

Talea pressed the internal communication system button on the wall to check that her colleague, Benny, was ready for his spacewalk. It was a strange time at the space station; the other team of astronauts had left last week and she and Benny were the only two out here. She loved it though. They got on well and always had a laugh, so she never felt lonely being so many thousands of miles from her family. Even last night was okay; Benny had stayed in the airlock overnight in order for his body to prepare for the day but they were still able to communicate.

"Got everything you need, Benny?" asked Talea, bringing up the schedule on her screen.

"Yep," replied Benny, his voice distorted from the helmet.

"All set here," came a voice from ground control. The team from ground control were ready to give advice and provide support on the work to be done.

Talea turned on the camera screens and watched as it flickered into life. She heard the distant creak of the ratchet handle and then Benny emerged from the airlock to the universe outside. The tether floated behind him, anchoring him to the space station.

What was that? She was sure she saw something moving behind Benny, then disappearing from view. She looked closer. There was nothing there, so she reasoned it must just have been the thick white wisps of cloud covering parts of Earth below.

She focused on Benny and saw him move across the top of the module to find the footholds on the surface. She was always fascinated by spacewalks – they were so exciting. Being out there, alone, in the darkness of space was quite special. She felt very privileged to be able to do this job. She'd once considered a job as a teacher, but she knew in her heart of hearts it wouldn't satisfy her wish for adventure.

Benny's helmet camera showed his huge hands working on the experiment he was setting up. His tools were all tethered to him and she watched as he looked for the right attachment to use. Ground control was talking to him about the procedure and she could hear them discussing a move to the other side.

"All okay Benny?" she asked.

"Yeah, fine. It's not going to take too long then I'll get on with the repairs. I'll be ready for my bed to..." Suddenly, the screen showing the images from Benny's camera went blank and she heard a dull thud.

"Benny.....come in Benny...." She waited for an answer but none came. "Space station to ground control, I've lost communication with Benny!"

Silence.

"Come in, ground control! Benny's not answering and I've lost his camera transmission! Do you have it?"

She waited for an answer – anything – but there was only the quiet hiss of the atmosphere. Her mind raced with her training, trying to think what she could do next. She couldn't go after him – she was the only other one aboard – but she couldn't do nothing. She tried to get an image from the other camera on the east platform where Benny was working, but all she could see was the Earth, its beauty still breathtaking. There was no sign of Benny, the tether or the equipment for the experiment. Everything was still and silent. Usually, she loved the silence but this wasn't right. Even the slight crackle of the communication system was gone. She was totally alone.

Then, she heard a distant creak; it was hardly discernible, but she'd definitely not imagined it. She knew exactly what it was. Someone – or something – was unscrewing the airlock.

Circle the word that is closest in meaning to the word discernible.

acceptable

comfortable

available

detectable

Why did Benny stay in the airlock before the spacewalk?

What clues are there in the text that show Talea likes her job? Find two.

What clue does the author give the reader that something might not be right?

Number the events in the order they happen.

Talea's screen went blank.

Benny found the footholds.

Ground control talked to Benny about the procedure.

Benny left the airlock.

The other astronauts left the space station.

Someone – or something – was unscrewing the airlock.

What is the purpose of adding – or something – in this sentence?

Circle the word that is closest in meaning to the word discernible.

acceptable

comfortable

available

detectable

Why did Benny stay in the airlock before the spacewalk?

so his body could prepare for the spacewalk

What clues are there in the text that show Talea likes her job? Find two.

Any of the following:

- It says she loved being on the space station.
- It says she never felt lonely despite being miles away from her family.
- She is fascinated by spacewalks.
- She finds spacewalks exciting.
- It says that she found being in the darkness of space special.
- It says she felt privileged to do the job.
- It says she loves adventure.

What clue does the author give the reader that something might not be right?

Talea thinks she can see something behind Benny but she reasons that it must just be the clouds in the distance covering parts of Earth.

Number the events in the order they happen.

Talea's screen went blank.	5
Benny found the footholds.	3
Ground control talked to Benny about the procedure.	4
Benny left the airlock.	2
The other astronauts left the space station.	1

Someone – or something – was unscrewing the airlock.

What is the purpose of adding – or something – in this sentence?

It makes the reader think that something is wrong because it suggests that it is not Benny unscrewing the airlock. It makes the reader wonder what could be out there.

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