

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/ENGLISH IB/TOPS/MACS/CLASS 6 HANDOUT

NAME: _____

So far, we have read Chapters 1 and 2 from the short story about the adventures of Bridget, Barnaby, and Babette, and their feline friend Beauregard. The following selection is the first half of Chapter 3. Enjoy!

CHAPTER 3 (PART 1): SPACE HIPPIES FREAK OUT

Barnaby, Babette, Bridget, and Beauregard lay flat on their backs, staring up at a large mirrored ball that was spinning and casting multi-coloured light all around them. The smell of incense hung heavy in the air. They were all feeling a little **disoriented**. After all, not thirty seconds ago they had been standing in a grassy field. Now they had no idea where they were or what was going on.

"Is this hell?" whispered Bridget, to no one in particular.

"I think it's a disco," responded Babette.

Suddenly a voice thundered all around them, "Aw, man, Janice! You've gone and done it again. I keep telling you that isn't a disco ball—it's a highly sensitive teleportation device!"

The four friends sat up and stared at each other in wonder. This was all very unusual.

"You cats just hang loose for a sec," continued the voice. "I'll be right there."

"Cats?" questioned Barnaby. "But there's only one cat."

"That's just an old hippie expression," said Bridget. "It just means 'guys.' Do you think...?"

But Bridget's question was answered before she asked it. Through the door walked a hippie so hippie-ish he was practically a **caricature** of himself—long hair, a scraggly **goatee** on his chin, granny glasses, and a flowing Indian robe.

"Peace," he said, making a V-shaped sign with two fingers of his right hand.

Now, you'll have to admit, this was an extraordinary turn of events. I think I ought to give you some background information to help clear things up. As you may have guessed, we were all feeling a bit **fatigued** after our battle with the jackal fanatics. But even though we were worn out, we were all still eager to get back to Paris and commence our search for Bridget's parents. The last thing we needed was to have our plans thwarted yet again. Only this time, it was a spaceship, not bad weather, that threw a wrench in things.

That's right, we were beamed up against our will, right off the ground and onto a spaceship. And not just any spaceship, either. We suddenly found ourselves aboard the **infamous** pirate ship, the *Far Out*, captained by the **notorious** space hippie, Wobbly Philstein. At one time,

everyone in America knew his name, and they knew about the pranks he and his followers pulled on politicians they didn't like. The worst was when he somehow managed to dye the Speaker of the House bright red from head to toe as some sort of protest against the Speaker's plans to cut spending on education and public television. The FBI was never exactly sure who the **culprit** was in this crime, but Wobbly kind of gave himself away when he got on television and asked the Speaker whether he was "better red than dead or better dead than well read." That statement alone made him a prime suspect. Later, the FBI even discovered he had a tattoo of Big Bird on his arm, and that he was a known watcher of "Masterpiece Theatre."

So the FBI named Wobbly the number one most wanted man in America, and a manhunt **ensued** the likes of which the country had never seen. Police officers, Secret Service agents, even regular citizens were searching every barn, barrel, and basement for the hippie. But he was too **crafty** for them, and managed to **elude** his pursuers for months.

The rumour cropped up that Wobbly was planning to **defect** to the Netherlands, a country known as a **refuge** for misunderstood **bohemians**, a place where hippies, artists, musicians, and other uninsured free spirits with kooky or **eccentric** habits could feel safe. Later, however, it was revealed that Wobbly had been in Mexico all along, building a spaceship out of old tour buses. Destination: *Far Out*. Yes, he and his followers blasted off, and the authorities were forced to give up their hunt. Outer space, unfortunately, does not fall under the FBI's **jurisdiction**.

Gradually, the frenzy over Wobbly **ebbed**, and things returned to normal. Many even suspected his spaceship fell apart during takeoff, and that Wobbly and his buddies were now probably **deceased**. But they were obviously wrong, because there he was standing in front of us, very much alive.

"I am Captain Wobbly Philstein," announced the hippie. "You can call me Captain Wobbly if you want; but plain Wobbly is cool, too, if you don't dig the military thing."

"I'm Bridget, and this is Babette and Barnaby," Bridget replied. "And this cat apparently is a spy named Beauregard, but he doesn't talk to humans."

Barnaby and Babette giggled.

"You aren't from the government are you?" Wobbly asked suspiciously.

"No," said Bridget.

"Well, then everything's groovy! Welcome aboard the *Far Out*. Come on and meet the rest of the crew."

The kids followed Wobbly down a long hall that looked like the inside of a bus. Only a few candles were glowing, so the light was dim. There seemed to be someone in there playing the sitar, but the air was so **dense** with incense it was impossible to be sure. It was very peaceful.

Then they passed into another room, which also looked like the inside of a bus. Only this room, unlike the **previous** room, was in a state of **pandemonium**. All sorts of music were being played **simultaneously**, resulting in a terrible jumble of noises. Men, women, and children were swirling and dancing around the room, banging tambourines and finger cymbals in a kind of spiritual frenzy. And one guy was actually swinging by his heels from a chandelier, his face completely covered with hair and beads. Babette barely had time to admire the orange velour **upholstery** on the beanbag chairs before a group of spinning girls whisked her into their dance.

"Is this some kind of religious **cult**?" shouted Bridget over the racket. "If so, I'm telling you right now, I will *not* let you shave my head.

"No, we're not a cult," Wobbly yelled back. Then he shouted over to a woman with long blond hair who had her back to them, "Hey, Janice, cool it, will you? We've got company, remember?"

Janice turned around. She was very beautiful. She had a daisy painted on her cheek, and her face looked calm and **serene**, especially her peaceful blue eyes. She smiled at the visitors, then stood up on her seat and held her hands out in some sort of gesture to the crowd. She looked like a queen. In fact, it was clear she was the **matriarch** of the merry band of hippies, because they all quieted down when they noticed what she was doing, then stood as if awaiting orders.

"Hey, everybody, looks like we have some more Deadheads aboard," she announced.

"What do you mean?" asked Barnaby, rather alarmed. "We are not dead, and neither are our heads."

"Naw, man," said a hippie in dark sunglasses standing next to him, "the Dead was a band. As in the Grateful Dead, you dig?"

"Yeah, we dig," said Bridget. "We don't exactly live in a pop culture vacuum on Earth, ya know."

"I can dig that," Wobbly said. "Before you guys go back to Earth, you should come to a sit-in with us. We're **en route** to Alpha C right now so we can protest a new outer space curfew. The governing body wants us all in our spaceships by nine o'clock every night. That's so square!"

"It sounds like a good cause," said Bridget, "but we really have to get back. I've misplaced my parents."

"Count yourself lucky. I had to blast off into space in order to misplace mine," replied Wobbly.

Bridget looked down sadly at the brown shag carpet.

"Hey, I'm sorry, man," said Wobbly, seeing that his joke had not been appreciated. "I didn't mean to be **flippant** about something that's got you so low. But you see, it's like this—I can't beam you back down right now. The teleporter is stuck in 'up' and I can't fix it myself."

"Can't you land us somewhere on Earth? We could pick a hidden spot so no one would be able to sneak up and arrest you," Bridget offered.

"No can do, sister. The *Far Out* probably wouldn't survive a **descent** through the Earth's atmosphere. And if the descent didn't get us, going back up probably would. We could try to position ourselves over one of the holes in the **ozone layer**, but that would only help a little. There are plenty of other layers of gas ready to burn this bus up."

"You mean I'm stuck here? I'm going to live out my life as some sort of space **vagrant**—no home, no family, no money?" wailed Bridget.

Her lower lip began to tremble and her eyes welled up with tears.

"Hey, don't knock it, man. The wandering life of a **nomad** is full of adventure. There's nothing like the freedom of pulling up stakes and moving on whenever you feel like it," raved Wobbly.

"Of course, being a pauper isn't all that much fun. Which reminds me... you kids don't have any money, do you? I'll **reimburse** you as soon as we get to Alpha C."

At that point Bridget lost it. She sat down and began sobbing loudly.

"Hey, man, what's all this lamenting about?" asked Wobbly kindly. "I said I'd pay you back."

Janice, who had been talking with Babette and Barnaby over by the ship's controls, made her way over to Bridget.

"Nice work. Wobbly," said Janice. "First, I accidentally beam them up, and now you make them cry."

The captain shrugged helplessly and wandered off.

"Your name's Bridget, right?" asked Janice in a soft, comforting voice.

Bridget nodded. She even stopped crying quite so hard. There was something nice and maternal about Janice, and it made her miss her own mother a little less.

"Don't let Wob upset you, honey," she said. "I know he seems cold and **dispassionate**, but he's really not uncaring. We'll get you back home, I promise. We're actually stopping at a space station on the way to the sit-in to do a little shopping and pick up supplies. I'm sure we can fit a trip to the mechanic into our **itinerary**. We'll get that disco ball fixed."

Bridget nodded and managed a small smile.

"There, now, that's better," said Janice, "Say, I know what you need. You need to do a little yoga."

"Um, I don't know..." Bridget hesitated. She was **wary** of strange Indian exercises that didn't involve running, jumping, or sweating.

"It'll help you centre yourself. Right now you're all out of balance. Yoga can restore your **equilibrium**."

Bridget was **vacillating**. On the one hand, Janice was so cool that she wanted to go along with her, but on the other hand, the whole yoga thing seemed dangerous. What if she got into one of those twisted-up positions and couldn't get out?

"Don't sweat it, honey," Janice assured her, "I'm about to teach my daily yoga class now. Unfortunately, life on a remodeled tour bus can be pretty **sedentary**, and we all know that sitting around all the time isn't very healthy. That's why we do yoga. Kind of works the kinks out. Join in if you want, but only if your decision is completely **voluntary**. I'm not forcing you."

The fact that other people were going to join her kind of took the pressure off, so Bridget decided to try it. She **donned** the baggy muslin trousers Janice loaned her, and they were ready to begin.

The first exercise was more like sleeping than stretching. Janice told everyone to "get **horizontal**," and they all just lay down flat on the floor. After concentrating on breathing for a while, Janice told the class to stay on their backs but lift their legs up into a **vertical** position, straight up in the air, **perpendicular** to the floor.

"Then," she said, "when you're ready, lift your lower back off the floor, supporting it with your hands, and stretch your legs out over your head, so your knees are close to your face and your legs are **parallel** to the carpet. This pose will **stimulate** the flow of blood to the brain."

"I think it's definitely working," groaned Bridget. "My head's about to explode."

"Hmmm," said Janice. "Maybe this is too hard for a **novice**. Since you're a beginner, I'll start you off with something less **strenuous**. Bring your legs down, and I'll show you how to **meditate**."

Bridget wriggled out of her pose and sat up. Janice came over and sat down cross-legged in front of her.

"Meditation," explained Janice, "is basically just deep thought. But in yoga, you don't meditate on a particular problem or concrete issue. It's much more **abstract**, you know? You just think, but not about anything solid. Just close your eyes and let your mind relax. Understand?"

Bridget nodded. Janice helped her get into the correct position.

"Now then, as you do this, weird ideas may come into your head. Don't fight them, they're just **subconscious** thoughts, thoughts that you're not aware of all the time because they're hidden away in your mind. One time when I was meditating, I got so caught up I began to **hallucinate**. I opened my eyes and found myself floating in an endless sea of non-dairy whipped topping with chocolate sprinkles falling on my head, and a great maraschino cherry moon shining and **luminous** overhead. It was so cool." Janice smiled in a vague sort of way. Bridget was a little concerned, although finding herself in a bowl of whipped topping didn't sound all that bad."

"I mean, it wasn't really there. I was just seeing things, dig? Anyway, I don't think that will happen to you," Janice assured her. Bridget closed her eyes and began her meditation, and Janice went back to the rest of the class. Over by the control panel, Babette, Barnaby, and Wobbly were having a conversation.

"Captain Wobbly, I must say, I **marvel** at your mechanical abilities," said Barnaby. "It's truly amazing that you managed to build such a fine spaceship out of ordinary tour buses."

"Yeah, well, it could have been a fine ship, but the feds were breathing down my neck, you know what I'm saying? I had to hurry," said Wobbly. "For one thing, it's not that easy to **navigate**. The *Mayflower* was probably easier to steer than this baby. But the thing that burns me most is the transmission."

"You mean the gears?" asked Babette, somewhat shocked. "A spaceship with gears? Expected 'hyperdrive' and 'warp factors and things like that.'"

"You've got to work with what you have," replied Wobbly. "And for the *Far Out*, that meant a **manual** transmission I was trying to build an automatic transmission for her back in Mexico, but I ran out of time. So until I get the parts I need, gears are shifted the old-fashioned way—by hand."

VOCABULARY

A) Fill in the blanks by matching the words in the box below with their definitions.

disoriented	caricature	goatee	fatigued	infamous
notorious	culprit	ensue	crafty	elude

- _____ : Adept in the use of subtlety and cunning.
- _____ : Widely and unfavourably known.
- _____ : Having a reputation of the worst kind.
- _____ : Caused to lose one's bearings and sense of direction.
- _____ : A small pointed or tufted beard of a man's chin.
- _____ : Take place afterward.
- _____ : Escape the grasp of.
- _____ : Exaggeration by means of ludicrous distortion of parts.
- _____ : One guilty of a crime or a fault.
- _____ : Exhausted.

B) Write down the definitions of the following words.

1. Defect: _____
2. Refuge: _____
3. Bohemian: _____
4. Eccentric: _____
5. Jurisdiction: _____
6. Ebb: _____
7. Decease: _____
8. Dense: _____
9. Pandemonium: _____
10. Simultaneously: _____

C) WORD SORTING RELATING TO GENERAL IDEAS IN THE TEXT

i) What are some general ideas in this handout's reading selection? Circle the ideas that apply.

SLEEPINESS

YOGA

BUREACRACY

BOHEMIAN LIFE

DEJECTION

OFFICE WORK

SPACE

NEW DISCOVERIES

MEDITATION

SOCIAL ORDER

RENEGADES

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

ii) Pay attention to the handout's reading selection (page 1 to 6). Group words and/or phrases under 4 or more "big ideas" in the text. It is okay to repeat certain words under different big ideas.

General idea (example): <i>Physical activity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Get horizontal</i> • <i>Vertical position</i> • <i>Perpendicular to the floor</i> • <i>Stimulate the flow of blood</i> • <i>Strenuous</i> 	General idea 1: _____
General idea 2: _____	General idea 3: _____
General idea 4: _____	General idea 5: _____
General idea 6: _____	General idea 7: _____

THE END