

MARS YEAR 84

Nearly twenty Mars years ago, the extraordinary story of two children who discovered life on Mars heralded the beginning of a new era for the Marineris Colony and all humans living and working on the Red Planet.

Now, after many years, researchers have uncovered documents from the Marineris archives which shed new light on the discovery and the events that led to it.

Those documents are published here together for the first time. What follows is a story like no other...

28th May 2060

Dear Brand-New Diary of Adventure,

Today was our very last visit to Gran before our epic mission to Mars. Mum and I travelled there on the air tram, like usual. Did you know that air trams travel really, really fast? I looked it up on the map app on my webspectacles as we sped over the tall tower blocks and green parks. At one point, we got up to 147mph!

I asked Mum if that's how fast we'll be travelling through space. She said that the rocket will be much faster – over twenty thousand miles per hour!

Twenty thousand! That's mega-fast. That's stomach-churning, brain-melting fast. Sometimes, when we're on the air tram, I play games to make the journey more fun. Today, I imagined that I was a space pilot, speeding through the galaxy. Outside the windows, stars and planets zoomed past, blurring into streaks of light. An alien spaceship approached with lasers beaming but I was ready to zap it into another dimension as soon as it got into range.

"Pow! Pow-pow-pow! Pow!"

"Oh Jazz, you're not shooting aliens again," said Mum as the other people on the tram stared. "We like aliens!"

I explained that they had us cornered in the outer spiral arm of a distant galaxy and that I had no choice.

Mum said that I should at least try to bring one back alive so that she could study it. That's what Mum does for a living. She's an extraterrestrial-life researcher — an alien scientist.

I performed a lightspeed U-turn to capture an alien fleeing the shattered spaceship in a life raft.

"Hmmm," Mum said, pretending to investigate my captured alien. "It has bug eyes, seven legs, a spiky exoskeleton and liquid brains. This is like nothing I've ever seen before, Jazz. We could win the Galactic Discovery Prize for this."

"Do you think that's what the alien life on Mars will look like?" I asked.

Questions

1. What is the name of the colony on Mars that humans have established?

2. From the first section, find and copy a phrase which suggests that the documents have not been seen before.

3. How fast will Jazz and her Mum be travelling through space? Circle one.

147 mph

20,000 mph

1,000 mph

Faster than light

4. What is Mum's job? Circle one.

an extraterrestrial-life researcher

a space pilot

an air tram driver

5. Put a tick in the correct boxes to show which descriptions Mum uses to describe the pretend alien.

Mum's description	
bug eyes	
three legs	
a spiky exoskeleton	
no brains	

6. Put a tick in each row to show whether the events really happened in the story or were imagined by Jazz.

	Really Happened in the Story	Imagined by Jazz
Mum and Jazz travelled by air tram		
Jazz looked up the map using webspectacles		
stars and planets zoomed past the windows		
Jazz was shooting aliens		

7. How did Mum feel about Jazz's imaginary game?

Answers

1. What is the name of the colony on Mars that humans have established?

Marineris Colony

2. From the first section, find and copy a phrase which suggests that the documents have not been seen before.

Accept either: Those documents are published here together for the first time or Now, after many years, researchers have uncovered documents

3. How fast will Jazz and her Mum be travelling through space? Circle one.

147 mph

20,000 mph

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5. Put a tick in the correct boxes to show which descriptions Mum uses to describe the pretend alien.

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a spiky exoskeleton	✓
no brains	

6. Put a tick in each row to show whether the events really happened in the story or were imagined by Jazz.

	Really Happened in the Story	Imagined by Jazz
Mum and Jazz travelled by air tram	✓	
Jazz looked up the map using webspectacles	✓	
stars and planets zoomed past the windows		✓
Jazz was shooting aliens		✓

7. How did Mum feel about Jazz's imaginary game?

- **"Mum laughed". This suggests she was amused / she thought it was funny**
- **She went along with the game by "pretending to investigate the captured alien"**

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"Do you think that's what the alien life on Mars will look like?" I asked.

Mum laughed. "I doubt that they'll have seven legs. In fact, I

doubt that they'll have any legs at all."

I spent the rest of the journey thinking about Martians with tentacles and suckers, and some that crawled over the ground like slugs. When the air tram finally got to Sunset Heights, we released our seven-legged alien back into the wild and hopped onto the platform.

Gran lives in one of those old-fashioned retirement villages from the 2020s: all glass and steel and curving walls. When she isn't racing her friends around the courtyard on her hover scooter or throwing street parties on weeknights, she's in her top-floor flat, gazing through her binoculars at the happenings down below or inviting people over for curry so hot that it blows your head off.

I could smell Gran's curry as soon as we got upstairs. Even before the front door opened, my eyes watered.

Questions

1. In what year is the first section of the story set?

2. Find and copy a phrase or sentence in the first section that builds anticipation of the story that comes next and entices the reader to find out more.

3. What transport does Jazz use to visit Gran?

spaceship

car

air tram

hover scooter

4. How do you know that this is the typical way in which Jazz travels to visit her Gran?

5. Find and copy a phrase which reveals that Jazz is not actually capturing aliens in this extract.

6. In what kind of accommodation does Gran live?

7. Look at the line: "I could smell Gran's curry as soon as we got upstairs. Even before the front door opened, my eyes watered." What does this suggest about Gran's curry?

8. Mum and Jazz appear to have a fun relationship and get along well. What evidence is there to support this?

Answers

1. In what year is the first section of the story set?

Mars Year 84

2. Find and copy a phrase or sentence in the first section that builds anticipation of the story that comes next and entices the reader to find out more.

“What follows is a story like no other...”

3. What transport does Jazz use to visit Gran?

spaceship

car

air tram

hover scooter

4. How do you know that this is the typical way in which Jazz travels to visit her Gran?

Jazz says that they travelled this way ‘like usual’.

5. Find and copy a phrase which reveals that Jazz is not actually capturing aliens in this extract.

Accept any of the following:

- **I play games to make the journey more fun**
- **I imagined that I was a space pilot**
- **“Hmmm,” Mum said, pretending to investigate my captured alien.**

6. In what kind of accommodation does Gran live?

Accept:

- **(an old fashioned) retirement village**
- **a description such as: all glass and steel and curving walls**
- **a place from the 2020s**

7. Look at the line: “I could smell Gran's curry as soon as we got upstairs. Even before the front door opened, my eyes watered.” What does this suggest about Gran's curry?

The smell is very strong / it is spicy / it is powerful / it is hot

8. Mum and Jazz appear to have a fun relationship and get along well. What evidence is there to support this?

Accept any evidence that Mum and Jazz appear to get along well e.g. because Mum laughed at Jazz's imaginary game and she went along with the pretend investigation of the alien.

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Gran lives in one of those old-fashioned retirement villages from the 2020s: all glass and steel and curving walls. When she isn't racing her friends around the courtyard on her hover scooter or throwing street parties on weeknights, she's in her top-floor flat, gazing through her binoculars at the happenings down below or inviting people over for curry so hot that it blows your head off.

I could smell Gran's curry as soon as we got upstairs. Even before the front door opened, my eyes watered.

"My brave girls!" said Gran, throwing open the door. That's how she always greets us, even though we've never done anything as brave as she has — well, until now. Gran was wearing pink, fluffy slippers, khaki trousers and a dressing gown covered in parrots. "Off on an adventure to a new

world! What I wouldn't give to be coming with you." Gran said that she had made us a proper meal to send us off.

"There'll be lean pickings in space," she said. "No cheese, no meat, no chocolate fudge cake..."

Mum pointed out that the technicians on Mars make good lab-grown beef, and I said that we'll eat insects because that's what they're farming out there.

"I've eaten plenty of insects in my time," said Gran. "They were delicious when deep fried in sweet-and-sour sauce.

I'll send you my recipe, shall I? Did I ever tell you about the time when I ate toasted rhinoceros beetles in the Amazon rainforest?"

Questions

1. Look at the first section of the text. From where were the documents uncovered?

2. The first section ends with the line: "What follows is a story like no other..."
What effect is this designed to have upon the reader?

3. What does Jazz use her webspectacles for?

To see better

To go faster

To look up
information

To imagine aliens

4. Find and copy a phrase which suggests that Mum and Jazz typically use the same means of transport to visit Gran.

5. How can you tell that this story is set in the future? Give **two** reasons or examples.

6. What does Mum imagine about alien life forms on Mars?

7. Jazz describes the speed of travelling through space as "stomach-churning". What does this suggest about the way it makes her feel?

8. What impression do you get of the relationship between Mum and Jazz? Support your answer with evidence.

9. Describe some of the food that will or will not be available in space, according to Gran.

10. What impression do you get of Gran's character? Use evidence to support your answer.

Answers

1. Look at the first section of the text. From where were the documents uncovered?

The Marineris archives

2. The first section ends with the line: "What follows is a story like no other..."
What effect is this designed to have upon the reader?

Accept answers which describe the effect of: making the story seem extraordinary or enticing the reader, making them want to know more; building suspense or excitement.

3. What does Jazz use her webspectacles for?

To see better

To go faster

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To imagine aliens

4. Find and copy a phrase which suggests that Mum and Jazz typically use the same means of transport to visit Gran.

'(Mum and I travelled there on the air tram) like usual.'

5. How can you tell that this story is set in the future? Give **two** reasons or examples.

Accept any of the following:

- **The diary date says 29th January 2060**
- **Jazz refers to visiting Mars, which does not currently happen in the present**
- **She uses air trams to travel and webspectacles to look things up**
- **The first section refers to life being discovered on Mars in the past, but it hasn't happened yet**
- **Gran lives in a retirement village from the 2020s**

6. What does Mum imagine about alien life forms on Mars?

That they are unlikely to have seven legs, or any legs at all.

7. Jazz describes the speed of travelling through space as "stomach-churning". What does this suggest about the way it makes her feel?

Stomach churning suggests that it makes Jazz feel anxious or nervous, that she may feel sick about it.

8. What impression do you get of the relationship between Mum and Jazz? Support your answer with evidence.

Accept any evidence that Mum and Jazz appear to get along well e.g. because Mum laughed at Jazz's imaginary game and she went along with the pretend investigation of the alien.

9. Describe some of the food that will or will not be available in space, according to Gran.

Answers must refer to some food which will or will not be eaten, e.g.

- **good lab-grown beef**
- **insects**
- **no cheese**
- **no real meat**
- **no chocolate fudge cake**

10. What impression do you get of Gran's character? Use evidence to support your answer.

Accept any appropriate evidence of Gran's character, including:

- **unusual / eccentric ('Gran was wearing pink, fluffy slippers, khakis and a dressing gown covered in parrots').**
- **adventurous and likes excitement ('racing her friends around the courtyard on her hover scooter, or throwing street parties on weeknights')**
- **brave ('even though we've never done anything as brave as she has' / 'What I wouldn't give to come with you')**