

Name: Sophia Baldwin

Grade: 5

Story Title: November's Save

November stepped onto a smooth, shiny metal surface. She took another step. Now both feet were on the rocket ship. She lifted up her left hand and nervously stroked her hair. She glanced back and saw her little sister Kenya nervously clutching her mother's hand. November's hand fell to her side. She had been waiting on the launch pad for hours before they had called her family off of the rocket because of some false alarm. She had been scared the first time she had stepped foot on the machine. Each passing second had made her into a nervous wreck. She had been happy when she had been able to escape the tight, cramped space in the rocket. She had hoped that they would really be able to go home, that they would be able to forget they had ever planned to move to another planet.

Then they found out that it was just a mistake, and they could board again. She had been furious at her parents for being so casual about the move, but she hadn't said anything because her heart was pounding so loudly that she thought it would drown out anything she said.

Kenya stepped her clumsy, two-year-old foot onto the metal floor. Their parents followed. Great, November thought, yet another several hours of waiting. I think I'm going to go crazy.

She wished she could be one year old again. Back then, only astronauts had gone into space. Back then, nobody had moved to other planets. Even though her mom had told her a trillion times to be thankful that space travel had sped up so much so that they could go out of the solar system in only a few weeks, she didn't feel very thankful. All she wanted was to be back home with her friends. Who even knew what planet 5627-J49 was?

Three weeks later, November opened her eyes. She had woken to the sound of Kenya crying. Kenya was upset that they were getting off of the rocket that day. She liked to freely float around. November reminded Kenya that the new planet's gravity was lower than the gravity on Earth. Of course, Kenya didn't care. She looked at all of the luggage tied to the wall. It was all of the belongings she had been allowed to bring. Only a suitcase and a backpack.

She glanced out the window at the dot that had appeared days before. It was closer now, and she could focus on it more clearly than before. She could see that it was very different than Earth. On Earth, at least there was flat ground. The entire planet was a mess of steep valleys and tall mountains. Instead of having a specific color, it was rainbow as if someone had tie-dyed it like a t-shirt.

She closed her eyes as they landed. Only when her parents shook her and told her it was time to get off the ship, did she open them.

Her footsteps felt heavy as she stepped on the ground. It was so strange to have two suns in the sky. All of the people around her dressed in such unfamiliar clothes. She slowly followed her parents to the one part of the planet that had any resemblance of something on Earth. It was a bus.

November got off of the bus. It was the same bus she had boarded days before. It still smelled like a strange fruit that she had eaten on her first dinner on the foreign planet she now called home. This time she was not headed to her new house, however, but school. It's too bad, she thought, that they don't have school buses.

The school building was only the size of November's old house. It had one bathroom, a kitchen and 5 classrooms. Kindergarten had its own room and the rest of the grades were combined. There were two grades per class, which November found odd, because at her old school there had been three classes per grade.

November was the youngest one in her fifth/sixth class and nobody paid her any attention. Some of the kids were old enough to be in the highest class: Seventh/eighth.

Two and a half hours later they were at recess. Instead of a playground the school had a garden. November wondered how they maintained it with all of the kids running around in it every day.

She had no friends, so she walked to the back of the garden where two kids were reading books that she had seen back on Earth. She sat down in patch of grass in between two rose bushes.

Suddenly a loud noise filled the air. A shadow loomed over head. Both suns were blocked. It was as if some invisible force was sucking all of the light away. November heard kids running around and screaming. The kids she had sat by were whispering. Finally one of them piped up "Hey, hey kid, kid who sat by us. Sadie and I want you to help us. We're going to find out what's going on, and whatever it is, we're going to stop it."

"I," November paused. It felt like it had been ages since anyone close to her own age had spoken to her. "I- I'm November. I'll help you."

The three made their way through the darkness. The girl who had asked for help- Wonda- explained that they had always wanted to be heroines. They were worried this might be their only chance.

They had gone on to explain that they only wanted her to help because they thought they may need a third person. This kind of hurt November's feelings, but she figured this was as much kindness as she was going to get here.

November could make out a dim light on top of a low mountain. A purple tent had been hurriedly set up on its rocky summit. November, Wonda and Sadie wandered towards it, their eyes locked on the one place in their view that they could actually see. "This is like some sort of game," Wonda complained. "To get to the top of the mountain you have to avoid unknown obstacles."

They started to hike up through a forest. The trees blocked the tent's light so it took a while to find their way, blindly walking towards a random target. "I think the first rule of that game you were talking about, would have to be that you had to keep your eyes closed," November finally said.

When they reached the summit, forty-five minutes later, they could see the light was a huge bulb, the size of a car. A crowd of creatures with skin like a chameleon, that blended with its back ground and features that that were long and thin, were clustered around the bulb. "English," one stated. "English is a nice language. In the next century it will spread like wildfire throughout the solar system. It is good that our computers were able to download it into our brains. Did you know that the knowledge of our species has increased by 69% in the last--"

"We know, we know." Zazaboo interrupted. "We all got the same download."

"Well mister smartybrain, if you know as much as me then what's the answer to the Earth equation 89 times 65 on planet QU?" Zazaboo questioned. "I highly doubt you know that, Gwert."

"Oh, I didn't get that download, but did you get the complete collection of Shakespeare plays? Or better yet, what was Benjamin Franklin's middle name?" Gwert asked condescendingly.

"I didn't bother with the Shakespeare plays. No one will care about those in the future. But it said right in the Earth History for Beginners that Benjamin Franklin did not have a middle name. This was because --" Zazaboo began.

"Oh, I already know; you don't need to bore me with that. I bet you don't know the physics behind the--"

"You think you're so smart. I downloaded the physics of everything in the universe."

November turned to Wonda and Sadie. "What's with downloads? I have a new rule for the game: people have to be saying random things all around you," Sadie hissed.

November didn't know why she did it, but she did. She stood up and walked over to Zazaboo. "So, who are you," she asked.

"We came on a rope ladder. The top is tied to our space craft. We came to invade. But to answer your question we are the LIZards. My name is Zazaboo," Zazaboo replied.

"Zazaboo! You've spoiled everything! We were not supposed to tell anyone," Gwert shouted.

"That is weird. I do not remember that being the instruction," Zazaboo said, thinking carefully.

"Well, duh, that's because it's common sense. Also, he figured that our technology that puts out all types of lights, even the emergency kind, would prevent them from getting near us," Gwert cried.

"Uh huh, then what's that?" November asked, pointing to the light bulb.

“That is stealing all of the energy from the lights that should be on right now. It’s dim because it’s destroying all of it. Don’t tell me how energy can’t be destroyed, because it actually can,” Gwert explained.

“So, Zazaboo, you’re trying to invade?” November pried.

“Oh yes,” said Zazaboo, proudly. “We plan to send in an army to take over this planet. The only way to stop us is to cut the rope. The ship is like a balloon, if the string on the balloon is anchored to the ground the balloon will stay, but if the string is cut the balloon will float away. But no one will cut the ropeladder because they have to cut it at the top, then they will have to stay onboard forever.”

Just then a hand yanked November away. The hand belonged to Wonda. While November and Zazaboo talked Sadie and Wonda had found the ladder. It was holding the tent up.

They began to climb the rope ladder. They the game would involve climbing. “You know,” Sadie admitted. “I might be able to spend a bit of recess time playing this game. It’s not so bad.”

At the top they remembered how you had to remain on the craft forever. Otherwise you would fall a long, long way down. They wasted several minutes trying to decide what to do. November took a pocket knife Wonda had brought with them. She told Wonda and Sadie to climb down.

November slowly chopped at the rope. She could hear Gwert yelling at Zazaboo and she wanted be back with them. As she aimlessly swung the knife the rope started to look a bit like a cat’s scratching post. Finally the rope fell away and she lay down on the ship’s floor.

A figure loomed over her. “I am Gaurdomono, captain of this ship. Come with me,” said a voice filled with coldness.

He led her to a small room that resembled a jail cell. It had a bed and a toilet. She was handcuffed to a bedpost. She waited there for hours thinking to herself over and over: This story has such a happy ending, NOT.

After she thought she was going to go insane from the boredom, Guardomono walked in. In a sinister voice he said “I could keep you prisoner and punish you for what you have done or I can...”

Two body guards that had followed him in rushed forward and unhand cuffed November. They quickly strapped November into a parachute and shoved out of a window that they had just thrown open. As the parachute opened November realized how happy she was to call 5627-J49 home.