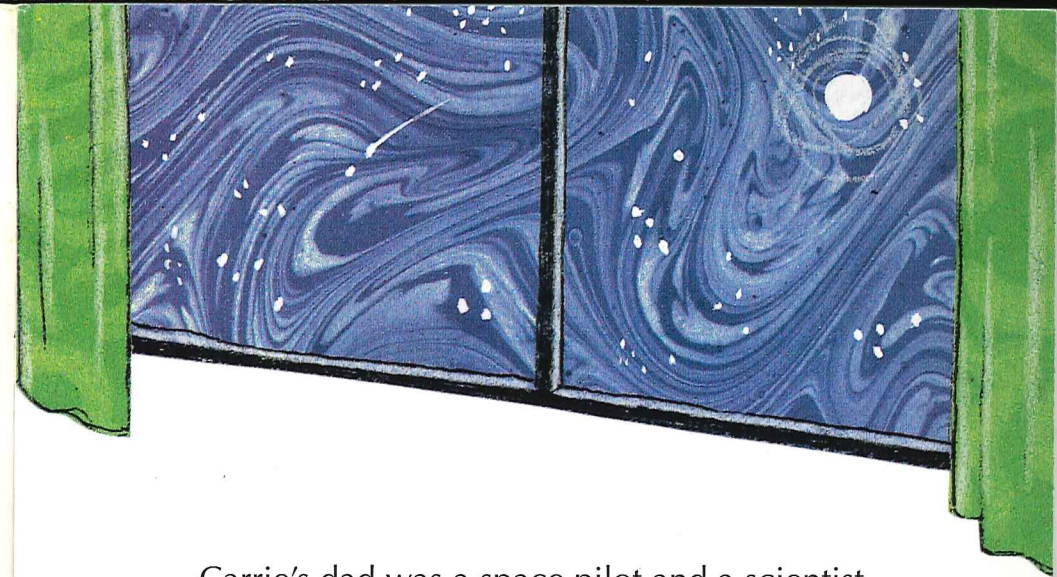
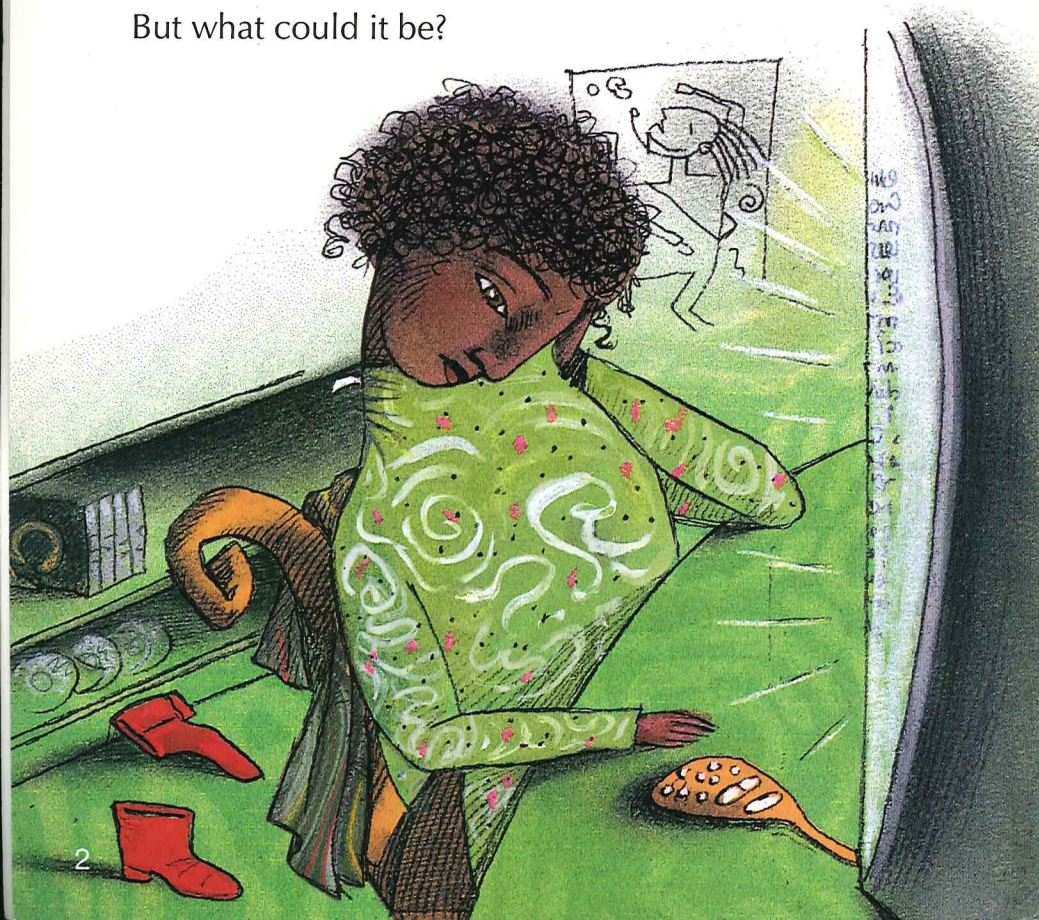


Carrie turned off her computer and sighed. She was worried. For the third day in a row, she couldn't reach her dad. What was wrong?

Carrie and her mom had heard the rumor. Was the rumor true? Was there a strange disease on the planet Artemis, where her dad was? Or had the rumor been spread to hide the real truth? Anyway, there was a communications block on the whole planet. It had to be something important. But what could it be?



Carrie's dad was a space pilot and a scientist. He searched for life on other planets. It was a challenging job.

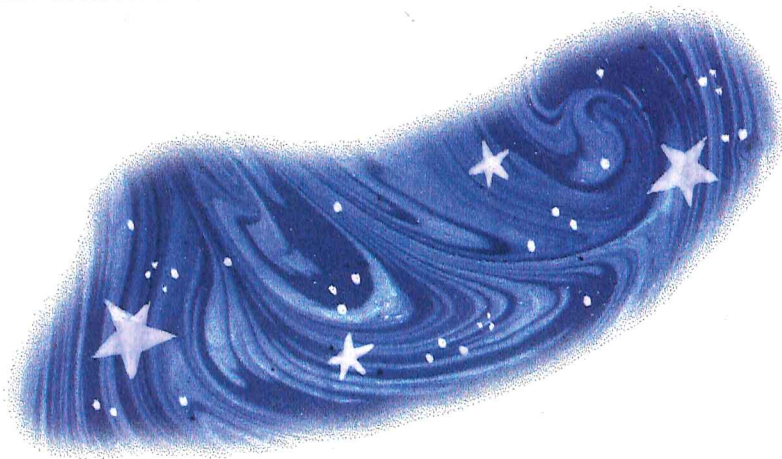
He had been thrilled by his assignment on Artemis, a newly discovered planet in a neighboring solar system.

"There are exciting, unexplained things there," he told Carrie before he left. "We've spotted some structures from space. They look just like pyramids. There's air on the planet. And there's water—lots of it. We haven't seen any life forms yet, but who knows what's down there? We've got to find out!"



Finding life on another planet was a lifelong dream of Carrie's dad. He just knew it had to be out there. He even had a pet theory that ancient civilizations from Earth could have reached distant planets. He had spent many years looking for evidence to prove his theory.

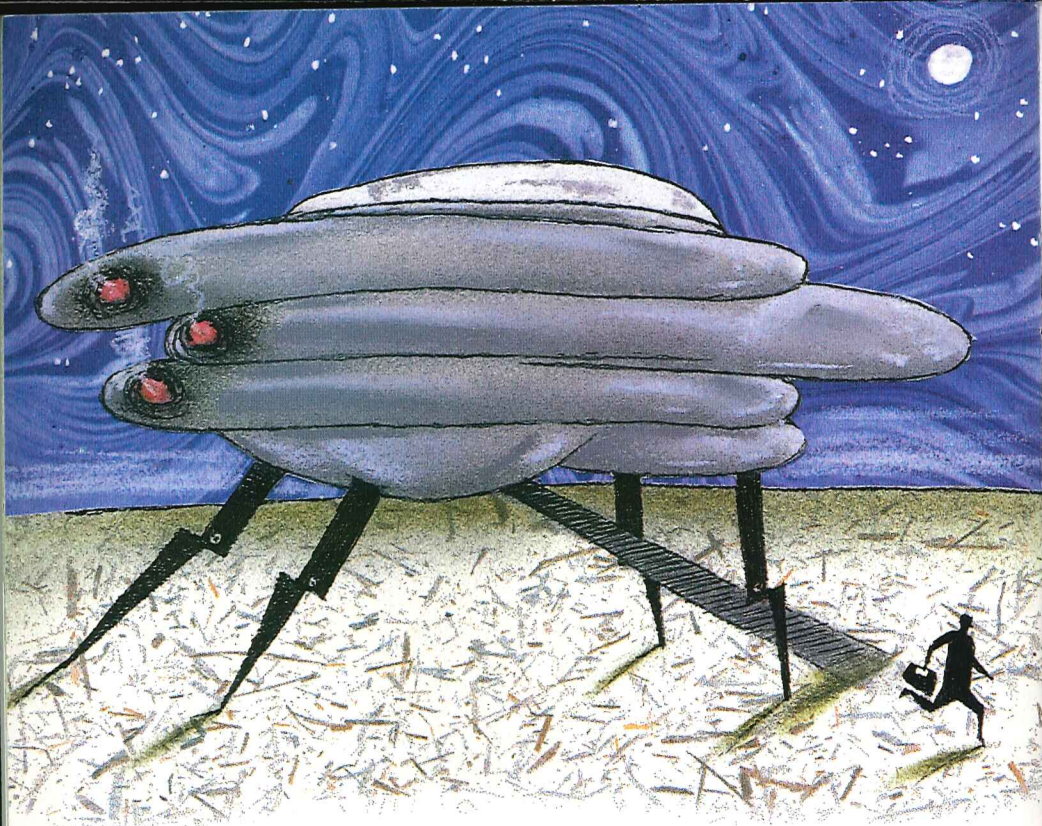
Carrie looked at the clock. It was late. Time for bed. She would try to reach her dad again tomorrow.



Carrie jerked awake in the middle of the night. It was still dark, but a bright light filled her bedroom. Her heart pounded in anticipation.

"Dad!" she said. She darted to the window. She was hoping to see the lights of her dad's space skimmer.

Instead she saw a big, shiny spaceship in the field beside the house.



The lights on the spaceship went out. Then, by the light of the moon, Carrie saw a man. In one hand he was carrying a large box. Carrie lost sight of the man for a minute. But soon he retraced his steps and went back to the saucer. This time, he wasn't carrying anything. The spaceship lifted straight up. It hovered for a few seconds and then flew away without a sound.

It took Carrie a long time to get back to sleep.

As soon as it was light enough to see, Carrie got dressed. Shivering in anticipation, she walked to the field. She paced all around, looking for a clue. Why had that spaceship landed last night?

Then she heard something. The sound came from the old shed beside the field, where her dad stored the lawn robot.

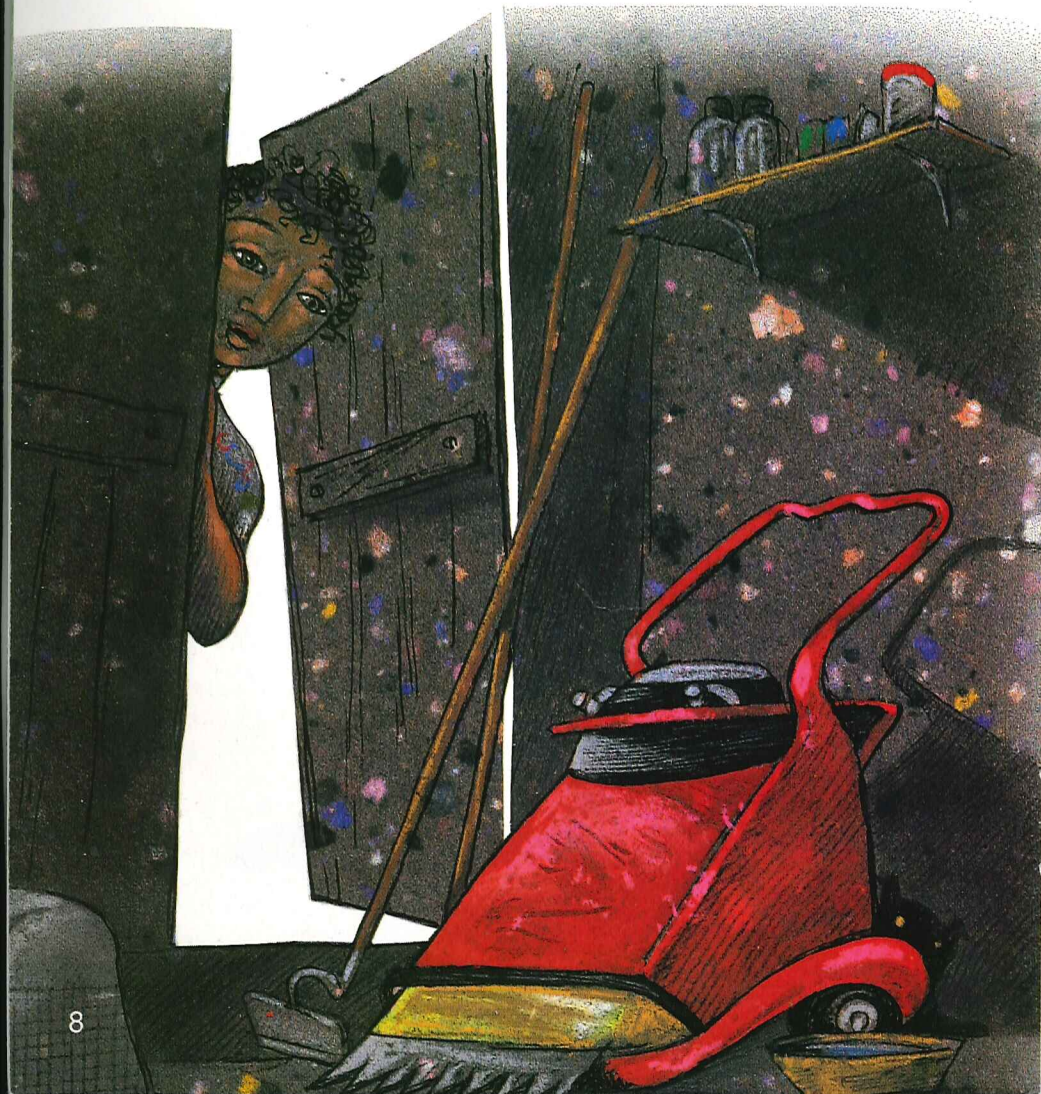
“Chuff-chuff-chuff!” it went.

Carrie darted to the shed.



Carrie opened the shed door a few inches. It was dark inside. She looked all around. She had the feeling that something was watching her.

Suddenly she saw them. Two bright eyes were peering at her from behind the lawn robot.



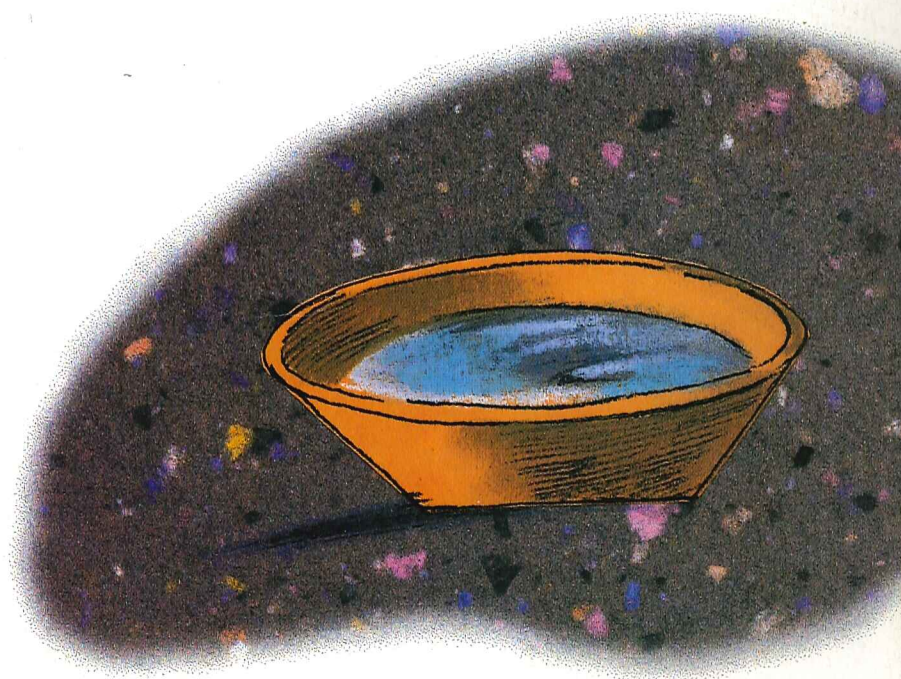
"Hey," Carrie called softly. "What are you? Come on out. I won't hurt you." She held the shed door in front of her, just in case whatever was in there wasn't friendly.

The creature whined.

"You sound like a pup!" said Carrie.

Then Carrie saw a pet carrier and an almost-full water dish in the corner.

More puzzled than ever, she stooped down and held out her hand. The frightened animal withdrew farther into the corner.



Carrie retraced her steps to the house.

Mom was in the living room, talking on the telephone in a low voice. She didn't see Carrie push the buttons of the food dispenser and head back out the door.



Little by little, Carrie coaxed the puppy to her. The dog ate hungrily as Carrie stroked her short, sleek fur.

"What kind of dog are you?" Carrie asked. "You remind me of a dog I saw in a picture of ancient Egypt."

There was a tag on the pet carrier. It said "Space 3" in big letters.





"So you found her!" Carrie's mom was at the door of the shed.

"How did you know about her, Mom?" Carrie asked in surprise.

Mom smiled.

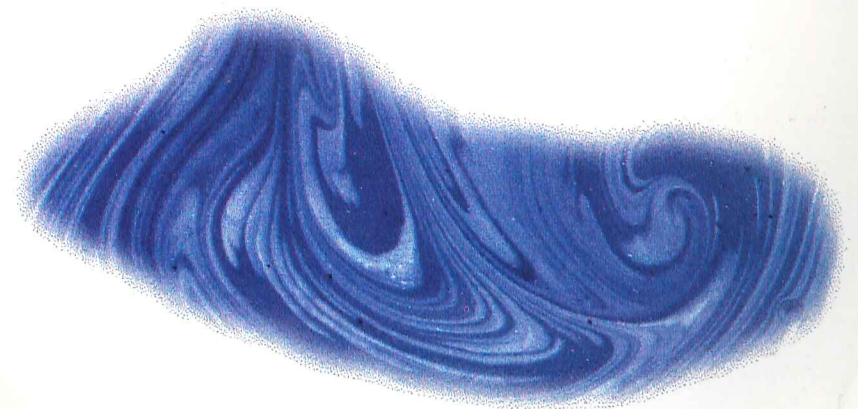
"Go ask your dad," she said. "He's on the phone right now, long distance. Very long distance."



"Dad! Dad!" Carrie cried into the phone. "Are you okay? When can you come home? I can hardly wait to show you the dog I found. He looks like one of those dogs from ancient Egypt!"

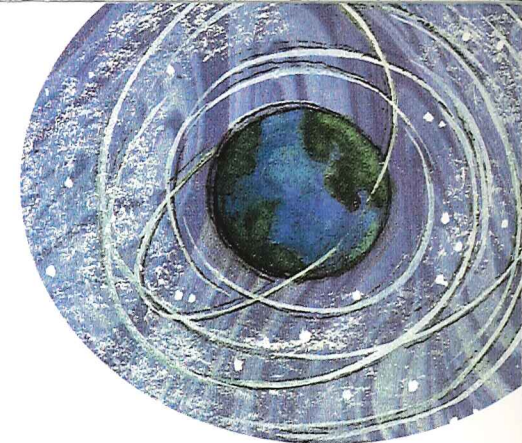
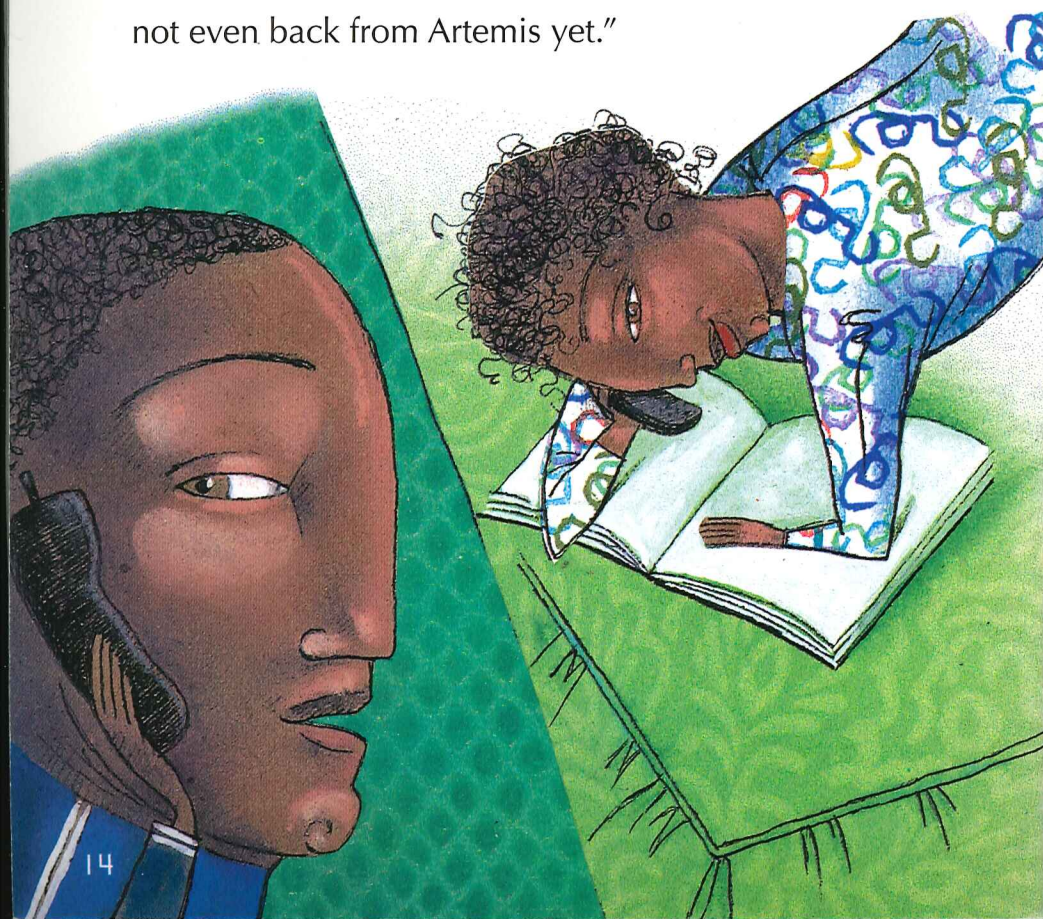
"So you found her already?" Dad laughed.

Wait a second, thought Carrie. *Mom knew about the dog. Now Dad does too. What is going on here?*



"Hey, Dad," she said. "Last night I saw a spaceship in the field. Somebody got out of it. And he was carrying something. Was that you?"

Carrie's dad laughed. "You're quite a detective. Yes, you spotted me," he said. "Sorry I couldn't stay. It was late and I was on my way to headquarters. We are way behind schedule. But I'm going to let you in on a big secret. Don't tell anyone. Don't even let anyone know that I called. Officially, I'm not even back from Artemis yet."



"I'll tell you more later," he said. "Wait until you hear all the things we found on Artemis! But here's the best part. You said the dog looks as if she's from ancient Egypt." Her father took a deep breath. "Well, guess what? She might be. We found fifteen just like her on Artemis. You've got Number Three."

"There must have been a lot more at one time. We've been studying them for weeks! We tested them to make sure they aren't carrying any diseases. And they checked out fine. Now we have to see how well they adjust to life on Earth."

"So you were right!" said Carrie. "Ancient civilizations did go to outer space."



"It looks like it," said Dad. "But remember, don't tell anyone where she came from. People may not be ready to hear how far behind the ancient Egyptians we still are. We're trying to find a nice way to tell them."

"Where are they now, Dad?"

"The ancient Egyptians? Maybe in another galaxy by now. But we'll keep looking for them."

"Those Egyptian dogs were supposed to be good hunters," he went on. "Maybe someday your little dog will lead us to them!"



The Leveled Readers are easy-to-read selections that give children additional reading experiences with tested vocabulary and targeted comprehension skills, as well as a variety of literary genres.

Skills Reinforced in This Book:

Vocabulary: *anticipation, darted, retraced, withdrew*

 **Comprehension Skill:** Character

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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 0-673-62557-5

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