

This board was more interesting. It showed flying saucers, rockets, and planets in outer space, with a path of colored squares leading from Earth to a purple planet called Zathura and back to Earth.

Danny put a token on Earth, then rolled the dice. After he'd moved along the path, something surprising happened. A buzzing sound came from the board and, with a click, a small green card popped out of the edge right in front of him. He picked it up and read, "**Meteor** showers, take evasive action."

"Hey, Walter," Danny started to say, "what does eva—" when he was interrupted by a noisy *rat-a-tat-tat* sound coming from the roof.

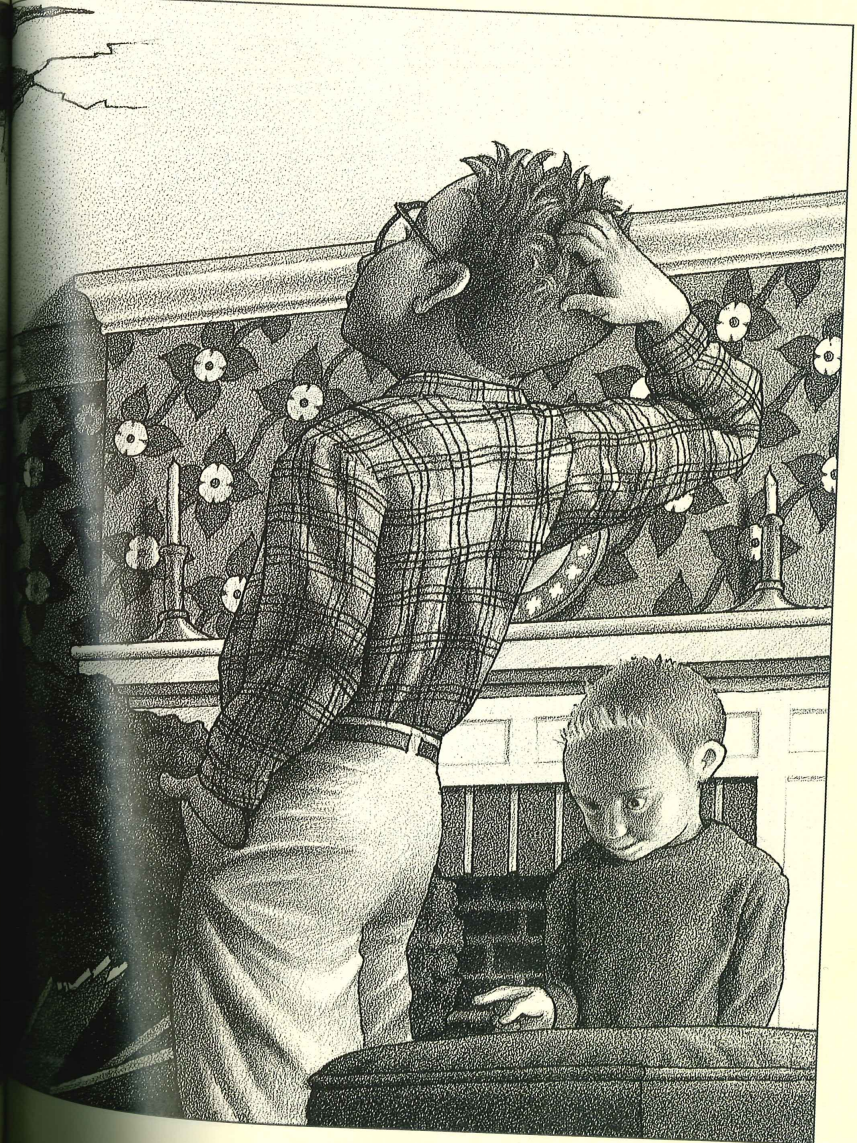
Walter looked up from the television. "Holy smoke," he said, "must be a hail storm!" "It's not hail!" shouted Danny, holding up the card. "It's meteors."

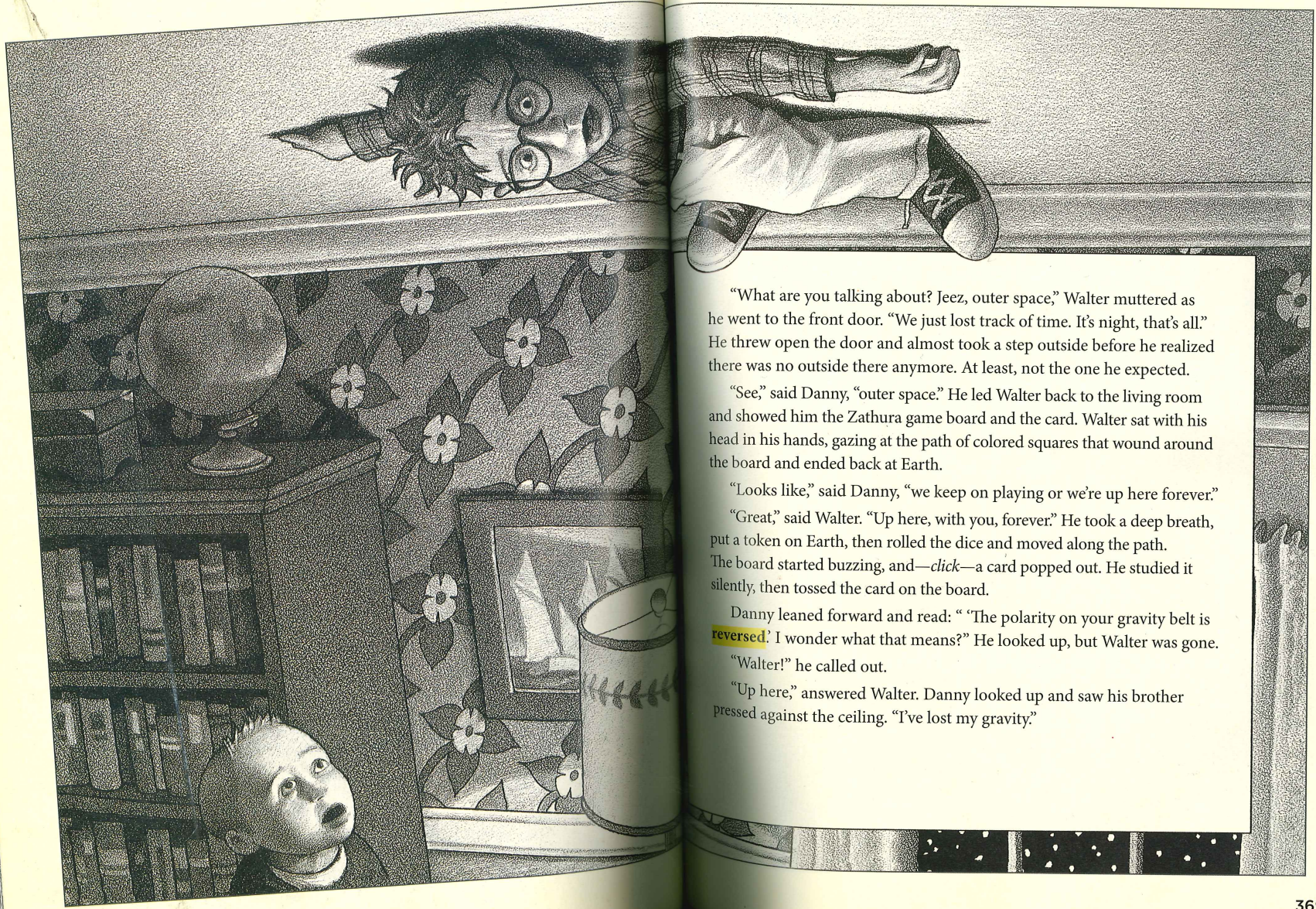
The noise grew louder, like a thousand golf balls bouncing off the roof. The room got so dark, Walter turned on the lights. Then—KABOOM—a rock the size of a refrigerator fell through the ceiling and crushed the television.

"See," Danny said. "I told you. Meteors."

Walter stared at the hole in the ceiling. "Okay," he agreed, "meteors. But how'd it get so dark so fast?" Through the hole he could see what was left of his parents' bedroom, and beyond that, a black, star-filled sky. "It looks like night up there."

"It's not night," said Danny. "It's outer space."





"What are you talking about? Jeez, outer space," Walter muttered as he went to the front door. "We just lost track of time. It's night, that's all." He threw open the door and almost took a step outside before he realized there was no outside there anymore. At least, not the one he expected.

"See," said Danny, "outer space." He led Walter back to the living room and showed him the Zathura game board and the card. Walter sat with his head in his hands, gazing at the path of colored squares that wound around the board and ended back at Earth.

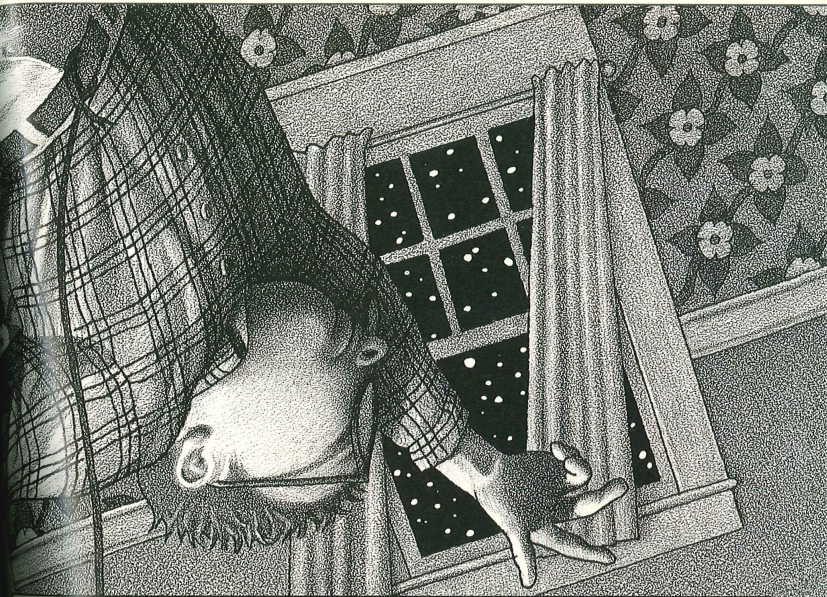
"Looks like," said Danny, "we keep on playing or we're up here forever."

"Great," said Walter. "Up here, with you, forever." He took a deep breath, put a token on Earth, then rolled the dice and moved along the path. The board started buzzing, and—*click*—a card popped out. He studied it silently, then tossed the card on the board.

Danny leaned forward and read: "The polarity on your gravity belt is **reversed**. I wonder what that means?" He looked up, but Walter was gone.

"Walter!" he called out.

"Up here," answered Walter. Danny looked up and saw his brother pressed against the ceiling. "I've lost my gravity."



“That’s not all you’re going to lose,” Danny said nervously, because he could see that Walter was being pulled slowly toward the hole in the ceiling—and a lonely trip into outer space.

Walter realized it too and started clawing at the ceiling, but he couldn’t keep himself from moving closer and closer to the hole.

Danny looked around. Lying next to the meteor was the cord from the shattered television. He tossed it to Walter, who knotted it tightly to his belt. Danny grabbed the end of the cord and tied his brother to the sofa.

Danny rolled the dice and moved his token along the path. *Click.* Out popped another card: “Your gyroscope is malfunctioning.” Suddenly the house tilted. Everything in the room slid to one side, and Danny got buried under a mountain of furniture. He slowly dug himself out, clutching the game, only to find that Walter was floating back toward the hole in the ceiling.



#### Draw Conclusions

What purpose do you think a gyroscope serves on a space ship?