

WE HAVE LIFT OFF!

Hal Ames



“Four, Three, Two, One, and we have lifted off!” the words came over the speaker. There was a flash of light, and then the seat began to vibrate as the space craft began to go into outer space.

“What’re you doing?” a voice came from outside of Jordan’s room.

“What’d you say mom?” Jordan asked.

“What’re you doing? What’s all that noise?” His mother yelled back at him.

“Just a minute mom, I’ll be right there,” Jordan said as he quickly put his things under his desk. He turned down the speaker on his computer. After that he went to see what his mother wanted.

“What do you want?” he asked his mother.

“What’s all that noise in your room? It sounded like a rocket was going into space or something,” she said.

“I’m working on my new computer game that I’m preparing for the science program next month. It’s almost finished!” Jordan said proudly.

“What exactly does that game do?” his mother asked.

“Well, it gives the person playing the game the feeling of going into space. When things go wrong they have to figure out how to repair them. It’s like a space shuttle mission,” Jordan explained.

“And this is supposed to be fun?” his mother asked.

“Yes, a real simulation of space. In the space center, they have a simulator that costs millions of dollars. My game will be affordable to everyone, and they will

get the same experience,” Jordan said with a big smile on his face.

“Good luck,” his mother said.

The next morning Jordan got ready for school. He packed his books and his bag.

When he got to school, he met up with his friends Matt and Brad. They all belonged to the science club. They sat out under a tree before the bell rang and shared their ideas for the science project.

Brad was building a special robot that could clean a house. It had a special chip inside pre-programmed to wash floors, vacuum carpets, dust, and even clean windows!

Matt was building a module for his computer that could take people’s thoughts and put them into a word processor so they did not have to type anymore. He still needed to find the correct type of sensor to put on a person’s head to transfer the thoughts to the computer.

Jordan was excited because he had done an internet search and found something that might be useful for Matt’s project.

“I did a search for mind sensors, and I found this company called Kortonic Enterprises here in town that has been experimenting with mind control devices for about five years. They said they have had a break through. They have a device that can send thoughts and ideas to the brain. If we reverse the signal we might be able to make it work for you!” Jordan reported.

Matt was excited and read the information that Jordan had printed from the computer.

“How much is this going to cost?” Matt asked.

“I’ve no idea, but if we go talk to them they might let us try our idea,” Jordan suggested.

“Let’s go there right after school,” Brad added.

Finally, the final bell rang. The boys ran from their classrooms and met at the lunch

hall. Jordan brought the paper he had printed from the internet with him. They left together to catch the bus for the industrial park where the business was located.

It took about an hour on the bus. When they got there, it was almost time for the business to close for the day.

They entered the building and approached the lady at the front desk. Jordan spoke up first, "I saw this information on the internet, and we would like to talk to the person in charge of this project."

The lady at the desk asked, "Do you have an appointment?"

"Uh, no, but we'd really like to talk to the person in charge of this," Jordan answered.

"Hold on, let me see if he's in today," she replied.

The lady turned around and spoke so the boys could not hear her. After a few moments, she turned around and motioned for the boys to wait over by the fish tank.

A few minutes later a man walked up to them and introduced himself as Mr. Jones, the project director on the Mind Transfer Module. He asked them, "So what's your interest in our project young men?"

Matt explained about his science project, and then asked if the module might work.

Mr. Jones thought for a few minutes, and then replied, "I never thought of that." Then he turned to Brad and asked, "So what's your idea?"

Brad took his notes out of his bag and began to explain his theories to Mr. Jones.

"I'm impressed with your work, what about you, what are your ideas," Mr. Jones asked now talking to Jordan.

Jordan showed his plans to Mr. Jones as well.

“Wow, you have some great ideas. I’m sorry but I’m not going to be able to help you very much though. We have many secrets here, and we can’t give them out. I wish that I could help you. Thank you for coming to see me,” he said to them and then walked away.

The boys were discouraged. Mr. Jones had seemed so excited about their ideas when they showed him their plans for the science project.

The science fair came and then was over. Jordan’s idea was good, but it did not win. Brad’s computer controlled cleaner ended up only being able to wash floors. Matt’s mind reading computer did not work out since he did not have a way of transferring the mind controls.

A few months later the boys discovered a newspaper article. The advertisement talked about how Kortonic Enterprises was announcing a new game.

The article said:

“WE HAVE LIFT OFF” is the newest and best game on the market today!

The game is a space simulation program that puts the player in the seat of the shuttle. It is the most realistic game ever developed. The game is controlled by the thoughts of the player using a mind control helmet worn by the player. There are pre-programmed tasks that the program can do that makes the game a very unique experience. Experience everything an astronaut does in a simulator!”

VOCABULARY: (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. vibrate _____ | a. tired, not excited |
| 2. speaker _____ | b. plan |
| 3. affordable _____ | c. proposed, recommended |
| 4. robot _____ | d. shake |
| 5. appointment _____ | e. fix something broken |
| 6. project _____ | f. amplifier, making a sound |
| 7. discourage _____ | g. scheduled meeting |
| 8. rocket _____ | h. disappoints |
| 9. repair _____ | i. mechanical device |
| 10. simulator _____ | j. reasonable |

TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Jordan was making a simulated space launch game. | T / F |
| 2. Matt was a friend of Jordan. | T / F |
| 3. Mr. Jones hired the boys to work for him? | T / F |
| 4. Matt needed a new computer. | T / F |
| 5. Jordan's mother was not home. | T / F |
| 6. Kortonic Enterprises copied the boy's ideas. | T / F |
| 7. The boys could have made millions of dollars. | T / F |
| 8. Mr. Jones was a nice man. | T / F |
| 9. The boys read about the new game on the internet. | T / F |
| 10. Mr. Jones paid the boys for their ideas. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. What was Jordan doing when his mother called him to dinner? _____
 - a) working on his school project
 - b) watching TV
 - c) playing a game on his computer
 - d) cleaning his room

2. Where did the boys go after school? _____
 - a) to the city
 - b) to Jordan's house
 - c) to Kortonic Industries
 - d) to the school science fair

3. What was the name of the game? _____
 - a) "We're Going to the Moon"
 - b) "We Have Lift Off"
 - c) "We Have Power"
 - d) "We Want to Go into Space"

4. To whom did the boys talk? _____
 - a) Mr. Smith
 - b) Mrs. Jones
 - c) their teacher
 - d) Mr. Jones

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. With whom did the boys meet at the company?

2. What was the name of the company?

3. What was the name of the new game?

4. What were the boys reading when they found out about the game?

5. Where did the boys meet to discuss their projects?

6. How did the boys get to the business?

7. When did the boys go to the company?

8. Where did Jordan find the information about the company?

9. Whose idea was the mind control computer?

10. What was Brad's idea?
