus Your Learning

Reading this description will help you:

- read for detail
- listen and respond to others' interpretations
- argue for or against a statement
- write a letter

Unlike flying or astral projection, walking through walls is a totally earth-related craft, but a lot more interesting than pot-making or driftwood lamps. I got started at a picnic up in Bowstring in the northern part of the state. A fellow walked through a brick wall right there in the park. I said "Say, I want to try that." Stone walls are best, then brick and wood. Wooden walls with fibreglass insulation and steel doors aren't so good. They won't hurt you. If your wall walking is done properly, both you and the wall are left intact. It is just that they aren't pleasant somehow. The worst things are wire fences, maybe it's the molecular structure of the alloy or just the

amount of give in a fence, I don't know, but I've torn my jacket and lost my hat in a lot of fences. The best approach to a wall is, first, two hands placed flat against the surface; it's a matter of concentration and just the right pressure. You will feel the dry, cool inner wall with your fingers, then there is a moment of total darkness before you step through on the other side. ■

Activities

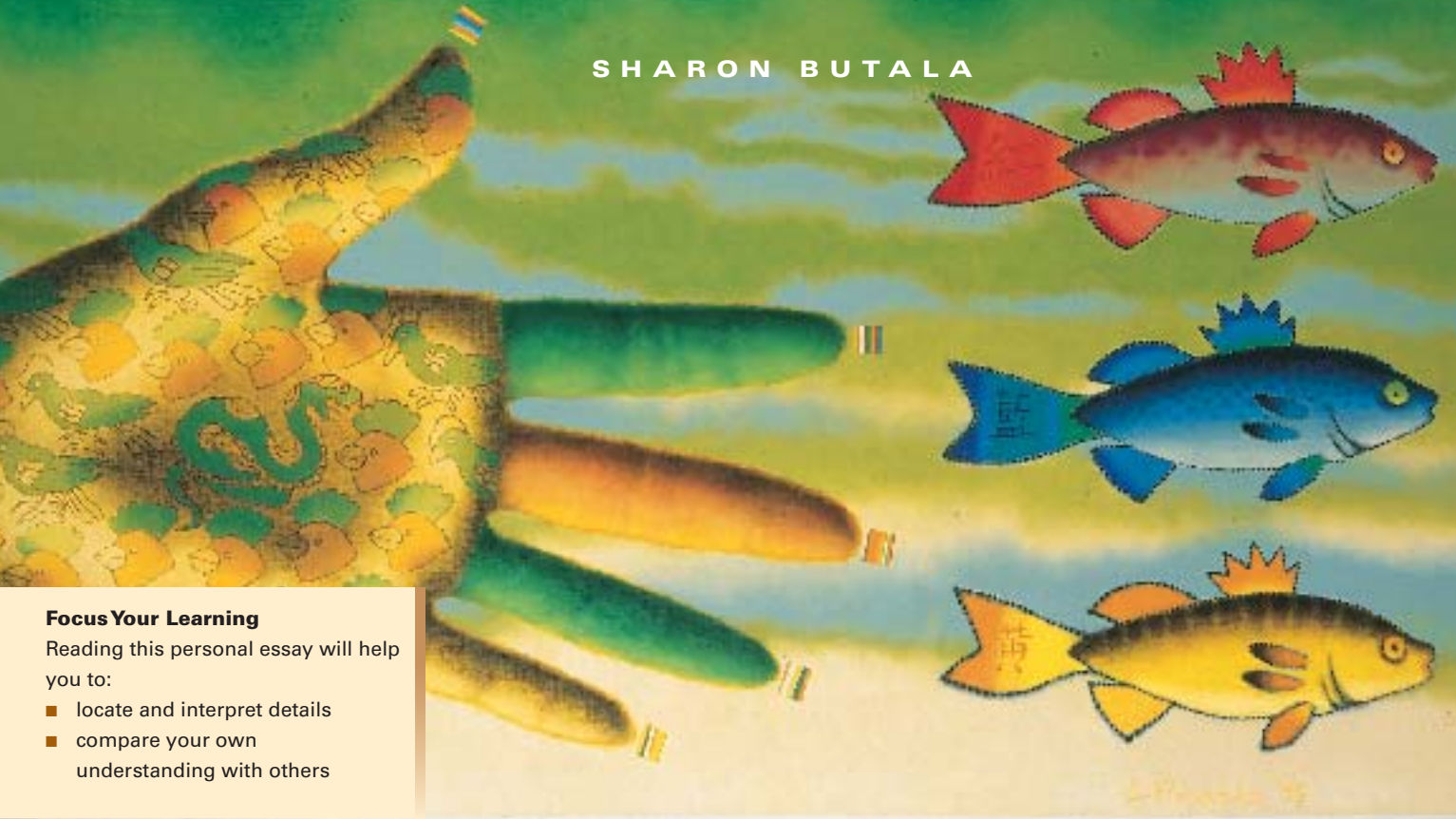
1. At what point did you realize the fanciful nature of this story?
2. Identify which walls are best and which are worst for walking through according to the narrator. In a group of three, take turns explaining why you think Louis Jenkins has put the walls in this order. Discuss and clarify each other's opinions and arrive at an explanation satisfactory to the whole group.
3. The author claims that "walking through a wall" is different from "flying" or "astral projection" and is a "totally earth-related craft."

Work with a partner, one supporting and one refuting this argument. Refer to the text and to your own experiences to support your points. Summarize your arguments and discussion in a personal journal entry.

4. Imagine you are capable of performing a seemingly impossible feat. Write a letter to your best friend in which you describe the experience and recommend that he or she try it as a means of expanding consciousness.

Dreamworld

SHARON BUTALA



Focus Your Learning

Reading this personal essay will help you to:

- locate and interpret details
- compare your own understanding with others

I take my dreams very seriously; I believe I should live my life based on them, and I'm trying to, although practical matters keep intervening, not all of which are of my own making. If I am a writer of both non-fiction and fiction, I am now, because of my dreams, fully aware of what I'm doing, which is having to choose between my soul, which craves to pursue novel-writing, and my ego, which enjoys all too easily the recognition for my other writing. When I'm writing fiction, I feel myself dissolve into another world where things are both of and not of my own making, where if I can be absolutely still and wholly observant, I feel myself to be in touch with something I call the Creative Flow. I feel that, in moments of purity

and wonder, I meld, for a precious instant, with that flow. Then, in those few, yearned-for moments, novel-writing becomes a holy act. How could I wish to turn away from such joy?

On the other hand, it's very satisfying to be in demand, and it's wonderful to feel a success, even if it isn't for the thing at which I most want to be a success. Believing, as I do, that for each of us there is a way—the one right way—and struggling to find the one that is my own, I am confused, and I wonder if I am wrong in thinking that novels are what I should be writing. I wonder, too, if in turning to non-fiction I am merely being subverted by my greedy ego from working at the building of my own soul. My dreams and the work I put into sorting

them out have made clear to me what otherwise I might not have understood until it was too late, if indeed I ever did.

Dreams also work in other mysterious ways. Recently I had a visitor who was a stranger to me. I remarked that I'd had a beautiful dream the night before in which I was in the end room of a dormitory, with glass on three sides, which jutted out over the ocean. Enormous, brightly coloured yellow, orange, green, and cream birds came flying toward my room and gambolled and played with each other, swooping through the air. "They reminded me of whales, actually," I said. Smaller birds, "about the size of dolphins," I explained, a creamy beige in colour, came closest of all as they played, even dipping into the water and splashing me, since by that time the dream glass had disappeared. My visitor said, "That sounds like my house." She explained that she lived in an oceanside house on the Pacific. From her deck, whales and dolphins could regularly be seen,

and seabirds and even eagles often lit on it.

On another occasion I dreamed about a certain strange man, a dream character, I thought; the next morning I met him in person for the first time. He turned out to be the special guest at a meeting I attended, and I knew him, the minute I saw him, as the man. I am still trying to understand why a dream had signalled a meeting with each of these people.

Whether you choose to believe dreams come from indigestion or from God, or from the gods or the goddess or your wiser self, or some other mysterious source, the fact is, aboriginal people the world over are right: dreams do teach, dreams are a source of information about the world, a guide if you let them be, and a constant source of inspiration. I sometimes go so far as to think, with aboriginal people, that the dreamworld is simply another reality, another world I enter some nights when I fall asleep. There are times when I even prefer it to the waking world. ■

Activities

1. Sharon Butala feels differently about her fiction and her non-fiction writing. In chart form, note the satisfactions and limitations of each. Compare your chart with a classmate's and discuss any discrepancies.
2. In a journal entry, speculate about why a "dream had signalled a meeting with each of these people." Continuing the entry, explore your own thoughts and feelings about the nature of dreams. Read another student's entry and respond in writing to his or her thoughts and ideas.
3. Recount one of your own dreams. Choose an appropriate format; narrative, storyboard, poem, etc. Add a brief explanation of why you may have had this dream and what, if anything, the dream means to you.



The Bridge Builder

MARGARET MAHY



Focus Your Learning

Reading this short story will help you:

- make a timeline
- analyse characters' choices and motives
- identify and discuss theme
- explore different ways to express ideas

My father was a bridge builder. That was his business—crossing chasms, joining one side of the river with the other.

When I was small, bridges brought us bread and books, Christmas crackers and coloured pencils—one-span bridges over creeks, two-span bridges over streams, three-span bridges over wide rivers. Bridges sprang from my father's dreams threading roads together—girder bridges, arched bridges, suspension bridges, bridges of wood, bridges of iron or concrete. Like a sort of hero, my father would drive piles and piers through sand and mud to the rocky bones of the world. His bridges became visible parts of the world's hidden skeleton. When we went out on picnics it was along roads held together by my father's works. As we crossed rivers and ravines we heard each bridge singing in its own private language. We could hear the melody, but my father was the only one who understood the words.

There were three of us when I was small: Philippa, the oldest, Simon in

the middle, and me, Merlin, the youngest, the one with the magician's name. We played where bridges were being born, running around piles of sand and shingle, bags of cement, and bars of reinforced steel. Concrete mixers would turn, winches would wind, piles would be driven, and decking cast. Slowly, as we watched and played, a bridge would appear and people could cross over.

For years my father built bridges where people said they wanted them, while his children stretched up and out in three different directions. Philippa became a doctor and Simon an electrical engineer, but I became a traveller, following the roads of the world and crossing the world's bridges as I came to them.

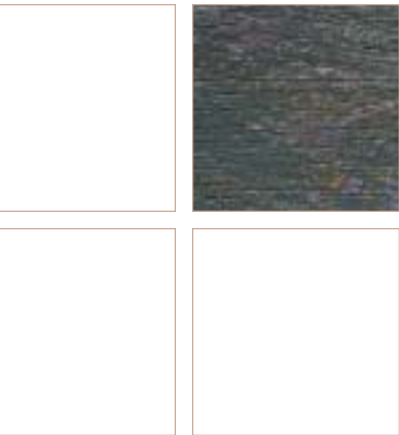
My father, however, remained a bridge builder. When my mother died and we children were grown up and gone, and there was no more need for balloons and books or Christmas crackers and coloured pencils, his stored powers were set free and he began to build the bridges he saw in his dreams.

The first of his new bridges had remarkable handrails of black iron lace. But this was not enough for my father. He collected a hundred orb-web spiders and set them loose in the crevices and curlicues of the iron. Within the lace of the bridge, these spiders spun their own lace, and after a night of rain or dew the whole bridge glittered black and silver, spirals within spirals, an intricate piece of jewellery arching over a wide, stony stream.

People were enchanted with the unexpectedness of it. Now, as they crossed over, they became part of a work of art. But the same people certainly thought my father strange when he built another bridge of horsehair and vines so that rabbits, and even mice, could cross the river with dry feet and tails. He's gone all funny, they said, turning their mouths down. However, my father had only just begun. He made two bridges with gardens built into them which soon became so overgrown with roses, wisteria, bougainvillea, and other beautiful climbing plants that they looked as if they had been made entirely of flowers.

Over a river that wound through a grove of silver birch trees he wove a bridge of golden wires, a great cage filled with brilliant, singing birds; and in a dull, tired town he made an aquarium bridge whose glass balustrades and parapets were streaked scarlet and gold by the fish that darted inside them. People began to go out of their way to cross my father's bridges.

Building surprising bridges was one thing, but soon my father took it into his head to build bridges in unexpected places. He gave up building them where people were known to be going and built them where people might happen to find themselves. Somewhere, far from any road, sliding through brush and ferns to reach a remote stretch of river, you might find one of my father's bridges: perhaps a strong one built to last a thousand



years, perhaps a frail one made of bamboo canes, peacock feathers, and violin strings. A bridge like this would soon fall to pieces sending its peacock feathers down the river like messages, sounding a single twangling note among the listening hills. Mystery became a part of crossing over my father's bridges.

In some ways it seemed as if his ideas about what a bridge should be were changing. His next bridge, made of silver thread and mother of pearl, was only to be crossed at midnight on a moonlight night. So, crossing over changed, too. Those who crossed over from one bank to another on this bridge crossed also from one day to another, crossing time as well as the spaces under the piers. It was his first time-bridge, but later there was to be another, a bridge set with clocks chiming perpetually the hours and half-hours in other parts of the world. And in all the world this was the only bridge that needed to be wound up with a master key every eight days.

Wherever my father saw a promising space he thought of ways in which it could be crossed, and yet for all that he loved spaces. In the city he climbed like a spider, stringing blue suspension bridges between skyscrapers and tower bridges—air bridges, he called them. Looking up at them from the street they became invisible. When crossing over on them, you felt you were suspended in nothing, or were maybe set in crystal, a true inhabitant of the sky. Lying down, looking through the blue web that held you, you could see the world turning below. But if you chose to lie on your back and look up as far as you could look, and then a bit farther still, on and on, higher and higher, your eyes would travel through the troposphere and the tropopause, the stratosphere and the stratopause, the mesosphere and the mesopause, the Heaviside layer, the ionosphere, and the Appleton layer, not to mention the Van Allen belts. From my father's blue suspension bridges all the architecture of the air would open up to you.

However, not many people bothered to stare upward like that. Only the true travellers were fascinated to realize that the space they carelessly passed through was not empty but crowded with its own invisible constructions.

"Who wants a bridge like that, anyway?" some people asked sourly.

"Anyone. Someone!" my father answered. "There are no rules for crossing over."

But a lot of people disagreed with this idea of my father's. Such people thought bridges were designed specially for cars, mere pieces of road stuck up on legs of iron or concrete, whereas my father thought bridges were the connections that would hold everything together. Bridges gone, perhaps the whole world would fall apart, like a quartered orange. The journey on the left bank of the river (according to my father) was quite different from the journey on the right. The man on the right bank of the ravine—was he truly the same man when he crossed onto the left? My father thought he might

not be, and his bridges seemed like the steps of a dance which would enable the man with a bit of left-hand spin on him to spin in the opposite direction. This world (my father thought) was playing a great game called "Change," and his part in the game was called "crossing over."

It was upsetting for those people who wanted to stick to the road to know that some people used my father's hidden bridges. They wanted everyone to cross by exactly the same bridges that *they* used, and they hated the thought that, somewhere over the river they were crossing, there might be another strange and lovely bridge they were unaware of.

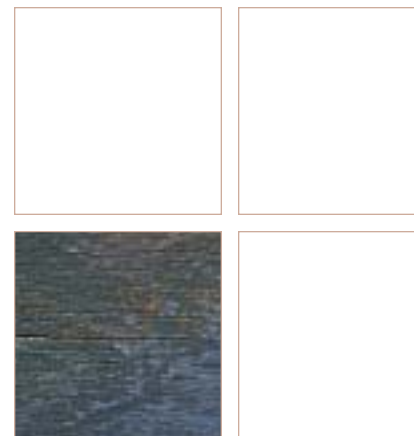
However, no one could cross all my father's bridges. No one can cross over in every way. Some people became angry when they realized this and, because they could not cross over on every bridge there was, they started insisting that there should be no more bridge building. Some of these people were very powerful—so powerful, indeed, that they passed laws forbidding my father to build any bridge unless ordered to do so by a government or by some county council. They might as well have passed a law saying that the tide was only allowed to come in and out by government decree, because by now my father's bridge building had become a force beyond the rule of law. He built another bridge, a secret one, which was not discovered until he had finished it, this time over a volcano. Its abutments were carved out of old lava and, along its side, great harps, instead of handrails, cast strange, striped shadows on the decking. Men, women, and children who crossed over could look down into the glowing heart of the volcano, could watch it simmer and seethe and smoulder. And when the wind blew, or when the great fumes of hot air billowed up like dragon's breath, the harps played fiery music with no regard to harmony. This bridge gave the volcano a voice. It spoke an incandescent language, making the night echo with inexplicable songs and poetry.

"The bridge will melt when the volcano erupts," people said to each other, alarmed and fascinated by these anthems of fire.

"But none of my bridges are intended to last *forever*," my father muttered to himself, loading his derrick and winch onto the back of his truck and driving off in another direction. It was just as well he kept on the move. Powerful enemies pursued him.

"Bridges are merely bits of the road with special problems," they told one another, and sent soldiers out to trap my father, to arrest him, to put an end to his bridge building. Of course, they couldn't catch him. They would think they had him cornered and, behold, he would build a bridge and escape—a bridge that collapsed behind him as if it had been made of playing cards, or a bridge that unexpectedly turned into a boat, carrying his astonished pursuers away down some swift river.

Just about then, as it happened, my travelling took me on my first circle



around the world, and I wound up back where I had started from. My brother, the electrical engineer, and my sister, the doctor, came to see me camping under a bridge that my father had built when I was only three years old.

"Perhaps you can do something about him," Philippa cried. "He won't listen to us."

"Don't you care?" asked Simon. "It's a real embarrassment. It's time he was stopped before he brings terrible trouble upon himself."

They looked at me—shaggy and silent, with almost nothing to say to them—in amazement. I gave them the only answer I could.

"What is there for a bridge builder to build, if he isn't allowed to build bridges?" I asked them. Dust from the world's roads made my voice husky, even in my own ears.

"He can be a retired bridge builder," Simon replied. "But I can see that you're going to waste time asking riddles. You don't care that your old father is involved in illegal bridge building." And he went away. He had forgotten the weekend picnics in the sunshine, and the derrick, high as a ladder, leading to the stars.

"And what have you become, Merlin?" Philippa asked me. "What are you now, after all your journeys?"

"I'm a traveller as I always have been," I replied.

"You are a vagabond," she answered scornfully. "A vagabond with a magician's name, but no magic!"

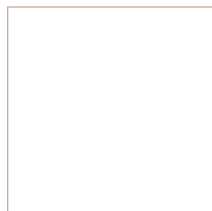
Then she went away, too, in her expensive car. I did not tell her, but I did have a little bit of magic—a single magical word, half-learned, half-invented. I could see that my father might need help, even a vagabond's help, even the help of a single magic word. I set off to find him.

It was easy for me, a seasoned traveller, to fall in with my father. I just walked along, until I came to a river that sang his name, and then I followed that river up over slippery stones and waterfalls, through bright green tangles of cress and monkey musk. Sure enough, there was my father building a bridge by bending two tall trees over the water and plaiting the branches into steps. This bridge would, in time, grow leafy handrails filled with birds' nests, a crossing-place for deer and possums.

"Hello!" said my father. "Hello, Merlin. I've just boiled the billy. Care for a cup of tea?"

"Love one!" I said. There's nothing quite like a cup of billy-tea." So we sat down in a patch of sunlight and drank our tea.

"They're catching up with me, you know," my father said sadly. "There are police and soldiers looking all the time. Helicopters, too! I can go on escaping, of course, but I'm not sure if I can be bothered. I'm getting pretty bored with it all. Besides," he went on, lowering his voice as if the green



shadows might overhear him, "I'm not sure that building bridges is enough any longer. I feel I must become more involved, to cross over myself in some way. But how does a bridge builder learn to cross over when he's on both sides of the river to begin with?"

"I might be able to help," I said.

My father looked up from under the brim of his working hat. He was a weatherbeaten man, fingernails cracked by many years of bridge building. Sitting there, a cup of billy-tea between his hands, he looked like a tree, he looked like a rock. There was no moss on him, but he looked mossy for all that. He was as lined and wrinkled as if a map of all his journeys, backward and forward, were inscribed on his face, with crosses for all the bridges he had built.

"I'm not sure you can," he answered. "I must be *more* of a bridge builder not *less* of one, if you understand me."

"Choosy, aren't you?" I said, smiling, and he smiled back.

"I suppose you think you know what I'd like most," he went on.

"I think I do!" I replied. "I've crossed a lot of bridges myself one way and another, because I'm a travelling man, and I've learned a lot on the banks of many rivers."

"And you've a magical name," my father reminded me eagerly. "I said, when you were born, this one is going to be the magician of the family!"

"I'm not a magician," I replied, "but there *is* one word I know ... a word of release and remaking. It allows things to become their true selves." My father was silent for a moment, nodding slowly, eyes gleaming under wrinkled lids.

"Don't you think things are really what they seem to be?" he asked me.

"I think people are all, more or less, creatures of two sides with a chasm in between, so to speak. My magic word merely closes the chasm."

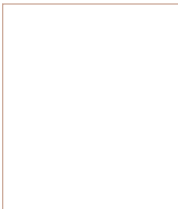
"A big job for one word," said my father.

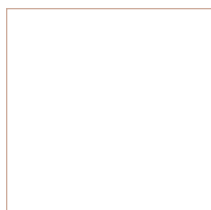
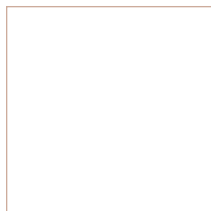
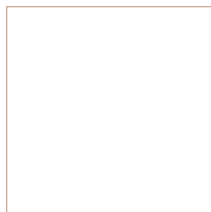
"Well, it's a very good word," I said. I didn't tell him I had invented half of it myself. "It's a sort of bridge," I told him.

All the time we talked, we had felt the movement of men, not very close, not very far, as the forest carried news of my father's pursuers. Now we heard a sudden sharp cry—and another—and another. Men shouted in desperate voices.

"It's the soldiers," my father said, leaping to his feet. "They've been hunting me all day, though the forest is on my side and hides me away. But something's happened. We'd better go and check what's going on. I don't want them to come to harm because of me and my bridge-building habits."

We scrambled upstream until the river suddenly started to run more swiftly, narrow and deep. The opposite bank rose up sharply, red with crumbling, rotten rock, green with mosses and pockets of fern. My father





struggled to keep up with me. He was old, and besides, he was a bridge builder, not a traveller. Closing my eyes for a moment against the distractions around me, I brought the magic word out of my mind and onto the tip of my tongue—and then I left it unspoken.

The soldiers were on the opposite bank. They had tried to climb down the cliff on rotten rock but it had broken away at their very toes and there they were, marooned on a crumbling ledge—three of them—weighted down with guns, ammunition belts, and other military paraphernalia. Two of the soldiers were very young, and all three of them were afraid, faces pale, reflecting the green leaves greenly.

Below them the rocks rose out of the water. Just at this point the river became a dragon's mouth, full of black teeth, hissing and roaring, sending up a faint smoke of silver spray.

It was obvious that the soldiers needed a bridge.

My father stared at them, and they stared at him like men confounded. But he was a bridge builder before he was anybody's friend or enemy, before he was anybody's father.

"That word?" he asked me. "You have it there?"

I nodded. I dared not speak, or the word would be said too soon.

"When I step into the water, say it then, Merlin!"

I waited and my father smiled at me, shy and proud and mischievous all at once. He looked up once at the sky, pale blue and far, and then he stepped, one foot on land, one in the water, toward the opposite bank. I spoke the word.

My father changed before my eyes. He became a bridge as he had known he would. As for the word—it whispered over the restless surface of the river and rang lightly on the red, rotten rock. But my father had taken its magic out of it. No one else was altered.

The curious thing was that my father, who had made so many strange and beautiful bridges, was a very ordinary-looking bridge himself—a single-span bridge built of stone over an arch of stone, springing upward at an odd angle, vanishing into the cliff at the very feet of the terrified soldiers. He looked as if he had always been there, as if he would be there *forever*, silver moss on his handrails, on his abutments, even on his deck. Certainly he was the quietest bridge I had ever crossed as I went over to help the soldiers down. There was no way forward through the cliff. Still, perhaps the job of some rare bridges is to cross over only briefly and then bring us back to the place we started from.

We came back together, the three soldiers and I, and I'm sure we were all different men on the right bank from the men we had been on the left.

Our feet made no sound on the silver moss.

"They can say what they like about that old man," cried the older soldier

all of a sudden, “but I was never so pleased to see a bridge in all my life. It just shows there are good reasons for having bridges in unexpected places.”

Together we scrambled downstream, and at last, back onto the road.

“But who’s going to build the bridges now, then?” asked one of the young soldiers. “Look! You were with him. Are you a bridge builder, too?”

They knew now. They knew that unexpected bridges would be needed.

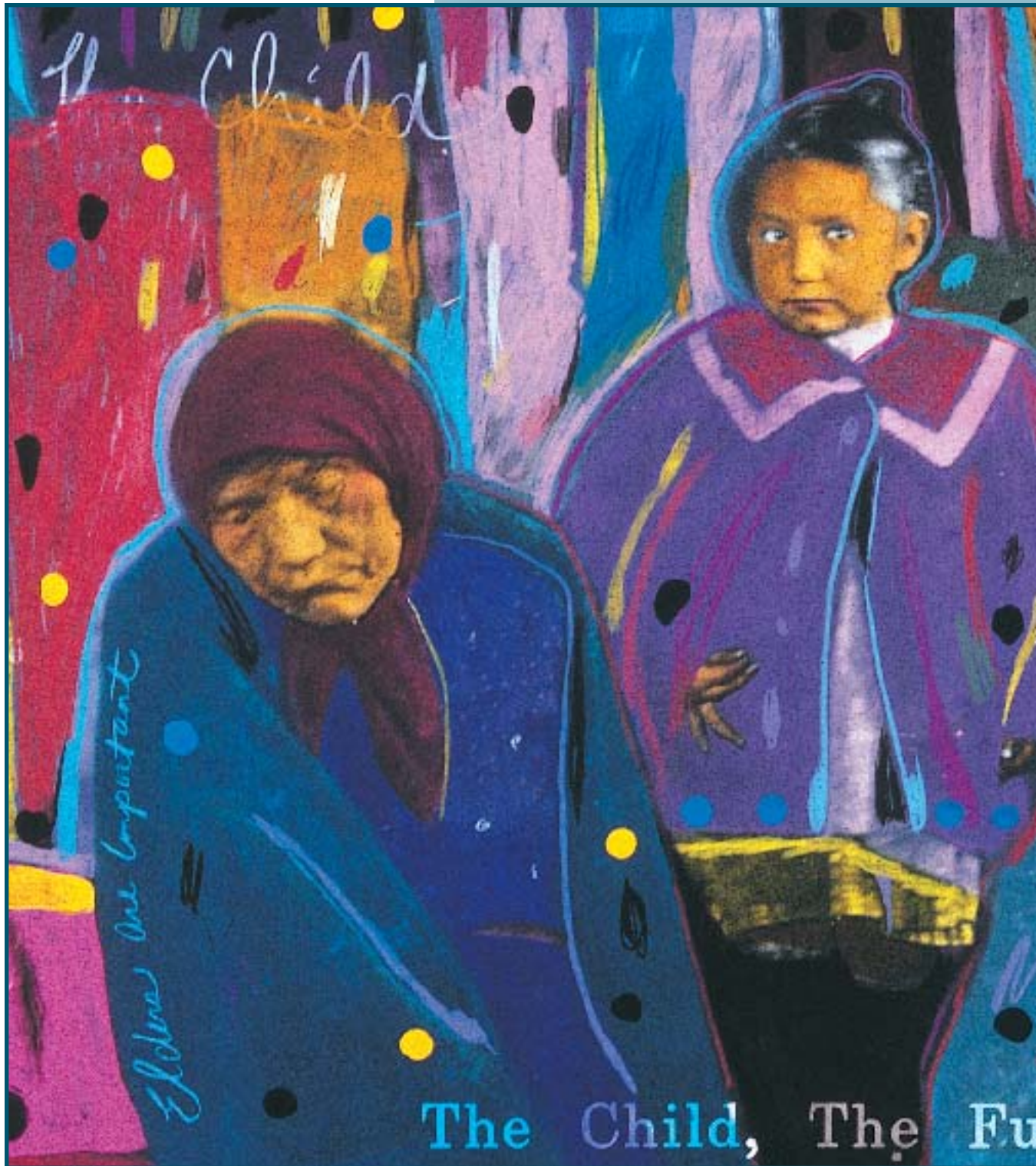
But someone else will have to build them. I am not a bridge builder. I am a traveller. I set out travelling, after that, crossing, one by one, all the bridges my father had built ... the picnic bridges of childhood, the wooden ones, the steel ones, the stone, and the concrete. I crossed the blue bridges of the air and those that seemed to be woven of vines and flowers. I crossed the silver-thread and mother-of-pearl bridge one moonlit midnight. I looked down into the melting heart of the world and saw my reflection in a bubble of fire while the harps sang and sighed and snarled around me with the very voice of the volcano.

Some day someone, perhaps my own child, may say that word of mine back to me—that word I said to my father—but I won’t turn into a bridge. I shall become a journey winding over hills, across cities, along seashores, and through shrouded forests, crossing my father’s bridges and the bridges of other men, as well as all the infinitely divided roads and splintered pathways that lie between them. ■

Activities

1. Working in a small group, make an illustrated timeline of the father’s career, showing the development of the kinds of bridges he made. Label the important changes in the father himself. Post your timeline in the classroom.
2. Work in a group of four. Have each person assume the voice of one of the following characters: father, Philippa, Simon, Merlin. In a short speech or dramatic monologue, tell the others your philosophy of life, explaining what it is that you value in life and why. Comment on each other’s speeches, indicating two things that you liked and one way in which the speech could be improved.
3. In a small group consider what the author is saying about dreams, individuality, tolerance, beauty, family relationships, and social pressure. Decide as a group whether the writer’s views are valid or not.
4. Create your own bridge. Produce a hand-drawn or computer-generated illustration or model, a written explanation of the materials involved, and a description of the location and intended traffic for your bridge.

The Child, The Future



GEORGE LITTLECHILD



Courtesy of the Artist.

Focus Your Learning

Analysing this image will help you:

- respond to a work of art
- examine the relationship between the artist and his work
- experiment with principles of design

Activities

1. With a partner, discuss your reaction to the three figures in the painting, paying particular attention to the following:

their position in the picture
their facial expressions
their clothing

Summarize your impression in writing, and suggest how these details relate to the artist's message.

2. **a)** George Littlechild was born of a Scottish father and a Cree mother; note down any evidence of his cultural background that appears in this image.
b) Create a mixed medium image—collage, found objects, photographs, news clippings—to make a statement about your own culture. Arrange your material for maximum impact. Share your artwork with the class, and be prepared to answer questions about the choices you made.

The Dream

S A N D R A B E Z I C



Focus Your Learning

Reading this memoir will help you:

- compare and contrast your own life with the theme
- understand the forms of memoir and newspaper story
- identify and discuss narrative voice
- role-play an interview

The dream begins the first time you feel your blades cutting across the hard, cold surface and discover the effortless motion of gliding. The first time you find yourself believing, if only for a few moments, that you are the most graceful or the most powerful person in the world. It grows inside you with a surprise discovery: on the ice you are free to express your joy or sadness in movement, jumping or spinning, or simply creating steps entirely your own. Now, in your mind's eye, you can see yourself performing at the Olympics, knowing that all eyes are on you.

You imagine yourself pushing away from the boards, your skates making a sharp, clean hiss like fabric ripping. The lights in the big arena are dazzling, and you hear the buzz of many thousands of spectators drop to sighs and whispers. You stop at centre ice, catch a glimpse of a honeycomb wall of camera lenses, and focus on a distant point, patiently waiting for the opening chords of your music. You feel your heart pounding, so you take a deep breath and clear your mind, just as you've practised doing so many times before. Your dream—no longer mere thoughts, long-

ings, aspirations, goals—comes alive...

Holding your final pose at centre ice as the crowd roars its approval, you know you've skated your best. You're out of breath as you glide toward the boards, flushed with exhaustion and emotionally spent. There are the tearful faces of your mom and dad cheering in the stands, and the open arms of your coach, as the

little flower girls hand you armloads of bouquets that rain from the sky like praise. Standing on the podium with a gold medal around your neck, you proudly watch your country's flag rise to the stirring sound of your national anthem. This is it, you think to yourself, I did it. ■

Activities

1. Using this memoir as a model, describe your own dream as if it has come "alive" as Sandra Bezic's did. Remember to include your feelings as well as the events.
2. **a)** Imagine that you are a newspaper reporter for the Sports section, and write the story of Sandra Bezic's triumph. Combine your own imagination with the events she remembers. Keep in mind that a news story focusses on who, what, when, where, why, and how.
b) Select several sports stories from newspapers or magazines, and rewrite them as the memoirs of participants. Collect several of these memoirs from a range of sports to create an anthology of sports writing. Share this with another class.
3. This memoir is unusual because it is written in the second person (you). In a small group, discuss the impact of the choice of person. Decide how the memoir would differ if it were written in the first (I, we) or third (he, she, it, they) person. Recreate a piece of this selection in either first or third person, and compare the effect of your version with that of a classmate written in the other person.
4. Role-play an interview with Sandra after her triumph. Present it live or videotape it.



In Praise of Dreams

WISLAWA SZYMBORSKA



In my dreams
I paint like Vermeer van Delft.

I speak fluent Greek
and not just with the living.

I drive a car
that does what I want it to.

I am gifted
and write mighty epics.

I hear voices
as clearly as any venerable saint.

My brilliance as a pianist
would stun you.

I fly the way we ought to,
i.e., on my own.

Falling from the roof,
I tumble gently to the grass.

I've got no problem
breathing under water.

I can't complain:
I've been able to locate Atlantis.

It's gratifying that I can always
wake up before dying.

As soon as war breaks out,
I roll over on my other side.

I'm a child of my age,
but I don't have to be.

A few years ago
I saw two suns.

And the night before last a penguin,
clear as day.

Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- adapt the form of a piece of writing
- present a dramatic reading

Activities

1. Write your own poem "In Praise of Dreams," in which you reveal your aspirations and hopes. Select appropriate fonts and styles to display your poem effectively on the page. Post your poem on a bulletin board that reflects the dreams of your class.
2. Working in a group of about ten, prepare and present a dramatic reading of this poem. Make use of the following:
 - different groupings of voices in terms of gender and number
 - different areas of the classroom for echoes, broken lines, chorus, etc.
 - props and costumes to complement the ideas in the poem

Rehearse so that you know your parts well and the presentation flows smoothly. There is no need to memorize the lines.

"The Art of Painting" by Jan Vermeer, Kunsthistorisches, Vienna, Austria.
LERNER FINE ART COLLECTION/SUPERSTOCK.

Sophie, 1990

M A R I A N E N G E L



Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- cite specific information from texts
- write collaboratively and independently
- read for clues to meaning
- integrate media in presentations

After Jethro left, Sophie set about doing her bit of housework, thanking her stars she hadn't as much to do as her mother had had once. It was her mother's birthday; she thought of her as she whisked the galley counter, vacuumed the parrots' cage and tended the hydroponic garden. What an easy life I have beside hers, she thought: a quarter of the space to clean, everything I want at arm's length, a man to support me.

And the light! And the sun! Really, Jethro was a genius, he deserved his success; it was he and his friend Bobby, who, working of course with other people's ideas, but working practically and imaginatively, had made it possible to live this way: comfortably and in so little space. Why, Sophie thought, if I just turned off the sound curtain, we'd be in the slums again ...

She thought back to the days when Jethro had been a gangling punk-rocker with a big Adam's apple, and she'd been his girl, leather jacket, green

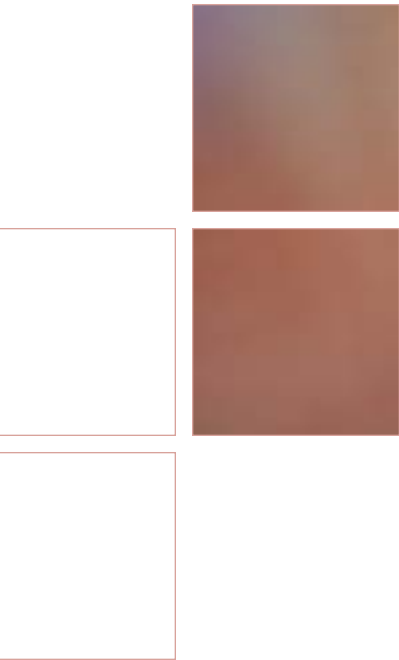
hair, I LOVE THE POLICE button and all. Annoyed by his bull sessions with Bobby, too, the way they took him away from her; infuriated by her mother's desire for her to have a career and horror at the green hair. Mother, she wanted to say, the boys were just figuring out how we should all live.

Yes, how to pack four million people into space for two, that's what their discovery had amounted to; twenty years before people had still been building as if the twentieth century had never come, they were living like little old china figures out of a Dickens novel, one room for every function—cooking, eating, sleeping; huge bathrooms; rec and TV rooms, pantries even. And they had eaten as if they lived in old books, too. Sophie's mother had kept cupboards full of raisins and sugar and rice and canned hams as if she were expecting a crew of hired men and a threshing machine; and there was the whole sick gourmet thing, people looking for more and more exotic things. Well, they'd found out that a few lentils, some greens, and a handful of The Mixture would do. They hadn't as much to talk about ... or as many heart attacks.

Funny that it was those sessions between Jethro and Bobby that had started the change. As far as Sophie was concerned it was a good one. If she was somehow past-haunted it was because it was here, in this very house, her mother's plain old semi-slum four-up four-down, where the two of them had once lived alone together with a room for every ashtray and a million books, that Jethro began. He'd put the first sound curtain behind the stairwell the year her mother died, and once he'd found out how to make it opaque, followed it with the famous underfloor storage units. The next year when refrigerators went out in the energy crisis, he'd figured out how to handle the four-foot galley unit. Most people had thrown their antiques into their potbellied stoves during the Freeze; there wasn't any real trauma about converting to built-ins after that. And now, of course, that the sound curtains enabled four families to live in this one little house, and the solar units were keeping them warm and well-lit, everything was beautifully comfortable. She had all the books and music she wanted on the computer that fed into the television set.

It took a while, she thought, but we're happier now. You don't need all that stuff we used to have: sewing machines, hair dryers, typewriters, blenders, and mixers. You can get anything you need at the Centre.

She was back in the sun on the bunk. It was February, but the sunstrainer allowed her to tan. Up in their high, gleaming cage, the parrots tumbled and squawked. She could almost hear the parsley and onions growing. Mother, she thought, would miss the morning paper. She turned on the news to see what was happening: as usual, nothing good. But it had always been like that.



She heard Bo stir and got a can of formula out of the cupboard for him, went and crouched beside his little cupboard bed while it was warming. Poor Bo: did he even know she loved him? Did he know she'd wanted him since she was fifteen, her own baby and Jethro's? They'd had to put him off during the Freeze when so many babies died it would have been cruel to have him; but this wasn't a good time for them either. Funny, she'd pictured monsters and freaks after the Accident but it wasn't like that at all, just a slow wasting. His poor little light going out before it was properly turned on.

He seemed to like flowers, so she grew them for him among the vegetables. She handed him a little, white-stemmed violet; he put it close to his pale eyes and smiled. She kissed him and went to get his bottle.

Every day she told herself fiercely, "You can't have everything."


At first she blamed Bo's disease on her smoking; but Gordie, the kid she'd beaten up in grade one at Huron Street school (he was always trying to kiss her) was the one who broke through the computer code at the medical bank and announced it: there were thousands of Bos. Jethro hadn't liked that, he'd grown up straight and though the Government was a hero. His mother had never made him sign a petition against the RCMP. Governments are just like people, Sophie thought, some good, some sly. I wish this one would let me go out to work again. Bo wouldn't know the difference between me and a housekeeper, if I got a nice one.

Well, it wouldn't be too long now, she thought, cradling the pale form in her arms. It's not that you don't love them, but you begin to accept parting with them; you have to, or you'd go crazy; you put your tears behind the sound curtain, really. She wrapped him carefully in the old wool shawl she had hidden away. Wool was valuable now. All the sheep had died in the Freeze; and the cattle. Now we dress in woodpulp, she thought, instead of writing on it. Funny world and why not?

Beyond the sound curtain, another woman was tending her garden, nursing her pallid son, retaining her ability to talk by whispering to her birds. If she and Sophie had gone out, they might have met each other. But there was no reason to go out. Her simple needs were taken care of; she went to the Exercise Centre on Thursday, not Friday as Sophie did.

Sophie turns on the television and wonders what book there will be today: *Northanger Abbey*, a golden oldie. That will keep me till Jethro comes home. She didn't like books until they were gone. She'd die without them now, waiting, always waiting.

The other woman mixes her baby's formula. She goes to add his medicine, and, looking over her shoulder, sure someone is watching, quickly appropriates some for herself. "We'll get through this day, Roo," she says. "We'll get through."



Activities

1. Isolate, quote, and explain four references from the text that suggest the government exercises strict control over its citizens in the world of the story.
2. Sophie says, "You can't have everything." Working in pairs, list the things about her life that seem to make Sophie happy, and list the negative points about Sophie's world.
3. Write a paragraph describing Sophie's world. Refer specifically to the text and quote from it to support your points. Exchange paragraphs with a classmate and work together to ensure that the information in each paragraph is complete. Edit and proofread with each other before handing in a final copy.
4. **a)** In your own words explain the meaning of the following words in the context of the story: the Accident, the Mixture, the Freeze, the Centre, the sunstrainer
b) Compare your ideas with those of another student and try to reach a consensus on the meanings. Write a dictionary definition of the words together. Post your definitions on the bulletin board; you may use illustrations if you wish.
5. Sophie "turned on the news to see what was happening: as usual, nothing good." Working with one or two partners, make a short newscast such as Sophie might see. Incorporate elements of the story into your presentation; perform the newscast live or make a video to show to the class.



Digital Bullies

SIMONA CHIOSE

Whose kids will win the game in the information super-playground?

Focus Your Learning

Reading this essay will help you:

- distinguish between main and supporting information
- understand transition words
- consider both sides of an argument
- explore use of new words and phrases

Tom Williams is CEO of Desert Island Software in Victoria, B.C. Right now he is “in negotiations” with MCA and Electronic Arts for distribution rights to his “Virtual Walk Northwest” program, which allows kids to look at images of the Pacific Northwest through “electronic binoculars.” Tom Williams is well placed to design computer games—he’s fifteen years old.

His corporate headquarters is his parents’

house, where he started Desert Island Software at age eleven.

Williams is every computer teacher’s dream student—or would be, if he went to school. Williams could be Canada’s answer to Bill Gates, but no teachers will be able to say that they remember being there when Williams was still a kid. This year he’s taking correspondence courses, and his programming skills were self-taught.

Williams explains that he doesn't like to "regurgitate" lessons in the classroom, and considers himself more of a "visual learner." The company, he says, started after his father (a University of Victoria professor) purchased a home computer, but didn't buy any games. "So I thought, why don't I teach myself how to make my own games, and learn something?"

Williams is a living incarnation of the paradoxes of education in the high-tech age. Believers in the new electronic communications, the worldwide Internet system in particular, say that computers in the classroom need no longer sit in a corner gathering dust. Kids can be motivated to use them to talk with people their own age, anywhere in the country or even the world. For Tom Williams's generation, who learned "point and click" before the alphabet, "cruising the Net" could prove no more daunting than a drive to the library. Advocates also assure us that these fully trained and computer-literate children will become the entrepreneurs and technicians of the much anticipated high-tech future.

But a whiz-kid like Williams had a computer in his home, a civil-servant mother and professor father, and now he's even bailed out of the public school system. Can a computer and a modem in every classroom really improve the high-school drop-out rate, or make computer scientists out of kids who fall asleep in class because they didn't have breakfast? Unfortunately, we may be counting on a techno-fix for political and social problems we are simply unwilling to address.

With public schools facing record-level underfinancing, electronic communications seems to be the only educational area in which governments are willing to invest. At an initial cost of \$25 million, the School-Net, a federally initiated and funded network has connected

over three hundred schools across the country. Much is expected of the network, from familiarizing elementary school students with technology to providing high-schoolers with access to the best scientific minds in North America for help with their biology or chemistry projects.

Many of the promises made by School-Net mirror the larger myth of the information superhighway. Nothing short of a revolution in public education is being envisioned. Several educational groups sponsored a full-page *Globe and Mail* ad asserting that the info highway will pave the way for schools to enter the twenty-first century of education. Not only would electronic links allow students to develop computer skills and connect them with "information sources around the world," it would also "provide access to every school" for "learning resources they cannot now afford."

But not everyone is convinced by the Net's populist promises. Emina Vukovic, who works at New York's Playing to Win computer centre in Harlem, part of a network of computing centres located in low-income neighbourhoods, says that the fevered Internet hype sweeping the wealthy of the world is no surprise.

The phenomenon, she says, is similar to what happened when personal computers were first introduced. Everyone was supposed to be able to draft letters free of spelling mistakes, to present their ideas in an attractive desktop format, and to acquire basic accounting skills. But no one ever adequately addressed how people without the economic resources to buy or rent a computer, or with low basic literacy levels, were supposed to become Pagemaker wizards.

"PCs were going to bridge the gap between the wealthy and the poor," Vukovic recalls. "But that's not what happened. Instead, even high-school graduates cannot get a job now

unless they have basic computer skills." Similarly, for those who have not grown up surrounded by home video games, simulated environments, and word-processing spelling bees, the electronic highway could be just one more party they weren't invited to.

Preventing a new tier in a techno-hierarchy is the task facing educators who work with low-income students. Many are experimenting with ways of tailoring electronic communication to the realities of poor and disenfranchised youth.

Charles Carr, the principal of Leslieville Public School in east-end Toronto, says that teaching students technology is only a small part of preparing them for a world where many are starting out with unequal opportunities. The school has only nineteen computers for over five hundred students, half of them acquired through the efforts of parents and teachers. But those nineteen terminals are used a lot. "We are an inner-city school, so we don't necessarily have all the resources of other schools. But our kids have to be provided with an equal opportunity to succeed as affluent kids with home computers in Rosedale," Carr says.

Yet Leslieville is far from the image portrayed by magazines like *Wired* and *Mondo 2000*, a sound stage peopled with precocious computer coders fretting over how to maintain hacker ethics while working for

Microsoft. Eighty percent of students at Leslieville are East Asian, and their first language is mostly Cantonese or Vietnamese. Very few have home computers. But because many of the school's technology projects aim to give students new perspectives

on their own lives, Carr says they have been motivated to improve their language skills so they can participate.

Leslieville is also home to a Native as a Second Language program, with Ojibway taught in the afternoons. The language program is connected with a Canada-wide computer network linking First Nations youth with other students. Kids From Kanata, as the project is called, brings schools together in triads across the country, with one of the participating schools located in a First Nations community or in a school with a large population of First Nations students. It has given Leslieville students an understanding of the power of electronic communication beyond fighting the uphill battle for a job.

"The native kids we talked to told us about what they did and if they were having troubles too. We just talked about ourselves and then we sent packages with photos and writing and stuff. What we found out was that the kids we talked to were a lot like us," says Ngoc Phung, a grade six student who was involved in the project last year.

Seth Klein, a teacher at Kitsoo Community School, located on a 400-person island reserve in northern B.C., says his school's participation in the program has dispelled stereotypes on both sides. "The kids [on the reserve] want to teach others about who they are because they are conscious of the biases and the prejudices people have. At the same time, they are beginning to realize that kids down south are not just going shopping or going to parties, which is what they see on TV."

Projects like Kanata, however, are still few and far between in educational computing. All too often, being able to chat electronically with a student in Finland is being billed as the way to a high-paid job.

There's some truth to the idea that powers

projects like School-Net—that without computer skills, youth could be stuck waiting all their lives, or permanently unemployed. And being able to play the info highway game could determine how much people will actually be able to participate in a technocratic democracy. We can pretend that the “super-highway” is only going to be about ordering pizza by phone or buying J. Crew clothes in minutes, but the stakes may be a lot higher than in Mario Brothers. Much of the information we now look for in daily newspapers, libraries, or government offices could be available electronically in seconds. Already, U.S. Supreme Court documents, scientific data, and many magazines are available through the Internet. Those who get to the information fastest could win all the games.

Far from creating a more informed and democratic society, the Internet could just help consolidate a wealthy, healthy, secure, and knowledgeable elite. It’s what Peter Skillen, coordinator of computer services for one of the most technologically advanced boards of education, the North York board, calls a society of “information haves and have-nots.”

Good intentions alone won’t bridge this gap. Jane Wingate, a librarian at Toronto’s Harbord Collegiate, says students at her school still don’t use Blackboard, a network geared toward the needs of black students. “We don’t have enough computers so that the kids could just access Blackboard in the classroom, and without enough guidance you don’t know what to do once you have the computer and are hooked up to one of these networks.”

In other words, playing the info game requires more than a modem. Home computers and technological know-how make a big difference. Nevertheless, many students will get a glimpse of the vaunted superhighway only in

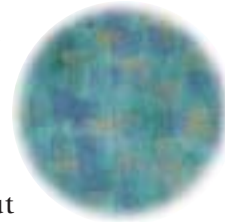
the classroom. The Vancouver school board encourages students with a home computer to connect to the board’s network from home, so that those without one, about two-thirds of all students, can have more class time.

Without conscious political thought like this, issues of economic and technological access could fall by the wayside. “A lot of money and resources are going into the School-Net, but with little political thought behind it. And if it doesn’t work, we are going to lose that money,” says Dick Holland, a teacher at Monarch Park Collegiate in Toronto.

Since most people familiar enough with computer networks to use them for more than playing around are still academics, bureaucrats, or Bill Gates wannabees, maybe it shouldn’t be surprising that their concept of democracy does not encompass the people they step over on their way to the blinking terminals. Since the only barrier between them and the information highway is the traffic to the Apple store, they all too often assume that the same is true for everyone. As soon as we build our fibre-optic cables, they figure, a new age of democracy will dawn.

Meanwhile, the faster governments and school boards move ahead with systems like School-Net, the faster some young people may fall behind. To Emina Vukovic, this means that the people who currently use her Harlem centre, including young business people without computers and kids who come to type school assignments, will only have that much more catching up to do.

“Sure, white middle-class people in the suburbs will have the information,” she says, “but what about us?” ■



Activities



- This article uses specific examples and information to support general ideas and concepts. Select two central ideas and, in point form, note the specific information used to develop them.
 - In one clear sentence state the thesis (dominant argument) of this essay. Share your sentence with a partner and together develop one that is acceptable to both of you.
- Examine the article carefully. Note how the argument develops and how the whole can be broken into sections that flow one into the other. Isolate and quote at least five words or phrases that serve to move the reader from one section or paragraph to the next. Keep these examples in your notes so that you can use them as models in your next piece of expository writing.
- In two opposing paragraphs, state what the Internet could do to better society and how it might harm society.
- New technologies, and computer technology in particular, have made it necessary for people to create new words, to use old words to convey new meanings, and to combine old words into new combinations. Working in a small group, isolate and note examples of words in the article that have undergone such changes. Display your information visually in a chart, poster, pamphlet, or illustrated glossary. Indicate both the current meanings of the words and the older meanings.

Where's Sammy? The Cyber-stalker Dodges His Hi-tech Pursuers

ROBERT BREHL

Focus Your Learning

Reading these articles will help you:

- understand the use of irony
- analyse structural features of a news story
- distinguish fact from opinion
- explore character and plot in news stories
- identify elements of myth in modern-day life

Sommy, can you hear me?

Who are you?

The computer hacker electronically stalking and harassing a Windsor-area family is fast developing rock-star-type status in the North American media and around the world via the Internet.

The latest twist occurred yesterday when a crack security team's high-tech gizmos couldn't locate a trace of the stalker, who calls himself

Sommy, after a two-day sweep of the home of Dwayne and Debbie T—.

Experts, including the former head of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, nonetheless warn the case shows a great deal of sophisticated electronic equipment is getting "into the wrong hands" and everyone should beware—especially business people with sensitive information.

Sommy has taunted police and others over

the T—s' phone line that he's smarter than they are and can't be caught.

"We're disappointed, but it just proves we've eliminated the house ... we just have to look in another direction," Debbie T— said in a telephone interview.

She said Sommy may have accessed Bell Canada computers and equipment to tap into their home phone lines. Sommy last menaced them March 31, she said.

"I don't know if he's gone or if he's just lying low. He's got the world looking for him [and] he thrives on the attention," she said.

Police Visit

There have been at least two cases of less sophisticated Sommys doing major messing with phone lines.

A troublemaker in Ottawa ten years ago disconnected thousands of phone calls, including the prime minister's, in one swoop by messing with Bell's switching equipment.

The T—s' electronic intruder—police think there could be more than one—has tapped the family's phone lines, interrupting conversations with burps and babble.

Debbie T— said Sommy even uncovered the personal identification number for her bank card.

He has boasted that the police came to his house and talked to him without realizing who he was.

"I believe that," T— said. "He told me police asked him to ring his doorbell. How would he know that if they weren't there? [Police] said they asked everybody to ring their doorbell."

Sommy has overheard conversations in the house and seems to have access to its electrical

power. Some reports have said he could turn off individual appliances at will, but that isn't true.

The security team figures Sommy has bugged out, if he was there at all.

"Our position on this matter is that no further action by [our team] is warranted at this time," said Trevor Stewart, lead member of the Nepean Systems Inc. crew.

The company was brought in by the Canadian Discovery Channel, which planned to air its show on Sommy Monday, and *Dateline NBC*, which was to air its feature last night.

Stewart, 41, a former RCMP officer and Canadian Security Intelligence Service spy, said the team is composed of intelligence and security experts from "a wide variety of backgrounds," but their work is so secret that no further information is given out.

"There is a great deal of sophistication in the hands of the wrong people."

He would not reveal what equipment was used for the sweep.

Norman Inkster, a former RCMP commissioner now at KPMG, an accounting and consulting firm, said he'd never seen anything like this in his thirty-six years with the Mounties.

Foiling highly skilled specialists and police for three months must be giving Sommy "some kind of thrill," he said.

Inkster said it shows "there is a great deal of sophistication in the hands of the wrong people. We'll probably see more of this."

The case has drawn the attention of tabloid TV shows like *Hard Copy*, *Inside Edition* and

Unsolved Mysteries. There has been plenty of talk of a movie deal, too.

Hired Agent

Some are wondering if it's all a hoax. Many are whispering the words "financial gain." Others point to the T—s' fifteen-year-old son.

T— says her son does not own a computer or know much about them.

And money is not worth what they have endured, she said, adding that they went public hoping someone would rat on Sammy.

The family has turned down free trips to New York and Hollywood for TV talk show appearances. The only money they've accepted is a nominal amount to pay for damage in the house, caused by the crew of *Unsolved Mysteries*.

"Between us we make \$90,000 a year," said T—, a blackjack dealer at the Windsor casino.

Her husband is a tool-and-die worker.

"We had a beautiful home and we saved up a lot of money. We had a comfortable living ... There's nothing possible to gain from this."

But they have hired a Detroit agent.

T— said Dan Dietz is working for them to keep the American media at bay. Dietz agrees.

He says many calls have come in for movie deals, but he has negotiated with no one.

"I wouldn't spend my time working with them if I thought they were some kind of scam people," said Dietz, a self-described "Michigan attorney media agent."

The family has put the house up for sale— for \$25,000 more than the \$160,000 they paid last fall.

"We have put in \$20,000. We just want to break even, T— said. ■

Cyber-Trickster Caught

CANADIAN PRESS

A fifteen-year-old boy has admitted he is the "cyber stalker" who invaded his family's home in a teen prank that spiralled out of control.

His mother, Debbie T—, issued a statement yesterday apologizing for the actions of her son, who was able to elude investigators, Bell Canada, Ontario Hydro, and even an espionage team hired by two television networks.

He made a full confession Saturday after a four-hour interrogation by police.

"He's my son, I don't know how I didn't know," she said tearfully. "I must have been blind ... I feel so stupid. So sorry."

The electronic stalker, who called himself

Sommy, began haunting the custom-built home near Windsor, Ont., in December.

He tapped into the family's phone lines, interrupting conversations with burps and babble. Lights and appliances would randomly turn on and off.

The family recently put their house up for sale to escape him.

Several times throughout the investigation, Debbie T— had argued her son was not responsible.

Her brother emerged from the house yester-

day after a long chat with his nephew, whom he described as “a good kid.”

The teen was “very remorseful” and insists he acted alone, he said.

There was at least one time when the T—s received a call from someone calling himself Sommy while their son was in the room.

“If you look at all the evidence, it’s impossible for him to have worked by himself,” he said.

The uncle said it’s believed that the teen simply cut in on phone conversations using an extension in his bedroom. He could not say how the teen disguised his voice. There are four phones and two phone lines in the house, he added.

The uncle said the culprit is an average high-school student and has never been in serious trouble before.

Provincial police said no charges will be laid.

“After going through the evidence gathered and the interviews, we concluded that charges would revictimize the family,” said Sergeant Doug Babbitt.

“We felt it would be better for [the family] to settle this themselves than to charge them.”

In a rambling letter of apology, Debbie T— wrote:

“When I asked my son numerous times if he knew anything about what’s been happening around here and he replies: ‘No, Mom. I would never hurt you like this,’ a mother’s first instinct is to believe him.

“All the crying I heard from him at night I thought was because of the pain we were suffering caused by Sommy. We now realize it was him crying out for help because he wanted to end all this, but was afraid because of how many people were now involved.”

A two-day sweep last week by a team of intelligence and security experts loaded with high-tech gizmos failed to reveal Sommy’s methods.

The investigation kept two officers busy since police were first called Jan. 20.

“It was important for us to systematically eliminate all the potential sources that could have been doing it and that takes time,” Sgt. Babbitt said.

“As well, it seemed every time we set up a piece of equipment to eliminate how something could be done, suddenly Sommy never called for eight or ten days.” A two-day sweep last week by a team of intelligence and security experts loaded with high-tech gizmos failed to reveal Sommy’s methods. The team was brought in by *Dateline NBC* and the Discovery Channel, which planned to broadcast its program today. ■

Activities

1. Find five examples of opinions and comments in the first story that seem ironic in the light of later information in the second article. Explain the irony in each. Share your notes with a partner.
2. Analyse the structure and content of one of the articles, examining at least the following areas:
 - the location of the main information
 - the sequencing of the information
 - the relevance of the information
 - the appeal and interest of the information.

Present your findings in a short piece of expository writing.

3. In point form, summarize the “hard information” in each article as distinct from opinion, interpretation, and comment.
4. Working in pairs, create and present to the class in dramatic form the conversation in which Sommy confesses to his uncle that he is the cyber-stalker.
5.
 - a) Imagine that you are Sommy, and write a series of diary entries reflecting the initial excitement, the continuing pressure, and the eventual confession of cyber-stalking. Express your feelings as well as the actual activities involved.
 - b) Create an audiotape of a phone tap of the house during the reign of the cyber-stalker. You may record more than one phone call.
 - c) Recreate a portion of your audiotape as a first person narrative. In an accompanying note explain how the change of format has affected the content and the feeling of the information.
6. A myth is a story that attempts to explain some phenomenon or express a world view. With a partner, consider to what extent the Sommy story in the first article could be called a modern myth. What does this tell you about our “scientific” view of the world?

Welcome to Cyberspace

MIRKO ILIĆ CORP.



Focus Your Learning

Looking at this visual will help you:

- analyse the creative use of images
- express the theme of a work of art
- experiment with figurative language

Activities

- 1. a)** Select four items from the picture and explain what each indicates about our society.

b) Compare your analysis with a classmate's. Work together to write an analysis of the image.
- 2.** Describe three ways in which the artist has conveyed the concept of consumerism. In a written assessment agree or disagree with this depiction of society. In your opinion, is the artist too critical, not critical enough, or accurate?
- 3. a)** Imagine that you are the blue figure adrift in cyberspace. Making references to the picture, describe what you see and feel as you drift. Be adventurous in your style and try to convey a sense of cyberspace: random links, gaudy colours, electronic sounds, etc. This is an experimental piece of writing and it may not work; the attempt is what is crucial here.

b) In a group of five, share your experiments. Comment on each others' stylistic techniques. What works? What doesn't?

The Curio Shop

WILLIAM KOTZWINKLE



Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- identify explicit and implicit ideas and information
- analyse creative use of language
- extend your understanding of the text
- design a book cover

“Now here, sir, is a lovely—and might I say, traditional—example.” The Seller pointed a finger at the decorative sphere, set against a velvet background cloth.

The Collector leaned on the edge of the counter and studied the bauble. Its workmanship might be good, but it was hard to tell, owing to large, sooty stains on its surface and, beneath that, what appeared to be rust or some fatal corrosion that had permanently marred the interior.

“I’ll let you have it cheap,” said the Seller, spying the critical look of the Collector. Business wasn’t good; the shop was seldom visited any more.

“Is it”—the Collector touched at it with his monocle, studying the piece more closely—“still enchanted?”

“The occasional wail, sir. You know the phenomenon, I’m sure.”

“The true spirit, or merely an echo?”

The Seller sighed. He couldn't misrepresent the piece. He'd like to, naturally. He needed the sale. But he couldn't afford to offend an important customer. "It no longer contains a true spirit, sir, I regret to say."

The Collector nodded, turning the trinket slightly with the edge of his monocle.

"But," the Seller continued, a trifle urgently, "the echo is authentic, sir."

"I'm sure," said the Collector, with a sideways glance, his eyes showing only a momentary flicker of contempt.

"Well, sir," said the Seller, defending himself against the glance, "there are clever copies in existence. The ordinary collector can be deceived. Not that you, sir"—he hastened to correct himself—"are an ordinary collector."

"Happy that you think so." The Collector turned the ball in his hands, examining the portions of the surface not corrupted by time and bad handling. It was shameful the way certain pieces deteriorated. But the work was authentic; he didn't need the Seller to tell him that. You could see the little original touches all over the object, though they were badly encrusted. Unfortunately, you couldn't clean the damn things, no matter how you worked at them; once the corrosion began, it couldn't be reversed. He wondered sometimes why he bothered with them at all. But then, it was always amusing when company came and one had a new piece to show. He could have it put in a gold mount; that'd show it off to better advantage. Or hang it from a chain in his study, where the lighting was usually muted and the defects of the sphere wouldn't show too badly.

"Let me ... please, sir ..." The Seller pulled out a cloth from his pocket, attempted to shine the tiny patch of transparency on the ball. But as the cloth touched it, the wailing came forth, long, low, and chilling. Echo or not, it went right through the Seller's soul.

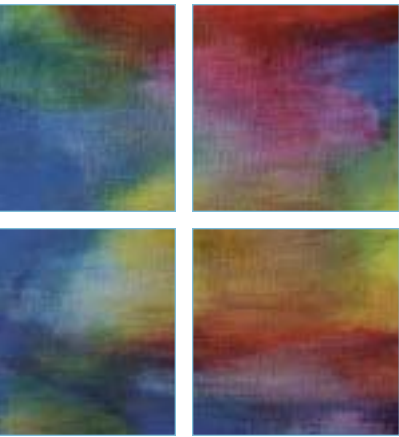
"The echo is fresh," said the Collector, smiling for the first time. "The spirit must have departed only recently."

"So I'm told, sir." The Seller resumed his bit of dusting on the surface, more confident now, for he'd seen the smile and knew he had a sale. "That's precisely what the Caravan Master said when I bought it from him, sir—the spirit has but recently departed."

The Collector squinted through his glass, savouring the moment, knowing the piece must be his, for the wail was strong. He could listen to it at his leisure and learn the story of the bauble, who had made it and when. All that would still be in the echo. Pity the true spirit had fled—that would have been a find!

"Well, I suppose I'll have to have this," he said. "My wife will hate it, of course."

"Because of the wailing, sir?"



"Puts her off. Gives her the creeps."

The Seller continued his dusting. "I must admit, it gives me the creeps, too."

"You don't know how to listen," the Collector said. "You must get past the superficial sound and hear the traces of its inner voice."

"You have the knack for it, sir, that's clear." The Seller masked his own contempt behind a cheerful smile. He'd be glad to have the cursed thing out of the shop and be done with its bloody wailing.

"Much to be learned, much," said the Collector, aware that he was revealing too great an excitement and knowing he'd suffer in the bargain, but he didn't care at this point. The wailing had thrilled him. These little ornaments were always filled with surprises, even when they were as old as this one and all that remained of their glory was a fading echo.

"Microbes," he said, inspecting the ball with his glass again. "They say that's what causes the deterioration."

"I've heard the same, sir. Tiny organisms that feed upon the workings."

"Once it was brand-new," the Collector said, holding the ball up to the light. "Can we ever conceive of the beauty it must have contained? How splendid its workmanship was? If the spirit that once inhabited this ball were still present, it could tell us more than just who made it and when—" He paused, his eyes shining with the intoxication of the connoisseur. "It would engage us in deep discussion, whisper to us of the wondrous workings of its mechanisms, give us the secret of its maker. It would grant us, in short, the favour of its enchanting company, but"—he placed the ball back on its dark velvet cloth—"this is a lifeless trinket now."

The Seller concealed a sneer behind his polishing cloth. These collectors were such pompous old bores. Listening to their twaddle made him sick. "You saw my sale sign, sir. Fifty percent off all items in the shop."

"Yes," said the Collector, disappointed at his failure to kindle true appreciation in the Seller. But what did these merchants know of subtlety? And in any case, once he was home and visitors came, then he could expand fully, then he'd have his fun in the comfort of his armchair in the study, with the fire crackling and the bauble suspended on a suitable chain, in the shadows by the window, perhaps. "All right, how much do you want for it?"

"As you can see, sir, through this bit of transparency, the centre is filled with jewels—"

"But surely that's not unusual—"

"The fakes, sir, are glass-filled—"

The Collector adjusted his top hat, turned up the collar on his cape. The bauble was in his pocket, and a thin smile played upon his lips. He'd driven a hard and cunning bargain.

The Seller graciously held the door, sly satisfaction in his eyes. He'd gotten twice what the trinket was worth. These foreign collectors often think they know it all.

"Do you remember, perchance," asked the Collector, drawing the sphere from his pocket as he stepped into the bright street, "what the Caravan Master called this thing when he sold it to you?"

"A peculiar name, sir," replied the Seller. "He called it Earth."

"Earth. I see. Very well then, my good man, I shall undoubtedly visit you again."

"My pleasure, sir, always."

The Seller closed his door and watched as the Collector walked on down the glittering, milky boulevard. ■

Activities

1. In conference with a partner, identify the turning point of the story (the point at which the perspective of the story becomes clear). In point form, note how the new information affects your comprehension of the whole story. You could organize your material into a before-and-after chart.
2. In clear sentences, explain the implications of the following phrases in the context of the whole story:
 - "large sooty stains"
 - "once the corrosion began it couldn't be reversed"
 - "The spirit must have departed only recently."
 - "the glittering, milky boulevard"
3. Working in pairs, make up three questions about the story that you would like to have answered. Exchange your questions with another pair and try to answer each other's questions. In a group of four afterwards, share your answers and expand your understanding of the story.
4. Imagine that "The Curio Shop" is to be published as a separate work: a book, video, or CD. Design and produce a suitable cover for the story. Include the following elements: title, author, illustrations, and promotional blurbs.

The Armies of the Moon

GWENDOLYN MACEWEN

now they begin to gather their forces
in the Marsh of Decay and the Sea of Crises;
their leaders stand motionless
on the rims of the craters
invisible and silver as swords turned sideways
waiting for earthrise and the coming of man.

they have always been there increasing their numbers
at the foot of dim rills, all around and under
the ghostly edges where moonmaps surrender
and hold out white flags to the night.
when the earthmen came hunting with wagons and
golf balls
they were so eager for white rocks and sand
that they did not see them, invisible and silver
as swords turned sideways on the edge of the craters—
so the leaders assumed they were blind.

in the Lake of Death there will be a showdown;
men will be powder, they will go down under
the swords of the unseen silver armies,
become one with the gorgeous anonymous moon.

none of us will know what caused the crisis
as the lunar soldiers reluctantly disband
and return to their homes in the Lake of Dreams
weeping quicksilver tears for the blindness of man.



Focus Your Learning

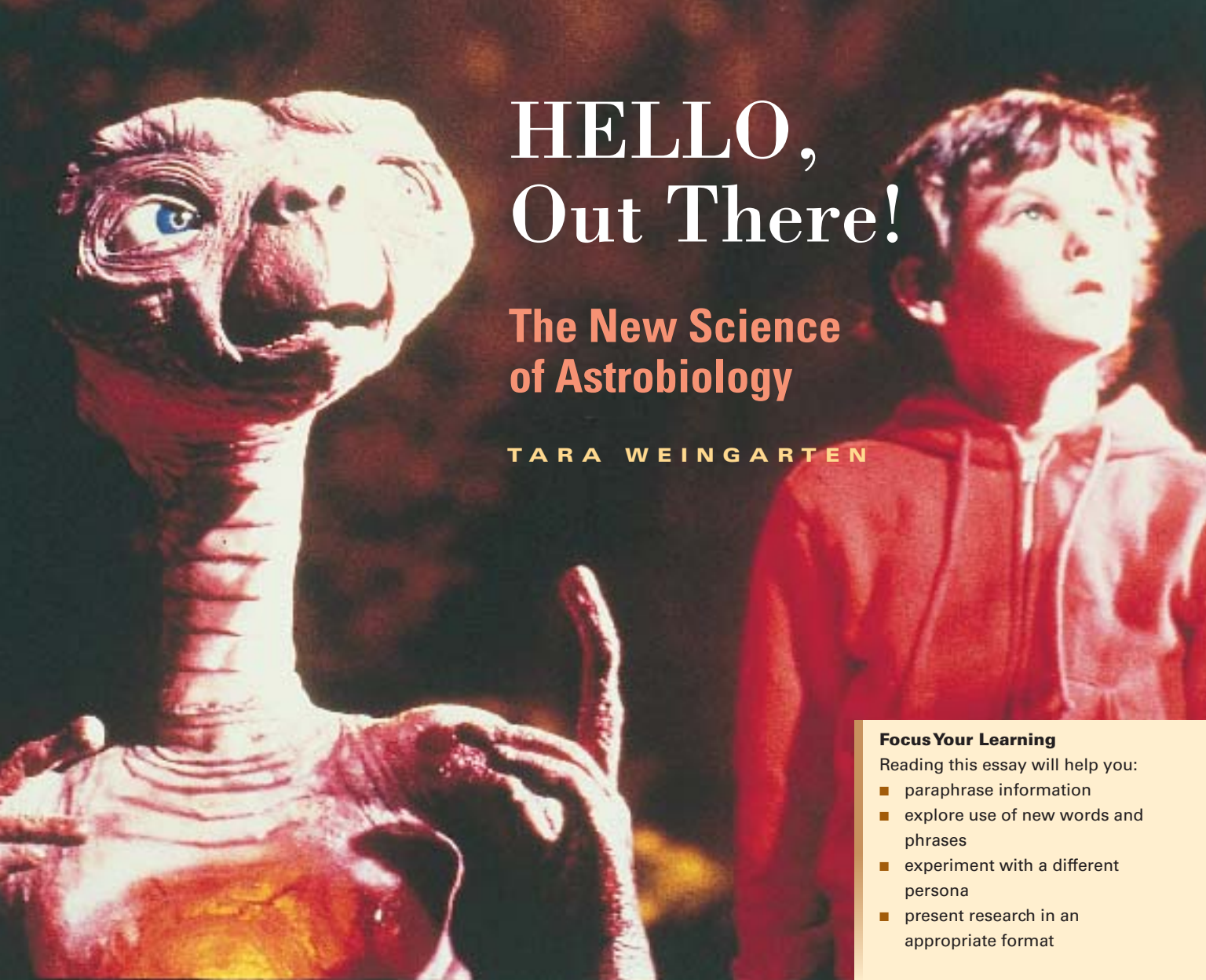
Reading this poem will help you:

- write a character sketch
- present a dramatic reading

Activities

- a)** In a few sentences explain the impression of the moon created by the poet's choice of place names.

b) Using the place names and other information from the poem, write a character sketch of a typical inhabitant of the Moon. Compare your sketch with that of a classmate.
- Working in a group of eight to ten, prepare and present a dramatic reading of the poem. After your presentation, write an assessment of your group's reading in which you consider its effectiveness, impact, and interest; reflect on your own personal contribution to the whole.



HELLO, Out There!

The New Science of Astrobiology

TARA WEINGARTEN

Focus Your Learning

Reading this essay will help you:

- paraphrase information
- explore use of new words and phrases
- experiment with a different persona
- present research in an appropriate format

On his shelf at work, Kenneth Nealson has a hunk of stratified rock from the Australian desert. The red and grey layered boulder looks to be nothing more than a pretty paperweight. But to Nealson, a microbiologist working for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the densely packed organic carbon in this rock represents proof positive that life existed 3.6 billion years ago on our planet. Nealson would give his soul, he says, to find a similar specimen on another world. "A rock like this would

prove unambiguously that life existed" somewhere else, he says.

Proof of life beyond Earth, of course, has so far been elusive. The meteorite touted a few years ago as evidence that life once flourished on Mars has since been largely dismissed as having been contaminated with Earth bacteria. But NASA is still looking. Nealson is one of dozens of scientists recruited by the agency to help find if not little green men, then at least a little green spore of some sort. The researchers are part of a new scientific discipline called

astrobiology, which blends astronomy, biology, chemistry, and physics in an effort to identify life in the universe. To expand the field, the space agency has founded the NASA Astrobiology Institute, which will fund programs at eleven institutions, including Harvard and UCLA. "If we can find one fossilized bacterium that wasn't formed on Earth, we'll be on our way," says NASA chief Daniel Goldin.

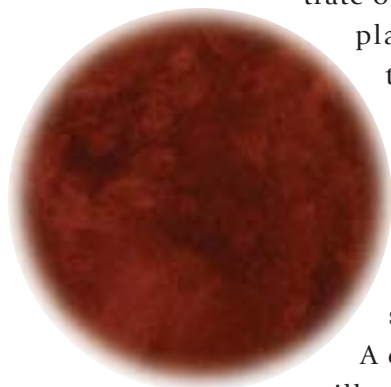
The agency's belief that something is out there is bolstered by recent discoveries of planets outside our solar system. So far astronomers have found evidence of eleven distant planets, each circling different stars, and new discoveries keep coming. "We know there are billions and billions and billions of stars, and so it makes sense that life exists not just on one planet but on many, many planets," says Swiss astronomer Didier Queloz, co-discoverer of the first planet outside the solar system and a visiting scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). Ed Weiler, director of NASA's Origins program, puts it more bluntly. "If this universe is all ours, then someone really screwed up," he says.

While some of the astrobiologists concentrate on finding life on distant planets, most are turning their attention to closer places like Mars. Neelson and his team will work with JPL's engineers to figure out where on Mars to land a half-dozen spacecraft to search for life. A decade from now, a craft will return some Martian rock samples for Neelson and others to analyse. But there's a hitch. Just as the Mars meteorite recovered in Antarctica is thought to have been tainted by Earthly bacteria, samples from Mars,

too, may not be what they seem. Comets that collided with Earth during its infancy blasted billions of pounds of rock and soil into space, some of which landed on the Red Planet. "We think there's some seven million tons of Earth soil sitting on Mars," says Neelson. "You have to consider the possibility that if we find life on Mars, it could have come from Earth." Astrobiologists also must grapple with a fundamental question: what exactly *is* life? "When we went to school, life had legs and wings and was green or something," says NASA's director of astrobiology, Jerry Soffen. "Now we find life in 250-degree thermal vents under the sea and in glacial ice. We thought we knew what life was, and we really don't any more." Scientists worry that the criteria they use to identify life may not apply on other planets. "The real killer would be to run into life and not recognize it," says Neelson.

Indeed, the first sign of life elsewhere probably won't be anything as obvious—or as cuddly—as E.T. In fact, it's likely to be microscopic. So where to search? "Life needs energy of some kind, whether it be geothermal heat, tidal energy, or sunlight," says Neelson. Any planet with a hot interior is a candidate to host life."

So, too, is a planet with the proper atmosphere. "You can tell from space by looking at Earth's atmosphere that it's alive," says Neelson. "All of the signatures for life are there: water vapour, oxygen, and carbon dioxide." But as recent discoveries of life in extreme conditions on Earth have shown, oxygen doesn't have to be present for life to thrive. "Oxygen only appeared on Earth 500 million years ago," he says, "but there was a world of bacteria here that preceded us. It was metabolically and chemically as alive two billion years ago as it is today." The first step in the search for life on other planets is to shed a lot of Earthly preconceptions. ■



Activities

1. In your own words, explain Neelson's job and exactly what he is searching for. You should not need any more than a few clear sentences.
2. Jerry Soffen says, "We thought we knew what life was, and we really don't anymore." Make notes from the section of the article that discusses the nature of life. In a short paragraph, referring to the article, explain why scientists like Jerry Soffen are unsure about what life is. Edit and proofread your piece with the help of a classmate and produce a good final copy.
3. Working in a small group, list the words from this article that you do not understand. Using clues from context and your knowledge of similar words or parts of words, try to define as many as you can. Using a print dictionary or an on-line source, check and correct your speculations, and note down correct definitions for new words.
4. Imagine that you are an astrobiologist engaged in a search for life on a distant planet. Write a log entry or a report to your commander in which you detail a triumph in your search. Use your imagination to describe a life form that is as alien as possible.
5. Working with a partner, research at least five different versions of extra-terrestrial life in stories, novels, and movies. Create a visual gallery of these life forms. For each you should provide an illustration with a brief written description of appearance, habits, habitat, food, etc. Decide on an appropriate presentation format; for example, computer database, posters, pamphlet, report from an exploration, or video.

Sentry

FREDRIC BROWN



Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- use appropriate language
- experiment with perspective in writing
- distinguish between narrative voice and point of view

He was wet and muddy and hungry and cold and he was fifty thousand light-years from home.

A strange blue sun gave light, and gravity, twice what he was used to, made every movement difficult.

But in tens of thousands of years this part of war hadn't changed. The flyboys were fine with their sleek spaceships and their fancy weapons. When the chips are down, though, it was still the foot soldier, the infantry, that had to take the ground and hold it, foot by bloody foot. Like this cursed planet of a star he'd never heard of until they'd landed him there. And now it was sacred ground because the aliens were there too. *The*

aliens, the only other intelligent race in the Galaxy ... cruel, hideous, and repulsive monsters.

Contact had been made with them near the centre of the Galaxy, after the slow, difficult colonization of a dozen thousand planets; and it had been war at sight; they'd shot without even trying to negotiate, or to make peace.

Now, planet by bitter planet, it was being fought out.

He was wet and muddy and hungry and cold, and the day was raw with a high wind that hurt his eyes. But the aliens were trying to infiltrate and every sentry post was vital.

He stayed alert, gun ready. Fifty thousand light-years from home, fighting on a strange world, and wondering if he'd ever live to see home again.

And then he saw one of them crawling toward him. He drew a bead and fired. The alien made that strange horrible sound they all make, then lay still.

He shuddered at the sound and sight of the alien lying there. One ought to be able to get used to them after a while, but he'd never been able to. Such repulsive creatures they were, with only two arms and two legs, ghastly white skins, and no scales. ■

Activities

- Find and quote ten words or phrases that Fredric Brown uses to evoke sympathy for the sentry.
 - With a partner, decide if the words affect the reader in the same way following the revelation at the end of the story.
- Imagine you are the first sentry to capture an "alien" alive, and write a report of the encounter for your superior officer. Place particular emphasis on how you managed to capture the alien, its reactions to you, and the immediate apparent differences between the alien species and your own. Remember to use the voice of the sentry to create an alien perspective and personality.
- Discuss how point of view affects the reader's reaction to the events in the story.
 - Writing in the third person, tell the incident from the point of view of the human who is approaching the sentry.

Voice Mail and the Mating Ritual

ANNELIES POOL

Focus Your Learning

Reading this essay will help you:

- describe and provide examples of satire
- be aware of both sides of an argument

I dialed the phone.

"Hello," said someone on the other end.

"Beep. I'm sorry, there must be some mistake. Beep." I said. "Beep. I wanted to talk to your voice mail. Could you connect me please? Beep."

Well, it didn't happen quite like that. What happened was that I called somebody fully expecting to get voice mail. So certain was I that I had the message already composed. When a real, live person answered the phone, it was a scramble to remember who I had called and why. This was an old-fashioned individual, obviously unaware that nobody who is anybody actually answers their phone anymore.

Time was when I would slam the phone down in frustration rather than stoop to talk to a machine. Now I find myself at a loss when a real person answers the phone. When, I asked myself, did this happen? Was it about the same

time that a web of wrinkles snuck in under my eyes, without my knowledge or permission?

It was then I realized the future is upon us—the future that thirty years ago was the stuff of bad science fiction movies and novels, the premise of which was that machines were going to take over the world. What none of us expected was that it would creep up on us when we weren't looking. And the way it would be done was by pretending that machines aren't machines but desirable companions designed to make us feel important.

The master stroke was calling it voice mail. Back in the days when we had answering machines, it was beneath nearly everybody's dignity to want to talk to one. But then it became voice mail—a sexy new thing, something you wouldn't mind talking softly to or taking on your honeymoon.

Just compare the ring of these two statements:

"I have to check my answering machine." This staccato sentence calls to mind some little nervous guy wearing a green suit with pants too short and frayed cuffs who carries a plastic briefcase full of samples of the dishwashing detergent he sells door to door. (I know, I know. We're not supposed to say nasty things about short, nervous people but what the hey?)

"I have to check my voice mail." Said in honeyed tones, this comes from a person who has lovers, spends winters in Hawaii, has a cushy, powerful job, and many underlings.

Which would you want to be? It reminds me of when typing became keyboarding—and it became respectable for everybody to do it, from top executives on down.

It's no secret that voice mail, along with its first cousin e-mail, is revolutionizing society, here in the North as well as everywhere else. And one of the first institutions that is feeling the effects is the age-old ritual of courtship.

Already I know somebody who knows somebody who met somebody on the Internet whose physical presence was several thousand miles away (that includes nearly everybody for us Northerners). They spent about a year communicating by e-mail and then got married, whether in cyberspace or in the flesh, I don't know. While I don't personally know anybody who has conducted a courtship by voice mail, I'm sure it's either happened or happening as we speak.

After all, there are so many benefits to this kind of courtship. For one thing, it's almost completely risk-free. Those of us old enough to have done the great mating ritual in the flesh (there being no voice mail or e-mail at the time) will remember the knee-trembling anxiety that always accompanied the first words of love or marriage as we risked having to crawl

home on our bellies like snakes because we had been rejected. With voice mail rejection can be painless: "Beep. I love you. Beep." or "Beep. Will you marry me? Beep."

If you've had the foresight to put a handkerchief over the phone and muffle your voice, you can deny everything if the answer is: "Beep. No, you slob. Beep." However, if the answer is an ecstatic "Beep. Yes! Beep." you can blame the quality of the telephone line for your muffled voice and then proceed, in between beeps, to make plans.

In the twenty-first century, people will spend their lives in cubicles communicating with the outside world (which will consist only of cyberspace) by voice mail and e-mail. We will be married by cyberspace preachers to people who are figments on a screen which thankfully we can turn on and off, and get our thrills playing non-stop games of Nintendo.

Now doesn't that sound like fun?

Whoops, have to go check my voice mail.

Beep. ■

Activities

1. With a partner, identify five serious points that the writer is making in her essay. Write a short paragraph for each point, explaining how she uses humour to present the argument. Evaluate the effectiveness of the satire; does the use of humour work? Or would the idea be more easily understood and more willingly accepted if it were presented in a more formal way?
2. **a)** From this article, briefly describe two ways, serious or not, in which voice mail is preferable to real-time contact.
b) Working in a group of four, present a debate on the resolution that voice mail is helping to destroy real communication among people.



- Make a list of ten items that you wish had not been invented. Share your list with a partner. Work together to produce a list of the ten inventions society would be better without.

Make a list of ten items that you would like to see invented. Work with a partner to produce a list of the ten items the world needs. Make a poster listing and illustrating your items.

- This bumper sticker combines a piece of serious advice with a fantastic or whimsical reason for it. Create your own bumper sticker using this combination of elements.

CHRONOLOGY OF 15 NOTABLE CANADIAN INNOVATIONS

1796	MCINTOSH APPLE	John McIntosh
1833	FIRST ATLANTIC STEAMSHIP	Samuel Cunard
1835	WASHING MACHINE	James Brown
1852	UNDERSEA TELEGRAPH CABLE	Frederick Newton Gisborne
1876	TELEPHONE	Alexander Graham Bell
1900	WIRELESS RADIO	Reginald A. Fessenden
1908	MARQUIS WHEAT	Sir Charles Saunder
1922	SNOWMOBILE	Joseph-Armand Bombardier
1925	SNOWBLOWER	Arthur Sicard
1925	ZIPPER	Gideon Sundback
1927	TELEVISION	Reginald A. Fessendon
1929	FROZEN FOOD	Dr. Archibald Huntstrom
1960	GOALIE MASK	Jacques Plante
1972	GEOSTATIONARY COMM. SATELLITE	Telesat Canada
1992	ADVANCED SPACE-VISION SYSTEM	NRC/Canadian Space Agency

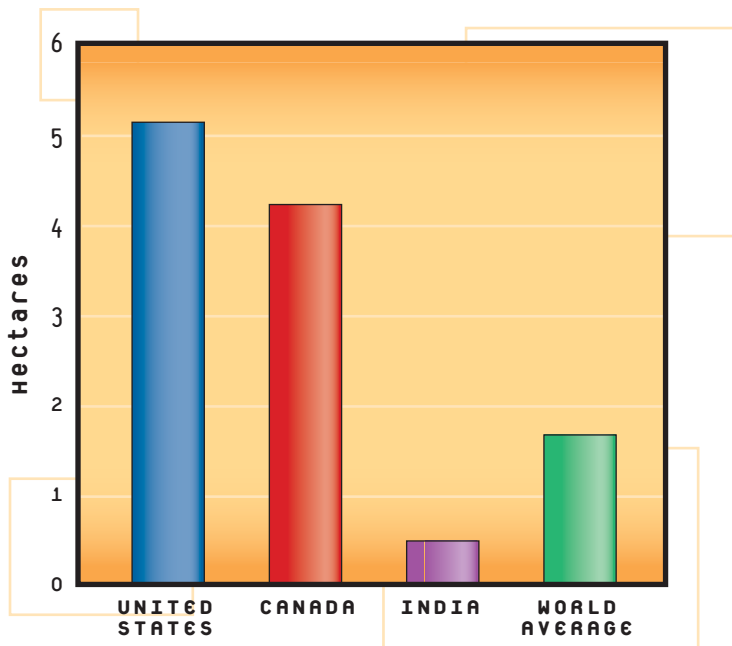
- In this cartoon, stereotypes are used to satirize the way that many people see Canada and Canadians. Analyse the cartoon. Who or what is being satirized?

It is common to hold stereotypes about individuals or groups. Examine several television sit-coms. What stereotypes are used? How do these contribute to humour?

Listen to a stand-up comic. How do such comics use stereotypes?



things I didn't see in Canada



AMOUNT OF LAND AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ONE PERSON'S LIFESTYLE

- This bar graph compares Canada's "ecological footprint" with that of some other countries and the world average. An ecological footprint measures the land and resources necessary to support the lifestyle of one person in a culture. How else might you present this information (pictographs, charts, comparisons, etc.) to make the message more relevant to students?

New Terra

NIGEL DARBASIE

Aboard orbiting stations
children study the home planet
its swirling clouds
tinged in orange
its desiccated land forms
in relief upon turquoise seas.

From data banks they learn
about its plants and animals
many of which exist only
as computer-generated
specimens that come to life
in stories elders tell
of things that used to be.



Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- use note-taking and note-making strategies
- analyse how authors format text
- discuss poetry as a medium for communication

Activities

1. In list form, note the problems that plague Earth in “New Terra.” Beside each item, identify a current trend that may eventually lead to the problem.
2. In a small group decide whether the poem would be as successful if it were written out as two prose sentences. Consider what is gained by the poem’s format on the page, and what would be lost by the change in format. In a short persuasive piece, defend the poet’s decisions in the presentation of the poem.
3. With two or three other students, evaluate the effectiveness of poetry as a medium for drawing attention to serious technological and scientific problems. Write a brief “Defence of Poetry” as a medium for airing current concerns.

The Trouble with Tribbles

DAVID GERROLD



This is a famous episode from the popular TV show Star Trek.

CHARACTERS

KIRK, Captain of the spaceship, U.S.S. Enterprise

SPOCK, First Officer

MCCOY (BONES)

SCOTTY

CHEKOV

UHURA

ENSIGN FREEMAN

KOLOTH, a Klingon captain

KORAX, a Klingon aide

Focus Your Learning

Reading this script will help you:

- write a log entry
- discuss how word choice and details affect meaning
- experiment with scripting techniques
- examine and describe the characteristics of a television show, including audience and production practices

COMMANDER LURRY
NILZ BARIS
ARNE DARVIN
CYRANO JONES
TRADER
ADMIRAL KOMACK
HELMSMAN'S VOICE
TWO GUARDS, *crewmen of the Enterprise*
SECURITY GUARD
KLINGONS
CREWMEN (TECHNICIANS, AIDES, WAITRESS, etc.), *five or more*

The program opens with a stock shot of the spaceship Enterprise flying through space. Fade out.

The Enterprise is passing near deep space station K-7, in a quadrant that is under dispute. Both the Klingons and the Federation claim rights to the territory, and especially to the nearby Sherman's Planet. Under the Organian Peace Treaty, the planet will be granted to the side that is deemed most able to run and develop it efficiently.

ACT ONE

FADE IN: Space station hangs against a backdrop of stars, slowly growing in size as the Enterprise approaches.

KIRK: Captain's log; Stardate 4523.3. Deep space station K-7 has issued a priority one call. More than an emergency, it signals near or total disaster. We can only assume the Klingons have attacked the station. We are going in armed for battle.

SCENE 1: Bridge

Everyone on the bridge stares tensely, watching the screen showing the space station.

CHEKOV: Main phasers armed and ready. (*Looks up at KIRK*) There's nothing. Just the station, sir.

KIRK: (*Stepping down, peering over CHEKOV's shoulder*) A priority one distress call and they're sitting there absolutely peaceful? Lieutenant Uhura, break subspace silence.

UHURA: Aye aye, Captain.

KIRK: Space station K-7, this is Captain Kirk of the *Enterprise*. What is your emergency?

LURRY: Captain Kirk, this is Commander Lurry. I must apologize for the distress call.

KIRK: Commander Lurry, you have issued a priority-one distress signal! State the nature of your emergency!

LURRY: Uh, perhaps you had better beam over, I—uh—I'll try to explain ...

KIRK: You'll try to explain? You'd better be prepared to do more than that. Kirk out. (*Starting toward door*) Mr. Chekov, maintain battle readiness. Uhura, have the transporter room stand by. Mr. Spock, I'll need your help ... (*KIRK waits for SPOCK to join him at the elevator. They step into it.*)

SCENE 2: Lurry's office on the space station

LURRY, BARIS, and DARVIN; KIRK and SPOCK materialize. KIRK is furious as he begins talking to LURRY as soon as materialization is complete.

KIRK: Commander Lurry, if there is no emergency, why did you order a priority-one distress call?!

BARIS: I ordered it, Captain!

LURRY: Captain Kirk, this is Nilz Baris; he's out from Earth to take charge of the Development Project for Sherman's Planet.

KIRK: And that gives you the authority to put a whole quadrant on a defence alert?

DARVIN: (*Stiff and stuffy*) Mr. Baris is the Federation Under-Secretary in Charge of Agricultural Affairs in this quadrant!

BARIS: This is my assistant, Arne Darvin. Now, Captain, I want all available security guards. I want them posted around the storage compartments.

KIRK: (*Angry, puzzled*) Storage compartments? What storage compartments?

DARVIN: The storage compartments with the quadro-triticales.

KIRK: The what? What is ... (*Stumbling over the word [pronounced "quadro-triti-cay-lee"]*) ... quadro-triticales? (*DARVIN sniffs audibly at KIRK's ignorance. He pulls a sample of the grain out of a container. He hands it to BARIS, who hands it to KIRK. KIRK glances at it only briefly, then hands it to a curious SPOCK. SPOCK examines it.*)
Wheat. So what?

BARIS: Quadro-triticale is not wheat, Captain! I wouldn't expect you or your First Officer to know about such things, but—

SPOCK: (*Quietly watching all this*) Quadro-triticale is a high-yield grain, a four-lobed hybrid of wheat and rye, a perennial, also, if I'm not mistaken. The root grain, triticale, can trace its ancestry all the way back to twentieth-century Canada, when—

KIRK: (*Making no effort to conceal his amusement*) I think you've made your point, Mr. Spock. (*SPOCK pauses and looks at KIRK. He gives KIRK the familiar SPOCK stare. He was just getting to the interesting part.*)

LURRY: (*interrupting*) Captain, quadro-triticale is the only Earth grain that will grow on Sherman's Planet. We have several tons of it here on the station, and it's very important that that grain reach Sherman's Planet safely. Mr. Baris thinks that Klingon agents may try to sabotage it.

KIRK: (*Irked—to BARIS*) You issued a priority-one distress call because of a couple of tons of—wheat?!

DARVIN: Quadro-triticale. (*KIRK starts to look at DARVIN, but decides he is not worth it.*)

BARIS: (*Coming in fast*) Of course, I—

KIRK: (*His patience exhausted*) Mr. Baris, you summoned the *Enterprise* here without an emergency! Now, you'll take responsibility for it! Misuse of the priority-one channel is a Federation offence!

BARIS: I did not misuse the priority-one channel! I want that grain protected!

LURRY: Captain Kirk, couldn't you at least post a couple of guards? We do get a large number of ships passing through.

SPOCK: It would be a logical precaution, Captain. The Sherman's Planet affair is of extreme importance to the Federation. (*KIRK looks at SPOCK as if to say "Blast your logic!" However, SPOCK is usually correct, so ...*)

KIRK: (*Chagrined; taking out his communicator*) Kirk to *Enterprise*.

UHURA: *Enterprise* here.

KIRK: Secure from general quarters. Beam over *two* and *only* two security guards. Have them report to Commander Lurry. Also, authorize shore leave for all off-duty personnel.

UHURA: Yes, Captain.

KIRK: Kirk out. *(He puts away the communicator. BARIS is upset, because KIRK has only authorized two guards.)*

BARIS: Kirk! Starfleet Command is going to hear about *this*. A mere two men!

KIRK: *(Looks at BARIS for a long moment)* I have never questioned either the orders or the intelligence of any representative of the Federation ... *(Pause, looking at BARIS)* ... until now. *(Leaving a speechless BARIS and DARVIN, KIRK exits, followed by SPOCK.)*

SCENE 3: Bar/store

Like a Western general store, this is a combination of two or more functions. Primarily it is a bar with a few tables and a bar against one wall, but a few extra props behind the bar should suggest that TRADER also runs a general-store type of establishment.

KIRK and SPOCK are at the bar, just putting down empty glasses. KIRK is shaking his head as he puts down the glass, looks at the wheat he holds in his hand.

KIRK: Summoned a starship on a priority A-1 channel to guard some storage compartments. Storage compartments of *wheat*!

SPOCK: Still, Captain, it is a logical precaution. The Klingons would not like to see us successfully develop Sherman's Planet. *(He and KIRK are crossing toward the door on his last line. UHURA and CHEKOV enter followed separately by CYRANO JONES. UHURA and CHEKOV wait to meet the Captain, but JONES crosses past them to the bar beyond where he will engage the TRADER.)*

KIRK: *(To UHURA and CHEKOV)* I see you didn't waste any time going off duty.

UHURA: How often do we get shore leave?

CHEKOV: She wanted to shop and I wanted to help her.

KIRK: Mister Chekov. *(Holds out wheat)* What do you make of this?

CHEKOV: *(Takes it eagerly)* Quadro-triticale! I've read about this, but I've never seen any of it till now!

KIRK: Mister Spock, does everyone know about this grain but me?

CHEKOV: Not everyone, Captain. It's a Russian invention. *(KIRK gives up, shot down in flames by nationalism again. As he and SPOCK start to exit, UHURA and CHEKOV move toward the bar. CYRANO JONES is*

arguing with the TRADER. He has a great amount of merchandise on the counter. Obviously, he has been trying to sell it to the TRADER, and the TRADER has obviously been very stubborn.)

TRADER: No! I don't want any. I told you before, and I'm telling you again. (*CHEKOV and UHURA approach and wait for the TRADER's attention.*) I don't want any Spican Flame Gems. I already have enough Spican Flame Gems to last me a lifetime. (*CYRANO shrugs. He starts to open his carry-all sack to put them away.*)

CYRANO: (*Pityingly*) How sad for you, my friend ... (*Hopefully*) You won't find a finer stone anywhere. Ah, but I have something better ... (*Picking a vial off the counter*) Surely you want some Antaran Glow Water.

TRADER: (*Deadly monotone*) I use it to polish the Flame Gems. (*By this time CHEKOV and UHURA are watching interestedly. CYRANO sweeps most of his other stuff back into his sack.*)

CYRANO: (*Sighing*) You are a most difficult man to reach. (*Picking up something off the counter. It is a green-gold ball of fluff, a tribble.*) Surely, you want ...

TRADER: (*Although he is interested*) ... not at that price.

UHURA: (*Catching sight of the tribble*) Oooooooh, what is it? Is it alive? (*Taking the tribble*) May I hold him? Ooooh, he's adorable! (*To CYRANO*) What is it?

CYRANO: What is it? Why, little darlin', it's a tribble.

UHURA: (*Softly*) A tribble?

CYRANO: It's only the sweetest little creature known to man, exceptin' of course, yourself.

UHURA: (*Laughing; she is not taken in by the flattery*) Oh! Oh! It's purring! (*The tribble in the lieutenant's hands purrs and throbs. It is a ball of green-gold fluff about the size of a large beanbag. Its purr is soft and high-pitched like a dove's cooing.*)

CYRANO: Ah, little lady, he's just sayin' that he likes you.

UHURA: He's adorable. Are you selling them?

TRADER: That's what we're trying to decide right now. (*He glares at CYRANO.*)

CYRANO: (*To TRADER*) My friend, ten credits apiece is a very reasonable price. You can see for yourself how much the lovely little lady

here appreciates fine things.

TRADER: A credit apiece.

CHEKOV: *(Asking CYRANO, as he takes the tribble from UHURA; he has put his grain on the counter; some spills out)* He won't bite, will he?

CYRANO: *(Making a great show of ignoring the Trader)* Sir! There is a law against transporting harmful animals from one planet to another, or weren't you aware of that? Besides, tribbles have no teeth.

TRADER: *(Trying to attract Cyrano's attention)* All right. I'll double my offer. Two credits.

CYRANO: *(Taking the tribble from CHEKOV and plopping it on the counter in front of the TRADER)* Twice nothing is still nothing.

TRADER: *(Eyeing the tribble)* Is he clean?

CYRANO: *(Eyeing the TRADER)* He's as clean as you are. I daresay a good deal cleaner ... *(While they have been talking, the tribble has been inching along on the counter, toward the grain. It now reaches it.)*

UHURA: If you don't want him, I'll take him. I think he's cute. *(CYRANO and TRADER both notice this. TRADER is annoyed. CYRANO beams.)*

TRADER: *(To CYRANO)* All right. Four.

CYRANO: Is that an offer or a joke? *(And meanwhile, the tribble begins munching on CHEKOV's grain.)*

TRADER: That's my offer.

CYRANO: *(Starting to leave)* Well, I can see that you're not interested. *(He reaches for the tribble. The TRADER stops him.)*


TRADER: All right ... five.

CYRANO: *(Returning quickly now that TRADER is talking money)* My friend, I'll tell you what I'll do for you. I can see that you're an honest man. I'll lower my price to eight and a half.

TRADER: You're talking yourself out of a deal. Six. Not a cent more.

CYRANO: Seven and a half. *(No response)* Seven. *(Still no response)* All right, you robber. Six. *(The tribble is happily munching on the grain; i.e., the grain is disappearing under it as the tribble throbs and croons contentedly.)*

TRADER: When can I have them?



CYRANO: Right away. (*He starts pulling tribbles out of his sack.*)

UHURA: (*To TRADER*) How much are you selling them for?

TRADER: (*Already counting his profits*) Well, let me see now ... six credits ... figure a reasonable markup for a reasonable profit ... ten per cent markup ... ten credits ...

CYRANO: (*Under his breath*) Thief!

TRADER: In fact, I'll sell you this one.

CHEKOV: Hey! He's eating my grain! (*Quickly moves to rescue what is left of the grain; fortunately tribbles are slow eaters.*)

TRADER: (*Picking up the tribble*) That will be ten credits.

CYRANO: (*Taking the tribble from the TRADER, indignantly*) Sir! That happens to be my sample. And it is mine to do with as I please, and I please to give it to the pretty little lady here.

UHURA: Oh, I couldn't.

CYRANO: I insist.

TRADER: That's right. Ruin the market.

CYRANO: Hah! Once the pretty little lady here starts to show this little precious around, you won't be able to keep up with 'em. (*He gallantly hands the tribble to UHURA.*)

SCENE 4: Briefing room

KIRK and SPOCK are having a cup of coffee when a wall panel or desk panel "bleeps."

KIRK: Kirk here.

UHURA: Message from Starfleet, Captain. Priority channel. Admiral Komack speaking.

KIRK: Transfer it in here, Lieutenant. (*The screen on the table lights. ADMIRAL KOMACK appears, seated at his desk.*)

KOMACK: Captain Kirk.

KIRK: Here, sir.

KOMACK: Captain, it is not necessary to remind you of the importance to the Federation of Sherman's Planet. The key to our winning of this planet is the grain, quadro-tritcale. The shipment of it must be protected. Effective immediately, you will render any aid and

assistance which Under-Secretary Baris may require. The safety of the grain and the project is your responsibility. Starfleet out.

KIRK: Now that's just lovely.

SPOCK: But not entirely unexpected.

UHURA: Captain Kirk! Captain Kirk!

KIRK: Kirk here. What's the matter, Lieutenant?

UHURA: Sensors are picking up a Klingon battle cruiser, rapidly closing on the station!

KIRK: Contact Commander Lurry. We're on our way. (*KIRK and SPOCK race for the door, not even waiting for UHURA's acknowledgement.*)

SCENE 5: Enterprise—bridge

KIRK enters the bridge, followed by SPOCK.

KIRK: (*To CHEKOV*) What's that Klingon ship doing now?

CHEKOV: Nothing, Captain. He's just sitting there, a hundred kilometres off K-7.

UHURA: I have Commander Lurry.

KIRK: Put him on visual, Lieutenant. (*Continuing*) Commander Lurry, there is a Klingon warship hanging one hundred kilometres off your station ...

LURRY: (*Appearing on viewscreen in his office*) I do not think that the Klingons are planning to attack us.

KIRK: Why not? (*Viewscreen reveals the Klingon Commander, KOLOTH, and his aide, KORAX, also in the office.*)

LURRY: Because at this moment, the captain of the Klingon ship is sitting here in my office.

KIRK: (*Covering his shock*) We're beaming over. (*He and SPOCK start to leave the bridge.*)

ACT TWO

FADE IN: Exterior of space station

KIRK: Captain's log; Stardate 4524.2. A Klingon warship is hovering only a hundred kilometres off deep space station K-7, while its Captain waits in the station commander's office. Their intentions are unknown.

FADE IN: Interior of space station—Lurry's office

KIRK, SPOCK, LURRY, KOLOTH, and two Klingon AIDES are present. KOLOTH is the Klingon commander and like the last Klingon commander that we saw, he is evil-looking.

KOLOTH: My dear Captain Kirk, let me assure you that my intentions are peaceful. As I have already told Commander Lurry, the purpose of my presence here is to invoke shore-leave rights. (KIRK and SPOCK exchange glances.)

KIRK: Shore leave?

KOLOTH: Captain, Klingons are not as luxury-minded as Earthers. We do not equip *our* ships with non-essentials. We have been in space for five months and what we choose as recreation is our own business. (Pause) Under the terms of the Organian Peace Treaty, you cannot refuse us.

KIRK: The decision is not mine to make. Commander Lurry is in charge of the station.

LURRY: (Aside to KIRK) Kirk, I don't want them here, but I have no authority to refuse.

KIRK: I have some authority to act, and I'm going to use it. (To KOLOTH) All right, you can give your men shore leave, but no more than twelve at a time. And I promise you this, Koloth, for every one of your men on this station, I'll have at least one security guard. There won't be any trouble.

KOLOTH: Captain Kirk, no formal declaration of hostility has been made between our respective governments. So, of course, the nature of our relationship *will* be a peaceful one.

KIRK: Let us *both* take steps to make sure that it stays that way. (The Klingon bows stiffly, politely; turns on his heel and exits. KORAX follows. KIRK, LURRY, and SPOCK exchange a worried glance.)

SCENE 2: Recreation room of the Enterprise.

KIRK and SPOCK enter. There are a few CREWMEN in the room. SCOTTY is at one table, reading. The other people in the room are in a knot around the other table. KIRK moves over to SCOTTY. SPOCK moves toward the knot of people. KIRK moves up and peers at the title of the tape that SCOTTY is reading. It is a page reflected on a screen.

KIRK: Another technical journal?

SCOTT: Aye, why shouldn't I?

KIRK: Mr. Scott, don't you ever relax?

SCOTT: (*Puzzled*) But I am relaxing. (*KIRK nods and moves over toward the group of people. MCCOY and UHURA are in the foreground of a knot of people. On the table is one larger tribble and at least ten smaller ones. They are playing with them.*)

MCCOY: How long have you had that thing, Lieutenant?

UHURA: Only since yesterday. This morning, I found that he—I mean *she* had had babies.

MCCOY: I'd say you got a bargain. (*He picks up one of the tribbles and examines it curiously. SPOCK does likewise.*) ... hmmm ...

SPOCK: Fascinating.

KIRK: Lieutenant Uhura, are you running a nursery?

UHURA: I hadn't intended to but the tribble had other plans. (*SPOCK absent-mindedly begins stroking his tribble.*)

KIRK: You got this at the space station? (*UHURA nods.*)

SPOCK: A most curious creature, Captain. Its trilling seems to have a tranquillizing effect on the human nervous system. Fortunately, I am, of course, immune to its effect. (*KIRK grins at him, turns to leave. SPOCK comes out of it, realizing he is petting the tribble almost hypnotically, puts it down. He follows KIRK out.*)

MCCOY: (*To UHURA*) Lieutenant, do you mind if I take one of these things down to the lab to find out what makes it tick?

UHURA: It's all right with me, but if you're planning to dissect it, I don't want to hear about it.

MCCOY: Lieutenant, I won't hurt a hair on his head. Wherever that is. (*Exits with a medium-sized tribble.*)

ENSIGN FREEMAN: Say, Lieutenant, if you're giving them away, could I have one too?

UHURA: Sure, why not? They seem to be old enough. (*The crewman takes one eagerly; others also help themselves.*)

SCENE 3: Corridor

KIRK and SPOCK round a bend.

CHEKOV: (*Filtered*) Bridge to Captain Kirk.

KIRK: (*Goes to button*) Kirk here.

CHEKOV: Mr. Baris is waiting on Channel E to speak to you.

KIRK: Pipe it down here, Mister Chekov.

CHEKOV: Aye, sir. Mr. Baris is coming on.

KIRK: Kirk here. What is it, Baris?

BARIS: Kirk! This station is swarming with Klingons!

KIRK: I was not aware that twelve Klingons were a "swarm," Mr. Baris.

BARIS: (*Quieter*) Captain Kirk. There are Klingon soldiers on this station. I want you to keep that grain safe.

KIRK: I have guards around your grain. I have guards on the Klingons! Those guards are there only because Starfleet wants them there! As for what *you* want ... (*Angry pause*) it has been noted and logged. Kirk out. (*KIRK savagely slams off the button. He turns and starts away down the corridor.*)

SPOCK: Captain, may I ask where you'll be?

KIRK: Sickbay. With a headache!

SCENE 4: McCoy's lab

BONES: (*DR. MCCOY is analysing a sample of something as KIRK enters. In the foreground is a box of tribbles.*)

KIRK: When you get a chance, Bones, I'd like something for a headache.

MCCOY: (*Looking at KIRK*) Let me guess ... the Klingons? Baris?

KIRK: Both. (*MCCOY nods as KIRK moves to look at the box of tribbles. Looking at tribbles*) How many did Uhura give you?

MCCOY: (*Taking pills from cabinet*) Just one.

KIRK: You've got eleven here.

MCCOY: Oh, you noticed that (*He returns to KIRK with a couple of pills. Continuing; handing KIRK tablets*) Here. This ought to take care of it.

KIRK: (*Holding the tablets but concerned with the tribbles*) Bones?

MCCOY: I'm still trying to figure it out myself. I can tell you this much: almost fifty percent of the creature's metabolism is geared to reproduction. Do you know what you get, if you feed a tribble too much?

KIRK: A fat tribble?

McCoy: (*Slightly irked at being a straight man*) No. You get a whole bunch of hungry little tribbles.

KIRK: (*Swallowing pills*) Well, Bones, I suggest you open a maternity ward. (*Exits. MCCOY looks at the tribbles and grimaces.*)

[In the next few scenes, crew members from the Enterprise are goaded into a fight with Klingons while on shore leave. Kirk is forced to cancel shore leave for both ships.]

ACT THREE

SCENE 3: Bridge.

KIRK is stepping out of the bridge elevator. He is gently kicking some tribbles out of the way. He goes to his chair, still preoccupied with something. Almost without noticing it, he has to scoop three or four off his chair before he can sit down. He sits in the chair, absent-mindedly stroking a tribble that is perched on the chair arm. Suddenly he realizes there are tribbles all over the bridge. KIRK brushes the tribble away and activates his intercom.

KIRK: Dr. McCoy, get up here, right away. (*Gets out of his chair and makes a circuit of the bridge starting with LIEUTENANT UHURA and circling around counter-clockwise. He brushes tribbles off consoles, out of chairs, down from shelves, etc.*) Lieutenant Uhura, how did all of these tribbles get into the bridge?

UHURA: I don't know, Captain. They seem to be all over the ship. (*KIRK steps down into the centre of the bridge and moves over to the central console. He brushes a tribble off it. He crosses to the other side, as BONES enters.*)

McCoy: You wanted to see me, Jim?

KIRK: Yes, I did. (*He holds up a tribble.*)

McCoy: Don't look at *me*. It's the tribbles who are breeding. If we don't get them off the ship we'll be hip deep in them!

KIRK: Explain yourself, Doctor.

McCoy: The nearest thing I can figure out is that they're born pregnant. It seems to be a great timesaver.

KIRK: (*Sourly*) Really?

McCoy: From all I can find out, they seem to be bisexual, reproducing at will. And they have a lot of will.

SPOCK: (*Moving closer*) Captain, for once I am forced to agree with

Doctor McCoy, though his way of putting it is most imprecise. They are consuming our supplies and returning nothing. I am running computations on their rate of reproduction, and although all of the figures are not yet in, I must confess I am somewhat alarmed by the direction they are taking.

UHURA: They do give us something, Mr. Spock. Their love. (*On SPOCK 's raised eyebrows*) Cyrano Jones says that a tribble is the only love money can buy. (*SPOCK gives her the stare. KIRK, amused, steps in.*)

KIRK: Lieutenant, too much of anything, even love, is not necessarily a good thing. (*Pause*) Have a maintenance crew start clearing the whole ship. Then contact Commander Lurry. Tell him I'm beaming over. Ask him to find Cyrano Jones. (*UHURA nods and turns to her console. KIRK and SPOCK start for the elevator, but pause long enough to remove some of the tribbles that have crawled back up onto the consoles.*)

SCENE 4: Lurry's office

LURRY is standing. CYRANO JONES is sitting in a chair. KIRK is staring at him. SPOCK is standing thoughtfully.

CYRANO: Captain Kirk, I am mystified at your tone of voice. I have done nothing to warrant such severe treatment.

KIRK: Really?

SPOCK: Surely you realized what would happen if you transferred the tribbles from their predator-filled environment into an environment in which their natural multiplicative proclivities would have no restraining factors.

CYRANO: Yes, I ... would you mind trying that on me again?

SPOCK: By removing them from their natural habitat, you have, so to speak, removed the cork and let the genie escape.

CYRANO: If you mean do I know they breed fast, of course I do. That's how I maintain my stock. But breeding animals is not against regulations, only breeding dangerous ones. Tribbles are not dangerous.

KIRK: Just incredibly prolific.

CYRANO: Precisely. And at six credits a head, that is, a body, it mounts up. I'm a businessman, after all. Now, if you'll excuse me. (*He rises. Absent-mindedly he hands KIRK the tribble.*)

KIRK: You ought to sell a manual of instructions with these things.

CYRANO: If I did, Captain, what would happen to the search for knowledge? Pardon me. I must be tending to my ship. (*As he exits, BARIS and DARVIN enter.*)

KIRK: (*Under his breath*) Oh, fine.

DARVIN: Go ahead, sir. Tell him.

BARIS: Captain Kirk, I consider your security measures a disgrace. In my opinion, you have taken this entire, very important project far too lightly.

KIRK: I regard the project as extremely important, Mr. Baris. It is you I regard lightly.

BARIS: (*Dangerous*) I shall report fully to the proper authorities that you have given free and complete access to this station to a man who is quite probably a Klingon agent.

KIRK: (*Staring hard at him*) That is a very serious charge, Mr. Baris. To whom do you refer?

BARIS: That man who just walked out of here. Cyrano Jones!

KIRK: (*Amused*) A Klingon agent?

BARIS: You heard me.

KIRK: Oh, I heard you all right.

SPOCK: He just couldn't believe his ears.

KIRK: (*A pause, then to BARIS*) What evidence do you have against Cyrano Jones?

BARIS: (*Drawing himself up to his full height*) My assistant here spent some time keeping Mr. Jones under surveillance. His actions have been, ah, most suspicious. I believe he was involved in that little altercation between your men and the—

KIRK: Go on. What else do you have?

DARVIN: Captain, I checked his ship's log. He was within the Klingon sphere of influence less than four months ago.

BARIS: The man is an independent scout. It's quite possible that he's also a Klingon spy.

SPOCK: We have checked on the background of Mr. Jones. He is a licensed asteroid locator and prospector. He has never broken

the law ... at least not severely ... and he has, for the past seven years, obtained a marginal living by engaging in the buying and selling of rare merchandise, including, unfortunately, tribbles.

BARIS: He's after my grain! He's out to sabotage the entire project.

KIRK: You have no proof of that.

DARVIN: You can't deny he has disrupted this station!

KIRK: People have disrupted space stations before without being Klingons. (*Meaningful look at the two*) They need only have some influence. Unfortunately, disrupting a space station is not an offence. If you'll excuse me, I have a ship to take care of. Mister Spock? (*KIRK starts to leave, realizes that he is still holding CYRANO'S tribble. He shrugs, looks around and puts it in an ashtray. They exit.*)

SCENE 5: Recreation room

KIRK goes to a wall panel. SPOCK and SCOTT are also there.

KIRK: Chicken sandwich, coffee. (*Almost immediately, the wall panel "bleeps."* KIRK goes over to the wall. A panel slides open. He stares. KIRK'S sandwich is covered with tribbles, throbbing and purring.) Mister Spock.

SPOCK: (*Approaches—he peers at it curiously*) Most interesting.

KIRK: (*Reacting. Up till now, they have only been a nuisance, now they are definitely out of hand.*) Mister Spock, I want these creatures off my ship. I don't care if it takes every man we've got. I want them off!

SCOTT: (*Approaches, takes a look*) Aye, they've gotten into the machinery all right. They've probably gotten into all of the other food processors, too.

KIRK: How?

SCOTT: Probably through one of the air vents. (*Points to a duct*)

SPOCK: (*Alarmed*) Captain, there are vents like that in the space station.

KIRK: And the storage compartments. (*Stepping to a wall panel*) This is Kirk. Contact Commander Lurry and Nilz Baris. Have them meet us near the warehouse. We're beaming over. (*KIRK and SPOCK exchange a glance. They run out.*)

SCENE 6: Transporter room

KIRK and SPOCK enter, dash up to the platform, kicking tribbles out of the way.

KIRK: Energize. (The CREWMAN slides the lever upward.)

SCENE 7: Space-station corridor—storage compartment

KIRK and SPOCK and a half-dozen tribbles materialize. LURRY and BARIS, but not DARIN, come running to meet them.

LURRY: What's wrong?

KIRK: (Glancing around) Plenty, if what I think has happened, has happened. (KIRK turns to the storage-compartment door. There are TWO GUARDS standing by it. There are lots of tribbles in the corridor.)

SPOCK: Guard, is this door secure?

GUARD: Yes, sir. Nothing could get in.

KIRK: I hope so. Open the door. (The GUARD moves to the wall panel and touches a magnetic key to a panel. At first the door doesn't open. Continuing; impatient) Open it! (The GUARD fiddles with the key. KIRK watches, waits; finally he steps up and pushes the GUARD aside and pushes the door.)

GUARD: It's not working, sir. It seems to be—(What it seems to be, we will never know, because at that moment the door slides open with a WHOOSH!!! This is immediately followed by a silent FWOMP!! Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of tribbles come tumbling out of the door, cascading down around KIRK, tumbling and seething and mewling and writhing and throbbing and mewling and trilling and purring and ...)

ACT FOUR

SCENE 1: Space station—corridor outside storage compartment, including door

KIRK is standing in the middle of a mountain of tribbles. More and more keep tumbling out, fat and sassy and lethargic.

SPOCK: (Examining a tribble) It seems to be gorged.

BARIS: Gorged! On my grain! Kirk! I'll hold you responsible! (Looking despairingly at the grain) There must be thousands.

KIRK: Hundreds of thousands.

SPOCK: One million, seven hundred and seventy-one thousand, five

hundred and sixty-one. That's assuming one tribble multiplying with an average litter of ten, producing a new generation every twelve hours over a period of three days.

KIRK: That's assuming that one got in here three days ago.

SPOCK: *Also allowing for the amount of grain consumed and the volume of the storage compartment.*

BARIS: Kirk! You should have known! You're responsible for turning the Development Project into a total disaster!

KIRK: *(Slowly)* Mr. Baris—

BARIS: Kirk, I'm through being intimidated! You've insulted me, ignored me, walked all over me! You've abused your authority and rejected my requests! And this ... this ... *(Indicating the tribbles)* ... is the result!! I'm going to hold you responsible. *(KIRK, thoroughly angry, but thoroughly cool, reaches out, grabs BARIS by the coat front.)*

KIRK: Baris, shut up. Or I will hold *you* in irons. *(McCOY approaches. KIRK releases BARIS, who hauls himself together.)*

McCOY: Jim, I think I've got it. All we have to do is stop feeding them. Once they stop eating, they'll stop breeding.

KIRK: Now he tells me. *(McCOY looks at the tribbles on the corridor floor and realizes that his advice is a little late. SPOCK is also looking at the tribbles on the floor. He is kneeling curiously.)*

SPOCK: Captain, this is most odd. This tribble is dead ... *(He begins examining others.)* So are these. *(McCOY and the others begin examining the tribbles more carefully.)*

McCOY: This one is alive—a lot of them are still alive, but they won't be for long.

SPOCK: A logical assumption is that there is something in the grain.

KIRK: Bones, I want a complete analysis of the tribbles, the grain, everything. I want to know what killed them.

McCOY: I still haven't figured out what keeps them alive. *(KIRK just glares at him.)* I'll let you know as soon as I find anything. *(His arms laden with tribbles, he moves off.)*

BARIS: Kirk, that won't do you any good. The project is ruined. Starfleet will hear of this disaster. There'll be a board of inquiry, and they'll roast you alive, Kirk. I'm going to be there to enjoy every minute of it.

KIRK: All right. But until that board of inquiry convenes, I'm still a captain. We have two things to do. First, find Cyrano Jones. *(Pause, glance at door)* Second, close that door.

SCENE 2: Lurry's office

The last few preparations are being made. Two CREWMEN escort CYRANO JONES into the room, then begin removing excess tribbles. KIRK and SPOCK and LURRY are discussing something. BARIS is waiting at the door, looking for DARVIN. KOLOTH enters, followed by KORAX.

KIRK: What do you want?

KOLOTH: An official apology, Kirk, addressed to the High Klingon Command. I want you to take responsibility for your persecution of Klingon nationals in this quadrant.

KIRK: An apology?

KOLOTH: You have harassed my men, treated us like criminals. You have been most uncourteous, Kirk. And if you wish to avoid a diplomatic crisis ...

BARIS: You can't let him, Kirk! That'll give them the wedge they need to claim Sherman's Planet!

SPOCK: I believe more than the word of an aggrieved Klingon commander will be necessary for that, Mr. Baris.

KOLOTH: *(Glaring at SPOCK)* As far as Sherman's Planet is concerned, Captain Kirk has just given it to us.

KIRK: We'll see about that, Captain. But before any official action is taken, I want to find out just what happened here. Who put the tribbles in the quadro-triticales, and what was in the grain that killed them?

KOLOTH: *(Interrupting)* Captain Kirk, before you go on, I have a request. Can you get those things out of here? *(KOLOTH points uncomfortably at the tribbles that CYRANO is holding in his lap and stroking. KIRK gestures to a CREWMAN. The man takes the tribbles and moves to the door just as DARVIN enters. The tribbles hiss and spit at DARVIN. CYRANO looks surprised. KIRK and SPOCK react. SPOCK's eyebrows shoot up.)*

SPOCK: Remarkable.

KIRK: Jones, I thought tribbles liked everybody.

CYRANO: Why, they do, Captain. I can't understand it. Last time I saw

them act like that was in the bar.

KIRK: What was in the bar?

CYRANO: Klingons, sir. Him for one. *(He points at KORAX. KIRK steps over, picks up a nice big fat tribble. He moves to KORAX, extends the tribble. The tribble hisses and reacts.)*

KIRK: You're right, Jones. *(He repeats the act with KOLOTH, who shrinks away. They obviously hate the tribbles, and the tribble rears back and hisses. BONES enters with a tri-corder in time to hear.)* They don't like Klingons. *(He moves to SPOCK. The tribble purrs loudly.)* They do like Vulcans. I never thought you had it in you, Spock.

SPOCK: Obviously the tribble is an extremely perceptive creature.

KIRK: *(Takes the tribble to BARIS. The tribble purrs loudly.)* He even likes you, Baris. I guess there's no accounting for taste. *(He moves back to DARVIN, extends the tribble. DARVIN shrinks, the tribble rears back and hisses violently.)* But he doesn't like you, Darvin. I wonder why. Bones ... *(Gestures to MCCOY)*

MCCOY: *(Curious, unbuckles his medical tri-corder. He runs a sensor over DARVIN, looks at the reading, looks again, runs the sensor over DARVIN again. He is puzzled. He repeats the performance)* Jim ... *(Checking a reading)* His heartbeat is all wrong. His body temperature is ... Jim, this man is a Klingon!

BARIS: Klingon!?! *(KIRK looks at BARIS. Two CREWMEN move up on either side of DARVIN.)*

KIRK: What do you think Starfleet will have to say about this, Mr. Baris? *(To BONES)* What did you find out about the grain?

MCCOY: Oh. It was poisoned.

BARIS: Poisoned?!!

MCCOY: It's been impregnated with a virus. The virus turns into an inert material in the bloodstream. The more the organism eats, the more inert matter is built up. After two or three days, it would reach a point where they couldn't take in enough nourishment to survive.

KIRK: You mean they starved to death? A whole storage compartment full of grain and they starved to death?

MCCOY: That's essentially it.

KIRK: *(Looking at DARVIN)* You going to talk?

DARVIN: I have nothing to say. (KIRK picks up a couple of tribbles. He walks up to DARVIN about to shove them in his face. The tribbles hiss.) All right. I poisoned the grain. Take it away!

KIRK: Then the tribbles didn't have anything to do with it?

DARVIN: I don't know. I never saw one before in my life!! I hope I never see one of those horrible fuzzy things again! (KIRK gestures. Two CREWMEN drag DARVIN away. KIRK catches sight of KOLOTH, who has been standing rather quietly, for a Klingon.)

KIRK: Captain Koloth, about that apology. You have six hours to get your ship out of Federation territory! (KOLOTH says nothing, leaves stiffly. The tribbles hiss at him.) You know, I could almost learn to like tribbles.

CYRANO: Ah then, Captain Kirk, I suppose that I may be free to go.

KIRK: Not yet. First I've got something to show you.

SCENE 3: Store/bar

KIRK, SPOCK, and JONES enter. TRADER is sitting in the door in the middle of a pile of tribbles. There are tribbles galore. It looks like a snowfall of fur. He has been inundated. He is close to tears, because there are too many even to try sweeping them out of his store. He sits there with his head in his hands.

CYRANO: Uh ...

KIRK: Mr. Jones, do you know what the penalty is for transporting an animal that is proven harmful to human life?

CYRANO: But one little tribble isn't harmful. (KIRK stares at him.) Gentlemen, you wouldn't do a thing like that to me, now would you?

SPOCK: The penalty is twenty years in a rehabilitation colony.

CYRANO: Ah now, Captain Kirk, *Friend* Kirk. Surely we can come to some form of mutual understanding. After all, my little tribbles did put you wise to the poisoned grain and they did help you to find the Klingon agent. We must have saved a lot of lives that way.

KIRK: Perhaps, there is one thing.

CYRANO: (Eagerly) Yes?!

KIRK: If you can remove every tribble from the space station, I'll have Commander Lurry return your ship to you.

CYRANO: (*Gasping*) Remove every tribble? That'll take years.

SPOCK: Seventeen point nine, to be exact.

CYRANO: Seventeen point nine years?

KIRK: Think of it as job security.

CYRANO: Ahh, Captain, you are a hard man. (*Looks at a tribble*) I'll do it. (*Sighs and begins picking up tribbles*)

SCENE 4: Bridge

KIRK and SPOCK enter.

KIRK: I'm glad Starfleet was able to divert that freighter. Sherman's Planet will get their quadro-triticales only a few weeks late. (*KIRK steps down and takes his place in his chair. He glances around. The bridge is strangely free of tribbles. SCOTT and MCCOY are on the bridge, and KIRK is speaking to them.*) I don't see any tribbles in here ...

MCCOY: You won't find a tribble on the whole ship.

KIRK: How did you do that, Bones?

MCCOY: (*Suddenly modest*) I can't take the credit for another man's work. Scotty did it.

KIRK: Where are they, Mr. Scott?

SCOTT: Oh, but Captain, it was Mr. Spock's recommendation.

SPOCK: Based on computer analysis, of course, taking into consideration the elements of ...

KIRK: Gentlemen, if I may be so bold as to interrupt this meeting of your mutual admiration society, I'd like to know just what you did with the tribbles.

MCCOY: Tell him, Spock.

SPOCK: It was Mr. Scott who did the actual engineering.

KIRK: (*Firmly*) Scott, how did you get rid of the tribbles?

SCOTT: I used the transporter, Captain.

KIRK: You used the transporter?

SCOTT: Aye.

KIRK: (*Curious*) Where did you transport them to, Scotty? (*SCOTT coughs into his hand. MCCOY looks off into the distance. SPOCK*

blinks and manages a patently blank, innocent stare.) Scotty, you didn't just transport them out into space, did you?

SCOTT: (*Slightly offended*) Sir! That'd be inhuman!

KIRK: Mr. Scott, what did you do with them?

SCOTT: (*Realizes he is going to have to tell it sooner or later*) I gave them a good home, sir.

KIRK: Where?

SCOTT: I gave them to the Klingons, sir.

KIRK: You gave them to the ...

SCOTT: Aye, sir. Just before they went into warp I transported the whole kit and kaboodle into their engine room where they'll be no tribble at all. (*All react as the joke sinks in. Curtain.*) ■

Activities

1. Select a section of this script and describe the events in the form of a log entry by Captain Kirk. If a word processor is available, use it to create an effective format for your log. Compare your log with that of another student who selected the same passage to see whether you agree on what is essential to the story.
2. Using this script as a model, in a small group write a script that deals with the events on board the Klingon ship after Scotty has transported the tribbles there. Make an audiotape or a videotape of a portion of your script and present it to the class.
3. Watch an episode of *Star Trek* on TV or watch a *Star Trek* movie. Working in a small group,

examine the visual version considering the following:

- the relative importance of plot, character, and special effects
- the extent to which the show depends on the audience's prior knowledge
- the balance and importance of male and female characters
- the quality and expense of production compared to other SF shows
- the audience at which the show is aimed—look at content and language level.

Share and compare your findings with those of another group.

No Renewal

SPIDER ROBINSON



Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- read for details of place and setting
- analyse how diction contributes to theme
- use presentation skills
- consider historical context
- relate texts to culture by explaining and analysing

Douglas Bent, Jr. sits in his kitchen, waiting for his tea to heat. It is May 12, his birthday, and he has prepared wintergreen tea. Douglas allows himself this extravagance because he knows he will receive no birthday present from anyone but himself. By a trick of Time and timing, he has outlived all his friends, all his relatives. The concept of neighbourliness, too, has predeceased him; not because he has none, but because he has too many.

His may be, for all he knows, the last small farm in Nova Scotia, and it is bordered on three sides by vast mined-out clay pits, gaping concentric cavities whose insides were scraped out and eaten long ago, their husk thrown away to rot. On the remaining perimeter is an apartment-hive, packed with ant-like swarms of people. Douglas knows none of them as individuals; at times, he doubts the trick is possible.

Once Douglas's family owned hundreds of acres along what was then called simply The Shore Road; once the Bent spread ran from the Bay of

Fundy itself back over the peak of the great North Mountain, included a sawmill, rushing streams, hundreds of thousands of trees, and acre after acre of pasture and hay and rich farmland; once the Bents were one of the best-known families from Annapolis Royal to Bridgetown, their livestock the envy of the entire Annapolis Valley.

Then the petrochemical industry died of thirst. With it, of course, went the plastics industry. Clay suddenly became an essential substitute—and the Annapolis Valley is mostly clay.

Now the Shore Road is the Fundy Trail, six lanes of high-speed traffic; the Bent spread is fourteen acres on the most inaccessible part of the Mountain; the sawmill has been replaced by the industrial park that ate the clay; the pasture and the streams and the farmland have been disembowelled or paved over; all the Bents save Douglas Jr. are dead or moved to the cities; and no one now living in the Valley has ever seen a live cow, pig, duck, goat, or chicken, let alone envied them. Agribusiness has destroyed agriculture, and synthoprotein feeds (some of) the world. Douglas grows only what crops replenish themselves, feeds only himself.

He sits waiting for the water to boil, curses for the millionth time the solar-powered electric stove that supplanted the family's woodburner when firewood became impossible to obtain. Electric stoves take too long to heat, call for no tending, perform their task with impersonal callousness. They do not warm a room.

Douglas's gnarled fingers idly sort through the wintergreen he picked this morning, spurn the jar of sugar that stands nearby. All his life, Douglas has made wintergreen tea from fresh maple sap, which requires no sweetening. But this spring he journeyed with drill and hammer and tap and bucket to his only remaining maple tree, and found it dead. He has bought maple-flavoured sugar for this birthday tea, but he knows it will not be the same. Then again, next spring he may find no wintergreen.

So *many* old familiar friends have failed to reappear in their season lately—the deer moss has gone wherever the deer went to, crows no longer raid the compost heap, even the lupines have decreased in number and in brilliance. The soil, perhaps made self-conscious by its conspicuous isolation, no longer bursts with life.

Douglas realizes that his own sap no longer runs in the spring, that the walls of his house ring with no voice save his own. If a farm surrounded by wasteland cannot survive, how then shall a man? *It is my birthday*, he thinks, *how old am I today?*

He cannot remember.

He looks up at the electric clock (the family's two-hundred-year-old cuckoo clock, being wood, did not survive the Panic Winter of '94), reads



the date from its face (there are no longer trees to spare for fripperies like paper calendars), sits back with a grunt. *2049 like I thought, but when was I born?*

So many things have changed in Douglas's lifetime, so many of Life's familiar immutable aspects gone forever. The Danielses to the east died childless: their land now holds a sewage treatment plant. On the west the creeping border of Annapolis Royal has eaten the land up, excreting concrete and steel and far too many people as it went. Annapolis is now as choked as New York City was in Douglas's father's day. Economic helplessness has driven Douglas back up the North Mountain, step by inexorable step, and the profits (he winces at the word) that he reaped from selling off his land parcel by parcel (as, in his youth, he bought it from his ancestors) have been eaten away by the rising cost of living. Here, on his last fourteen acres, in the two-story house he built with his own hands and by Jesus *wood*, Douglas Bent Jr. has made his last stand.

He questions his body as his father taught him to do, is told in reply that he has at least ten or twenty more years of life left. *How old am I?* he wonders again, *forty-five? Fifty? More?* He has simply lost track, for the years do not mean what they did. It matters little; though he may have vitality for twenty years more, he has money for no more than five. Less, if the new tax laws penalizing old age are pushed through in Halifax.

The water has begun to boil. Douglas places wintergreen and sugar in the earthenware mug his mother made (back when clay was dug out of the backyard with a shovel), removes the pot from the stove, and pours. His nostrils test the aroma; to his dismay, the fake smells genuine. Sighing from his belly, he moves to the rocking chair by the kitchen window, places the mug on the sill, and sits down to watch another sunset. From here Douglas can see the Bay, when the wind is right and the smoke from the industrial park does not come between. Even then, he can no longer see the far shores of New Brunswick, for the air is thicker than when Douglas was a child.

The clock hums, the mug steams. The winds are from the north—a cold night is coming, and tomorrow may be one of the improbable "bay-steamer" days with which Nova Scotia salts its spring. It does not matter to Douglas: his solar heating is far too efficient. His gaze wanders down the access road which leads to the highway; it curves downhill and left and disappears behind the birch and alders and pine that line it for a half-mile from the house. If Douglas looks at the road right, he can sometimes convince himself that around the bend are not strip-mining shells and brick apartment-hives but arable land, waving grain, and the world he once knew. Fields and yaller dogs and grazing goats and spring mud and tractors and barns and goat-berries like stockpiles of B-B shot ...

Douglas's mind wanders a lot these days. It has been a long time since he enjoyed thinking, and so he has lost the habit. It has been a long time since he had anyone with whom to share his thoughts, and so he has lost the inclination. It has been a long time since he understood the world well enough to think about it, and so he has lost the ability.

Douglas sits and rocks and sips his tea, spilling it down the front of his beard and failing to notice. *How old am I?* he thinks for the third time, and summons enough will to try and find out. Rising from the rocker with an effort, he walks on weary wiry legs to the living room, climbs the stairs to the attic, pausing halfway to rest.

My father was sixty-one he recalls as he sits, wheezing, on the stair *when he accepted euthanasia. Surely I am not that old. What keeps me alive?*

He has no answer.

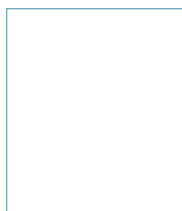
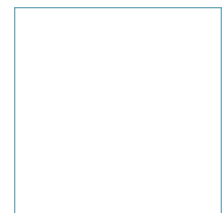
When he reaches the attic, Douglas spends fifteen minutes in locating the ancient trunk in which Bent family records are kept. They are minutes well spent: Douglas is cheered by many of the antiques he must shift to get at the trunk. Here is the potter's wheel his mother worked; there the head of the axe with which he once took off his right big toe; over in the corner a battered peavey from the long-gone sawmill days. They remind him of a childhood when life still made sense, and bring a smile to his grizzled features. It does not stay long.

Opening the trunk presents difficulties—it is locked, and Douglas cannot remember where he put the key. He has not seen it for many years, or the trunk for that matter. Finally he gives up, smashes the old lock with the peavey, and levers up the lid (the Bents have always learned leverage as they got old, working efficiently long after strength has gone). It opens with a shriek, hinges protesting their shattered sleep.

The past leaps out at him like the woes of the world from Pandora's Box. On top of the pile is a picture of Douglas's parents, Douglas Sr. and Sarah, smiling on their wedding day, Grandfather Lester behind them near an enormous barn, grazing cattle visible in the background.

Beneath the picture he finds a collection of receipts for paid grain-bills, remembers the days when food was cheap enough to feed animals, and there were animals to be fed. Digging deeper, he comes across cancelled cheques, insurance policies, tax records, a collection of report cards, and letters wrapped in ribbon. Douglas pulls up short at the handmade rosary he gave his mother for her fifteenth anniversary, and wonders if either of them still believed in God even then. Again, it is hard to remember.

At last he locates his birth certificate. He stands, groaning with the ache in his calves and knees, and threads his way through the crowded attic to the west window, where the light from the setting sun is sufficient to read



the fading document. He seats himself on the shell of a television that has not worked since he was a boy, holds the paper close to his face, and squints.

“May 12, 1999,” reads the date at the top.

Why, I’m fifty years old he tells himself in wonderment. *Fifty: I’ll be darned.*

There is something about that number that rings a bell in Douglas’s tired old mind, something he can’t quite recall about what it means to be fifty years old. He squints at the birth certificate again.

And there on the last line, he sees it, sees what he had almost forgotten, and realizes that he was wrong—he will be getting a birthday present today after all.

For the bottom line of his birth certificate says, simply and blessedly, “... expiry date: May 12, 2049.”

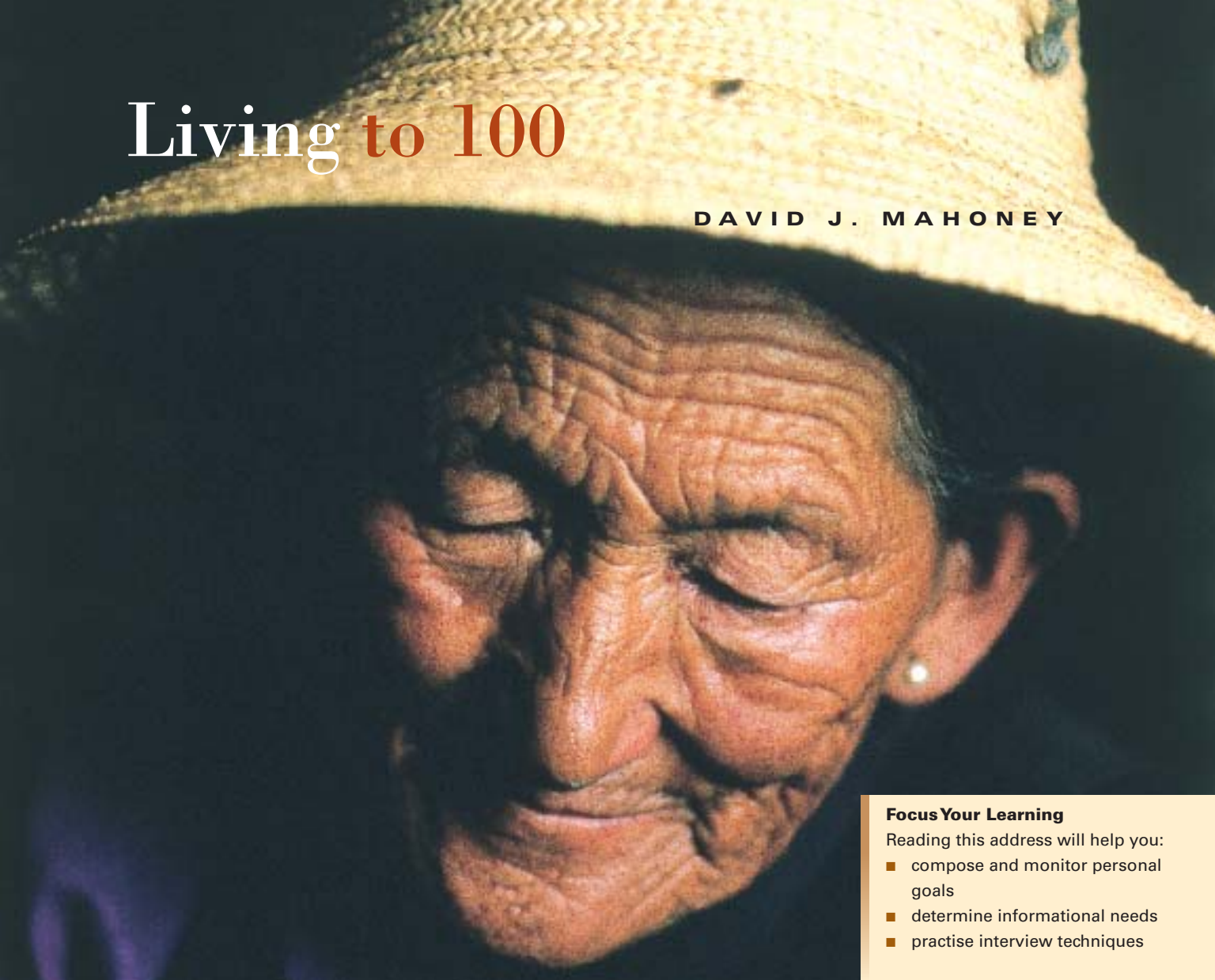
Downstairs, for the first time in years, there is a knock at the door. ■

Activities

1. Work in pairs to produce two maps: a map of the area around the Bent farm as it was when Douglas was a boy, and a map of the area as it is in 2049. Use evidence from the text and label the important elements.
2. Explain the birthday present that Douglas is to receive. Discuss with a partner how the word “blessedly” reinforces the themes of the whole story.
3. Create an “ancient trunk.” You may make one that reflects your life or the life of someone in your family, or you may create one for a completely fictional character. Include mementos such as photographs, souvenirs, old letters, news clippings, and other items that people keep as reminders of the past. Present your trunk in a role play to a group of classmates. Ensure that the objects in the trunk and the opinions in the presentation are appropriate for the time period and cultural background from which your character comes.
4. Reread the story and list the items from our world that have disappeared from Douglas Bent’s. In discussion with a partner, rank the list in order of probability of disappearance. Justify your opinions by reference to your own experience and your knowledge of current trends.
5. Using complete sentences, explain the meaning of the following phrases in the context of the story:
 - Pandora’s Box
 - agribusiness has destroyed agriculture
 - the petrochemical industry died of thirst
 - excreting concrete and steel
 - tax laws penalizing old age

Living to 100

DAVID J. MAHONEY



Focus Your Learning

Reading this address will help you:

- compose and monitor personal goals
- determine informational needs
- practise interview techniques

This speech is going to make you roll your eyes and smile. You're going to wonder—what kind of super-optimist did they get to make this year's commencement address? OK, here comes a challenge you didn't know you had: Each one of you is going to have to start planning now to live to be one hundred.

No, I'm not planning to live to a hundred myself. Nor is my son, David Jr.—he'll consider himself lucky to get to ninety. But his son, now age six, at the tag end of your generation, has more than a good chance to break a hundred. And so do all of you in the class of '96.

I'm not alone in making this prediction. A strange thing happened on Air Force One recently: The president of the United States sat on the floor of the aircraft, up against a bulkhead, and spoke to the travelling press pool for three hours. Not a word was on the record. The rules were "psychological background"—that meant the press could report what President Clinton was thinking, but could not say he was the one who told them. They could attribute his ruminations only to a mysterious source called "the highest authority."

Some of us read that pool report with care

because we like to know what's going on in the head of the man who runs the country. And sure enough, there was a line in it that was, to me, a stunner. Quote: "He feels biology will be to the twenty-first century what physics was to the twentieth century, he believes people might routinely live beyond one hundred years."

That comes to us from "the highest authority"—not God, but from the CEO of the world's only superpower, who has access to the best scientific minds in the country. And he was not talking about one person in a thousand living to be a hundred, as happens today; he believes that people will "routinely" make it all the way to triple digits. Of course, the reporters were more interested in politics and scandal, and nobody followed up on the most intriguing notion of the day: an extra-long generation tacked on to the average human's life.

Of course, the actuaries at the insurance companies look back, not forward, to report past life expectancy. Based on past history, the tables say all of you here can expect to live to only seventy-seven years and nine months. Don't knock it—that's a ten percent longer

life than Americans born fifty years ago, and it beats the biblical "three score and ten." But the actuaries are careful to say they're only historians, and they're not making forecasts.

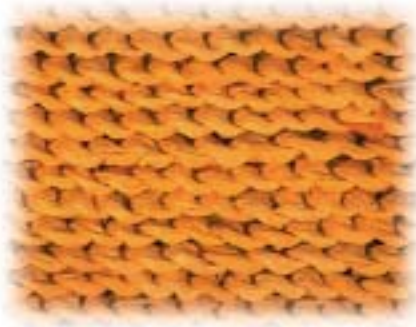
So don't be fooled by an "expectancy" age that presumes we won't get a cure for cancer—which we will. Don't accept a presumption that organ transplants won't become everyday operations, which they will. And then factor in the medical breakthroughs stemming from the Human Genome Project, which is going to use genetics to cure

hereditary diseases and bring down the death rate. And if we were able, in these past fifty years, to triumph over the microbe with antibiotics, isn't it logical to assume that in the coming generations we will be able to conquer viruses? Taken together, the medical advances in your lifetime are near certain to add a generation to your life. You will play in a whole new fourth quarter.

Let me tell you what opened my mind to these possibilities. I am chairman of the Charles A. Dana Foundation, which supports research in brain science. Five years ago, I put a challenge to a group of the brainiest neuroscientists in the world, many of them Nobel laureates, including James Watson, the co-discoverer of DNA. I said: "Name ten brain problems you can solve in the coming decade if you get the proper support." At first they were reluctant to go out on a limb, but they realized how important it was to offer realistic hope in order to get research support. They signed on to ten challenges—just ten—that together can beat dozens of neurological diseases in this decade.

We're halfway through this decade—how are we doing? Well, the latest Dana Alliance progress report shows that we have found the gene for Lou Gehrig's disease and the first drug for it is coming out this year. We've got not one but four genes involved in Alzheimer's disease and twenty-two new drugs for it are in trials. We have the first really good medication for schizophrenia and more in the pipeline, and just this year the FDA approved the first emergency drug that can protect against disability if someone having a stroke receives it quickly.

Next on the list: treatments that will block the action of cocaine. Brain tissue transplants—and not with human fetuses, either—that will cure Parkinson's disease. At least one and probably more genes that cause manic-depressive illness. And the first drugs that can induce



injured spinal cord cells to reconnect—so that people will have a better shot at recovering movement. These aren't my predictions: they are the estimates of the best minds in the field, who have a track record of delivering the cures they talk about.

That's why I agree with "the highest authority" in Air Force One about your generation living to a hundred. Get your minds around that: Most of you, now in your early twenties, might well have the chance to be centenarians. What does that mean to you right now?

You think of centenarians as toothless old geezers doddering around if they're lucky, confined to wheelchairs if they're not. You think of the line of George Burns when he reached one hundred: "At my age, you don't buy green bananas." Or you're thinking of the gag about Senator Strom Thurmond—that when he willed his body parts to a hospital, the doctors saw a list of parts that they weren't even using anymore.

You think of extreme old age—if you think of it at all—as a time of being a liability to society and a burden to the family. Of falling apart physically and losing your marbles mentally. Of making no contribution. And—worst of all—of having no fun. As Ira Gershwin wrote in *Porgy and Bess*: "Methuselah lived nine hundred years. But who calls that livin', when no gal will give in, to no one who's nine hundred years."

But what if brain scientists are able to keep pace with the scientists of the body? Let's assume that immunologists will be able to prevent or cure everything from cancer to AIDS, and organ transplants and blood-work and genetic engineering will cope with most other ailments and diseases. Without an active brain—without a working memory and the ability to learn—"who calls *that livin'*"?

I'm here to tell you that neuroscience is keeping pace with, even setting the pace for, all

other medical disciplines. This year, as you can learn from our heavily hit Web site on the Internet, we're expanding the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives on a global scale. Here's our guarantee: as body scientists keep you alive to a hundred, brain scientists will keep your life worth living.

What do you do with this information? I submit that you throw out all previous notions of one career followed by a lazy retirement. That was the strategy of your grandfathers and it's strictly wheelchair thinking. You need a new strategy for a lifetime of alertness that lasts a whole century.

The Centenarian Strategy delivers a swift kick in the head to the current idea of hitting the ground running, working your youth into a frazzle, taking every better offer as it comes, making a pile as early as you can, and then coasting on that momentum until your last downsizing company forces you into retirement.

The Centenarian Strategy also runs counter to the planning of idealistic young people who look to a life of public service, of social work, or environmental action, setting aside money for psychic income and expecting the government to care for them in old age.

Keeping that active fourth quarter in view—remembering that brain scientists have already found that you are much less likely to vegetate if you stay active and keep exercising your mind as well as your body—then here are the five fundamentals of the Centenarian Strategy:

1. *Diversify your career from the very beginning.*

Stop thinking of jobs in series, one after the other: instead, think of careers in parallel. That means planning your vocation along with your avocation, and keeping them as separate as possible. If you want to go into business, plan an avocation of music or art; if you are inclined toward the law or the media, diversify into education or landscaping. If you want to be a poet,

think about politics on the side, and study it seriously.

Don't confuse an avocation with recreation. Watching basketball on television or surfing the Internet for the latest interactive game can be a lively part of life, but it's not a creative avocation. And don't confuse a serious avocation with a hobby: do-it-yourselfing is fun, and so are clay modelling, and gardening and fiddling with old cars. Hobbies are ways to relax and to make friends, and everybody should have some: but a real avocation is a subtext to a career, and a part of your working week to pursue with a certain dedication. Why? Not only because it gives balance to your second quarter, but because it positions you for the time that will come, in the third or fourth quarter, to switch gears. And then switch them again—you'll have the time, and public policy will change to give you incentives to keep working or avocating.

The point is to not be single-minded about a career. Be double-minded, or triple-minded: keep a pot or two on your back-burners.

2. Take advantage of your opportunity to wind up a millionaire.

Financial independence will take a lot of pressure off that fourth quarter and make it something to look forward to. The Age of Entitlement is coming to an end. The baby boomers who count only on Social Security and Medicare will be disappointed. You in the post-boomer generation should not rely on society's safety net and think more about your own personal nest egg.

3. Invest in your family dimension.

As life gets longer, young people are getting married later. Fine; that deliberation about a big choice should ultimately reverse the divorce rate. But make a commitment early in your second quarter: the smartest thing you can do in diversifying your life is to stop playing the field.

The wave of the future, in the Centenarian

Strategy, is to frame your life in traditional family settings. Do your market research in singlehood, choose for the long term and then commit to marriage; have kids; avoid divorce; raise your likelihood of having grandchildren. Following this course, you can expect at least a couple of great-grandchildren to enjoy, to work with, and to help as you approach the century mark. If you plan properly now to protect your wallet and your intellect, you can be a family asset, not a liability, later; and your family, with all the headaches, will enrich your life.

4. Pace yourself; it's a small world and a long life.

The centenarian thinks about success differently, with a longer view. He or she measures success in getting to personal satisfaction, which does not always mean getting to the top of the heap. Making money is important, never derogate building an estate that you and your progeny can use. But developing long-term loyalties in all the strands of your career and avocation and hobbies and recreation pays off in that satisfaction. Those loyalties also make life easier later: you can get things done across the different strands, helping someone in your avocation who has helped you in your career.

Ask yourself along the way: Whose approval is important to you? Whose is not? The centenarians do not stop to smell the flowers; they carry the flowers along.

5. Plan for at least one thoroughgoing discomobulation in your life.

This can be a good shock, like meeting someone amazing, or developing a talent you never knew you had, or finding an opportunity that takes your career or avocation in a wholly new direction. Or you can find yourself, after years of success and loyal service, out on your ear in a merger or a downsizing or a hostile takeover.

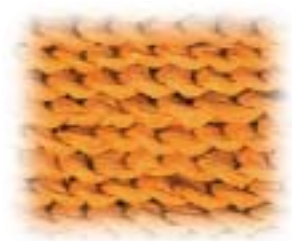
It happened to me. I was running a multi-

billion-dollar conglomerate, doing just fine, but when I tried to take it private, somebody beat me to the punch. I wound up with a big bunch of money, which meant I got no sympathy from my friends, but I was out of a job. No airplane, no executive support system, no daily calendar full of appointments with big shots—no place to go in the morning.

Did I let it bother me? You bet I did. I plunged into the deepest blue funk imaginable. But luckily—and this was not part of any life strategy—I had an avocation to turn to. It was a philanthropy, the Dana Foundation, and it had long been leading me into supporting the field of brain science. So I threw myself into that, applying what I had learned in marketing and finance to a field that needed an outsider with those credentials. And for the past ten years, I've gotten more sheer satisfaction out of marshalling the force of public opinion behind research into imaging, memory, and conquering depression than anything I ever did as a boy wonder or a boardroom biggie.

But it would not have happened if I did not

have that anchor to windward—the other, wholly unrelated activity to turn to. Success, or a resounding setback, in one career can lead to success, of another kind, in the parallel career.



That, in a nutshell, is how to cope with a challenge no graduating class has ever had—the challenge of a life with an active fourth quarter. Medical science will give most of you the body to blow out a hundred candles on your birthday cake, and the brain scientists will give you the life of your mind. That active memory will be their gift to you.

Unlike most of today's centenarians, you will be able to remember and use what you've learned in your century. You will be able, in the poet's words, to enjoy "the last of life, for which the first was made." It's up to you to make sure you have a varied life that's worth remembering.

Good luck. Happy commencement. And a happy hundredth birthday. ■

Activities

- 1. a)** In a personal journal, describe the career you would like to have in the future. If you are unsure, then describe a career dream. Add to the description the "avocation" that David J. Mahoney talks about.

b) Determine what information you will need about the career you've chosen. Research the steps you would need to take to qualify: university or college schooling; apprenticeship; skills, location, resources; etc. Lay out a brief career plan with a general timeline. In a journal entry, reflect on what you discovered in your research.
- 2.** Interview your grandparents or an older relative and ask them about their life. You might consider questions such as these:

 - what is your definition of a good life?
 - what advice would you give to someone of my age?
 - what things should be avoided?
 - what things are important to you? love? money?

Summarize your findings in a short essay and show the finished product to the interviewee.

End-of-unit Activities

1. With a partner, compare the descriptions of the importance of dreams in “Dreamworld,” “In Praise of Dreams,” and “The Dream.” Which piece do you find most persuasive? Why? What strengths and weaknesses can you see in the form and tone of each writer’s work? Why do you think the authors chose to express themselves in the way they did? Summarize your discussion in a brief essay.
2. Dreams often reveal our inmost thoughts and feelings about what is happening in our lives, even when we don’t acknowledge those thoughts and feelings in our everyday life. Create a visual representation of a dream (or nightmare) that the main character in “Sophie, 1990” might have, using images and symbols to reveal how she really feels about her life.
3. Write a description of “bridge building” from the perspective of the father in “The Bridge Builder.” Model your description on the style of “Walking Through a Wall.” Present your work to the class as a monologue.
4. Write a modern-day trickster myth based on the news stories about Sommy, the Cyber Trickster. For a model of a trickster myth, see “How Rocks Were Born” in Unit 3.
5. “Sophie, 1990,” “The Curio Shop,” “Sentry,” and “No Renewal” are all examples of the science fiction genre. List common elements of these stories that characterize the genre. Use your list as the basis for writing a short definition of science fiction. Compare your definition with those of other classmates.
6. The western genre has often been compared with that of science fiction. Reread the story “The Time of the Wolves” from Unit 3, and consider how it might be adapted to a science fiction setting. Take as an example the setting and action of “Sentry” in planning your changes.
7. “Armies of the Moon” deals with an historical event (the moon landing) in an imaginative way. Prepare a radio news report based on the story described in the poem.
8. With a partner, describe the characteristics and level of expertise of the intended audience for each of the following pieces about technology: “Digital Bullies,” “Hello, Out There,” “Voice Mail and the Mating Ritual,” and “Living to 100.” Find specific examples from each text to back up your assessments.
9. “No Renewal” and “Living to 100” present opposing views of the issue of aging in the future. With a partner, role-play a debate between David J. Mahoney and Spider Robinson on this topic. Use ideas presented in the text as a starting point for the debate.
10. In a small group think about the possible directions in which society might go during the next few decades. Present your speculations in a visual format—poster, future guide book, video documentary, diagram of a city of the future, etc. Present your material to the class and ask for their feedback.
11. In groups of five, invent a simple board game based on one of the themes covered in this unit: dreams, the future, science fiction, or technology. You will need to make the board, the pieces, the cards, if needed, and a set of rules. Make up a title for your game. When you have finished, exchange your product with another group, and ask for suggestions from the players on how the game could be improved.