

高等学校文科英语阅读教材

Islands in the Sky

空中之岛



外语教学与研究出版社

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(京) 新登字155号

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外语教学与研究出版社出版发行

(北京市西三环北路19号)

北京怀柔东晓印刷厂印刷

新华书店总店北京发行所经销

开本787×1092 1/32 3印张 47千字

1987年6月第1版 1992年6月北京第5次印刷

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印数 73001—83000册

ISBN7-5600-0022-3/C·23

定价：1.30元

内 容 简 介

中学生罗伊在一次电视台举办的宇航知识竞赛中获得第一名，获准到太空中的内层宇航站去旅行。本书叙述了罗伊在太空旅行的过程，故事引人入胜、情节生动、文笔流畅、文字浅明易懂。这本注释是针对我国的英语学习者的需要而编辑出版的。

本书是高等学校文科英语泛读教材，也可以用作中学生和其他英语学习者的读物

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1 I Win the Prize

The audience was waiting for the programme to begin. They stopped talking¹ and started to cheer as we entered the room. I tried not to feel frightened². Uncle Jim had told me, 'Don't worry. It's just a game. Enjoy yourself.'

I looked at the five other boys. 'Which one of us is going to win?' I asked myself. Elmer Schmitz came into the room and the audience cheered again. Elmer Schmitz was the question master³. He was going to ask us questions about aeroplanes, rockets and space. There were six boys in this competition* and the boy who answered most questions correctly would win the first prize. We had all entered and won other competitions before⁴. Tonight was the last night of the competition. We were going to discover who knew the most about space and rockets. That person would win the prize. It was also exciting because everyone was watching us on television.

The questions were all about travelling in space. At first they were easy, but then they became more and more difficult. Elmer didn't tell us if we had given the right

**competition*, game in which people answer questions.

or the wrong answer. You could guess, though¹, because the audience cheered when you were right. I guessed² that I had made one mistake. I felt miserable because I thought another boy had answered all his questions correctly. Then it was time for the last question. Elmer showed each of us the pictures of two aeroplanes. We had to tell him the name of the aeroplane. I thought it was an easy question. However, the other boy, the one who was winning, gave the wrong answers³. 'I only know about rockets,' he said. 'I didn't know we had to know about aeroplanes as well.' I thought that was a very silly thing to say⁴ because he had already answered some questions about aeroplanes.

I guessed that I had won but, of course, I wasn't sure. I waited in excitement for Elmer to read out the name of the winner. It was my name! The audience clapped and cheered as I walked towards Elmer. I felt very proud and pleased.

The Inner Station⁵

'Very good, Roy,' said Elmer. 'You answered all the questions correctly except one. I'm happy to tell you that you are the winner of this competition. As you know, the first prize is a free journey to any country in the world. Where would you like to go?' The audience waited to hear my answer and I remembered about all the people

watching me on television. I felt worried. I had planned what I was going to say but, suddenly, I knew there would be trouble¹.

‘I want to go to the Inner Station,’ I said.

At first Elmer looked surprised and then he looked annoyed². Someone in the audience laughed.

‘Ha ha, that’s very amusing, Roy,’ he said. ‘I’m sorry but the rules say that you can go anywhere on Earth.’

He was laughing at me and I began to feel angry.

‘I’ve read the rules very carefully,’ I replied. ‘They don’t say “anywhere *on* Earth³”. They say “to any part of the Earth⁴”. There’s a big difference.’

‘What do you mean?’ asked Elmer.

‘The law says that Inner Station is part of Earth because it is less than one thousand miles away. Anything in space less than one thousand miles distance from Earth is part of Earth⁵.’ I replied.

Elmer looked at me in surprise. ‘Did your father tell you this?’ he asked.

‘Oh, no,’ I said.

Elmer spent a few minutes asking me to choose another place to visit⁶ but I refused. I wanted to go to the Inner Station. ‘Well, I don’t know what to do,’ he said. ‘However, it’s time for the programme to finish now, so we will let you know whether you can go to the Inner Station later.’

Of course, Elmer was right. I hadn’t worked this plan

out by myself¹. My Uncle Jim had told me what to say. He had discovered the mistake² in the rules and had told me that the television company would have to let me go to the Inner Station. Uncle Jim has been to space many times and understands my wish to go there. I was sixteen years old. I had read everything I could about rockets and space³. I had hundreds of photographs and pictures of rockets, and I wanted to go there more than anywhere else.

One week later, I received a letter. The letter said that the television company agreed that I had won the first prize. They also agreed that I had read the rules correctly and therefore, they would pay for my journey to the Inner Station. However, my parents must give me permission to go. Also, the doctors at the Office of Space Medicine must examine me to see if I was healthy⁴.

My mother and father were annoyed with me because I had caused trouble. However, they didn't really blame me. They knew it was Uncle Jim's fault. When the letter arrived, I asked them if I could go. They talked to each other for a while and then said that of course I could go. Space travel was quite safe and they knew how much I wanted to go.

I found it difficult to go to sleep that night⁵ and spent most of the evening watching the stars, dreaming and thinking. I was both excited and worried. I was excited because I might soon be travelling in space, up there in the sky, amongst the stars⁶. However, I was worried

about seeing the doctors. I had read about the tests and I knew that they were difficult.

The tests

The next day I flew by aeroplane to New York and spent the day at the Office of Space Medicine. The tests were very strange. I had to jump up and down without breathing. They showed me tiny lights and I had to say what colour they were. There was one test that I didn't like. They put me in a box and turned it round very quickly. When I came out I felt very sick¹ and couldn't stand up. For the last test, the doctors put a lot of wires on my head and took me into a narrow dark room. I noticed that the door at the other end of the room was shut.

'Listen carefully, Roy,' said the doctor. 'I'm going to leave you now and the lights will go out. Stand there until someone speaks to you and then do exactly what you are told². Don't worry about the wires. They will follow you when you move.'

'I understand,' I said.

He left and the lights went out. I was now standing in complete darkness. A small red light appeared at the end of the room and I knew that the door was opening. I couldn't hear a sound. I tried to see what was beyond the door but it was too dark³. The wires on my head told

the doctors what was happening in my brain¹. I told myself that I must act calmly. Suddenly, I heard a voice.

‘Walk through the door in front of you, then stop.’

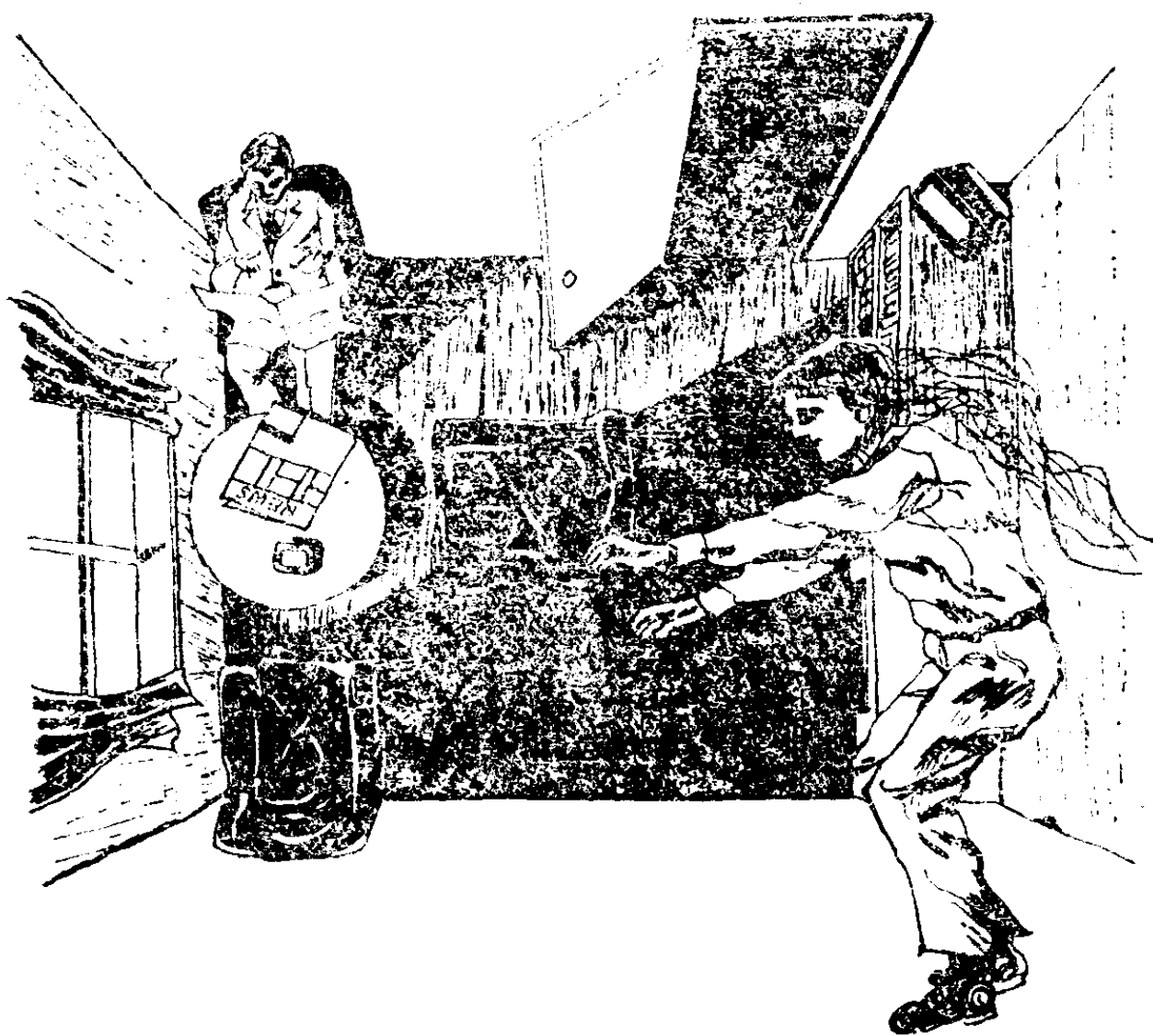
I walked forward and passed through the door. I heard the door shut behind me². Then I stood for ten minutes in complete darkness. Suddenly, the lights were switched on. I could see all around me and I screamed.

Lying on the ceiling

I could see a room. In the room was a table, three chairs, a desk and a television. The sun was shining through the window. I saw the door of this room open³ and a man walked into the room. He picked up a newspaper from the table and sat down in a chair. He was just beginning to read when he looked up and saw me. When I say ‘up’, I mean up⁴. I was frightened because I wasn’t standing on the floor in this room. I was lying flat against the ceiling and I had nothing to hold on to⁵. How could I stop myself from falling⁶?

Of course, I did not fall. I quickly thought that it must be a trick⁷. I was standing on the floor in one room and looking at this other room through a mirror. The door behind me opened and the doctor came in.

‘Did we give you a surprise?’ he asked me, smiling. Then he asked more seriously, ‘Do you know what we were testing?’



‘I think I can guess,’ I said. ‘You were testing my behaviour when gravity* is wrong.’¹

‘That’s right,’ he said. ‘In space you won’t have any gravity at all. This means that you won’t have any weight, You won’t be able to walk on the ground. Instead, you will float in the air. You will be able to stand on the ceiling and lie against it if you want to and you will never fall. Some people can never understand this and are

**gravity, the pull of the earth which makes objects heavy.*

always frightened.'

After this test I had to wait for half an hour. Then the doctor returned and said, 'Well done', Roy. You have passed all the tests. You are ready to go into space now.'

2 I Say Goodbye to Earth

I spent the next few days packing and saying goodbye to my friends and relatives. Then I was ready to leave and start the greatest adventure of my life.

All spaceships leave from and arrive at one place on Earth, a place near to Australia². Once, long ago, this part of the world was covered with mountains. They knocked down³ some of these mountains to make an airport for rockets and spaceships. The only way to reach this airport is by air. As my aeroplane came closer, I could see a tiny white square among the mountains. The mountains were covered with forests and jungle. No one has ever seen the people that live in these valleys. Of course, I looked for them from the aeroplane window but didn't see them.

When I stepped off the aeroplane, I was met by newspaper and television reporters. They took photos of me⁴ and asked me all sorts of questions... was I excited, what

did I think life on the Inner Station would be like? They all asked me questions at the same time and I didn't know who to answer first or what to say. However, an airport worker soon rescued me¹ and gave me some forms to fill in. They weighed me and gave me some medicine to swallow. Then we drove out by bus to the spaceship.

The journey begins

The name of the spaceship was *Sirius*². I was the only passenger because this was a cargo spaceship not a passenger spaceship. It was cheaper for the television company to send me on a cargo spaceship! I got off the bus and stepped into a lift which took me up into the rocket. It was quiet and cold inside the spaceship, a nice change after the hot sunshine outside. The pilot* was already in his seat and, when I entered, he turned round³ and smiled at me.

'So, you're the famous Roy Malcolm, are you⁴? I'll try and get you to the Station safely⁵,' he said. 'Have you flown in a rocket before?'

'No,' I replied.

'Well, don't worry. I know that some people say that it's unpleasant, but it isn't really. Sit comfortably and fasten your seat belt. We will be leaving soon.'

I sat down but I was too excited to rest. I looked eagerly all around me and watched the pilot. He was

* pilot, driver of an aeroplane, rocket or spaceship.

talking over his radio. I heard him say, 'Fifteen minutes to go', and then, 'Ten minutes to go,' then, 'Five minutes to go'. Then he said, 'Lie down. We're ready to leave.' He moved a large red switch, stretched his arms and lay down in his seat. There was a loud noise and the ship began to shake. On the television in front of me, lines appeared and a row of red lights turned to green. Suddenly, I felt as if someone had jumped on top of me². My body felt heavy, I couldn't lift my arms and it was difficult to breathe. I stayed³ lying down in this position for some time and soon I felt more comfortable. The noise of the engines sometimes got louder and sometimes softer. Sometimes there were bangs and the ship shook. The pilot didn't look worried so I decided everything must be all right. Then there was silence and I couldn't hear any noise from the engines. I knew this meant that we had left the pull of Earth's gravity. I saw the pilot unfasten his seat belt and float towards me.

'I'll unfasten your seat belt now,' he said, 'but be careful. Move gently and slowly at first and always hold onto something. If you don't hold onto something you will probably float up and hit your head on the ceiling.'

After a few mistakes, I was floating slowly around the spaceship as well. It was wonderful. I gave myself a gentle push and I could move in any direction that I wanted to, up or down, sideways, backwards or forwards⁴. The pilot called me over to one of the windows and I



looked out¹. The Earth was below us and I could see a number of different countries clearly.

‘Return to your seat now, Roy,’ said the pilot. ‘It’s time for us to land at the Inner Station.’

We arrive at the Inner Station

Before I sat down, I moved to the window on the other side where I could see the stars and the Inner Station. ‘What a mess it looks², I thought as I looked at the Inner Station. I could see about fifty buildings. All the buildings were in the shape of circles. The largest building was in the middle. The buildings were joined together by long tunnels*. I could see spaceships of different shapes and sizes and men in spacesuits floating outside the spaceships, working on them³. One man wearing a spacesuit floated past our spaceship and turned and smiled at me. Suddenly, I heard a big bang behind the ship. I jumped with fright⁴ and the pilot laughed.

‘Don’t worry,’ he said. ‘They have tied a rope to our ship and they are going to pull us in. Do you see the big building in the middle of the Station? We’re going there.’

We were pulled in very slowly and ten minutes later we reached the Station.

‘Well, we’ve arrived,’ said the pilot. ‘I hope you enjoyed the journey.’

**tunnel*, narrow covered path.