



## Space Race

*Sylvia Waugh*

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Eleven-year-old Thomas Derwent is moving. Not to another town or city, but to another planet. He and his father have completed their research mission on Earth, and are returning to The Other Place, the planet of Ormingat, where they came from five years ago. It was so long ago that Thomas can't remember anything about his life there. All he knows is his life on Earth, and he can't imagine leaving the places and people he loves so much. Then Thomas becomes separated from his father, and the decision of whether to stay or to go becomes his. Which will he choose?

## Space Race Details

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Author : Sylvia Waugh

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### Angelina says

1. Science Fiction

2. Alien Thomas (aka Tonitheen on the planet Ormingat) and his father Patrick (aka Vateelin on the planet Ormingat) are done with their work on planet Earth. They have to leave the life they have known for five years and return to Ormingat; this story chronicles their not-so-easy journey as fake humans trying to get back to their planet.

3. A. Plot

B. The narrative structure is straight forward, present tense with one major flashback written in italics. This allows the reader no confusion as to when events are taking place. It is written in third person narrative, so the thoughts of many are intertwined throughout the story. The conflict/ resolution are fairly character based. The major conflict is within Thomas. He doesn't want to leave his human life, at first.

C. The story is in present tense. The main flashback that takes place is when Patrick reminisces about the time Thomas and he left Ormingat (p. 148). It is easily distinguished from the rest of the text because it is written in italics.

The third person narrative allows readers to know the thoughts of the main characters as well as other characters in the book. Of course, the story mainly focuses on Thomas and Patrick. However, the reader is also exposed to thoughts of smaller characters like Inspector Galway, for instance. He was one of the men investigating the case of the disappearing man (p. 85-86). "There was something about this business that appealed to Inspector Galway. He loved a mystery...The crimes he met with, even the most nastiest, were mostly anything but mysterious. Now he looked sharply at his sergeant, irritated at being stopped in his tracks" (p. 86).

The third person narrative also helps us to understand Thomas and his conflict. When he finds out the news that he is definitely going back to Ormingat (p. 31), he protests the date. He states, "I can't go before the end of term" (p. 32). He even gets mad at his dad for deceiving people about where they were going. "Thomas was angry. It was an alien emotion..." However, after an accident where his dad disappears, Thomas realizes that he is alien to Earth and wants to return home. "My real name is not even Thomas. My real, real name is Tonitheen, he thought, and I come from Ormingat" (p. 89).

4. This book can be used to teach students science fiction. Breaking the story down, students can answer whether or not they feel it is set in the realm of possibility, talk about the technology in the book (ex. the spaceship), and reveal how futuristic they believe the story to be.

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### Lindi says

Thomas and his father live a quiet life in a small English village, but they are much more than they seem: they are aliens from the planet of Ormingat on a secret and peaceful mission. The trouble begins when they are separated on their way to their camouflaged spaceship for their return home. A lovely story about friendship, loyalty and hope.

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### Beverly says

I really enjoyed this science fiction novel about an alien dad and son whose time to leave Earth has arrived.

### **Jo Everett says**

This book was nothing like I expected it to be. It was recommended to me, and I was reluctant to read it as I thought it was more of a factual book on space travel. However, it turned out to be an exciting alien race to get to the home planet before the spaceship departs. As the alien father and son have assumed human form in order to integrate and learn about Earth, sounds like a cliché but it's more than that, the characters are not only believable but also likeable. This was a page-turner filled with humour, suspense and human kindness. The short chapters add to the urgency of the scenario, encouraging readers to get through just another couple of pages...

This is the perfect holiday read, especially as it is only 200 odd pages and lightweight, or an enjoyable bedtime book. Equally it could be finished in an afternoon, and it certainly wouldn't be a waste of time.

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### **Bliss says**

This is a wonderful book for children who are interested in sci-fi. It also touches on issues of abandonment, friendship, being different, and self-reliance.

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### **Austin says**

Awesome

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### **sowhatnow says**

I read this book way back in the 4th grade, but can't get it out of my head. I remember it was so enthralling I read it all in one go, one day over February break.

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### **Marcia Van Camp says**

A kid's book I picked up at the beach house. It is about a father and son alien who have lived with humans for a few years and now need to return home. The kid grew up as an earthling and is having a hard time coping with the idea of returning to an unknown home. Cute idea, but not very well written. It seemed to drag out details that were uninteresting and breeze past where more detail and explaining was needed.

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### **Aj Swaim says**

A new neighbor moves in next to you. You go over to say hey to find them acting quite normal. But little did you know: they come from outer space.

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This story is about an eleven year old English boy named Thomas Derwent lived in a small town. Thomas and his friend play everyday at school as any two boys would. Thomas moved to the town with his dad when he was six, no mother, just a dad. His neighbor acted as his mother for the duration of his stay in England. After five years, Thomas' father tells him that they have to go back to their home planet. This event begins the main plot with the difficulty of lying to all their friends about where they are going. The two journey back to their spaceship and run into many twists and turns along the way.

I would recommend this book for anyone who enjoys adventure. This book shows how you can get where you want, but only if you know where you're going. The author does a great job of describing rather than telling the reader what was happening. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book, all aspects were interesting and drew me further into the story. I think everyone should read this book, even if you don't enjoy reading; you'll enjoy this one.

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### **Seth says**

First book in the "Ormingat" trilogy, Space Race is a unique a fun read. On the whole this series is well written; the language is fresh and fluid, and filled with realistic characters and quirky humor. This series deals a lot with the themes of "outsiderism", what family is, and choosing loyalties. Without these ideas, this series would fall flat as just another sci-fi novel. It is very much akin in style to the Harry Potter series, with exploration of very different content.

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### **Lynda says**

A very good story about James and his father who live in Britain, but must return to their planet Ormingat. On their way to the spaceship, they get separated and strange things happen to them both. I really liked this. It was warm and comfortable somehow. There is a sequel, I will read next!

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### **Matthew says**

This is an ok book. I give this boom 3 stars because it gets a little confusing. I guess I would recommend this book for kids. It wouldn't really be interesting for adults. But if you like a fiction boom then I would say go read it.

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### **Kelley says**

Genre: Science Fiction

Thomas and his father Patrick are aliens. Patrick tells Thomas that they will be leaving Earth to return to The Other Place, Thomas is afraid to leave the only home he has ever known and the people he cares about. After getting separated from his father Thomas must choose whether he wants to stay on Earth or return to The Other Place with his father.

Plot

Thomas finds himself in a very unique situation; he is being forced to move by his parent, but not to another city or country, but to another planet. I think this situation would contribute to a wonderful discussion on

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what students would do if they were put in this situation. It is a way to get students to think critically about being individuals and making choices and how those choices affect our lives. On page 90 and 91, Thomas is forced to think about what he will say when people start to ask what has happened to his father. Thomas must make a tough decision, whether to stay on Earth or join his father for another planet.

Curriculum Connection: Grade level would be 4th-6th grade. This would be a good book to include in a lesson on space and astronomy, or on a lesson on choices.

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### **Lain says**

This has got to be one of the most boring books for kids I've read in a long time. My son (10 years old) read it for a book report and kept telling me that there was nothing to say because nothing happened. I didn't believe him, so I read it myself -- and he was right! It was 241 pages of boredom! We had trouble coming up with enough material to fill a one-page book report. Snnnoooooooooozzzze.

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### **Lord says**

1. I didn't really like "Space Race" by Sylvia Waugh. I say this because I didn't like the problem. For example, Thomas the main character's dad wants to go back to their home planet Ormingat, page 32 and Thomas doesn't want and I think that problem is really boring and that problem never gets solved because in the end he does go back. Also I didn't like this book because it went at a very slow pace like Thomas and his dad's journey just to get to their spaceship, page 1-241.
2. Someone who would like this book is a fantasy lover. I say this because Thomas in the book was talking about how he and his dad are from another planet called Ormingat which they came to Earth and they have an alien language and names. Like Thomas' real name is Lotitheen and his dad's real name is Valiteen.
3. One challenging aspect of this book was the book going at a very slow pace. The reason this was a challenging aspect was because there were certain points where in the book where it was getting confusing on what was the topic because some things went on to long and gave more detail than needed.
4. One theme I learned while reading this book is to stand up to people in order to get the things you want. I say this because if Thomas was to stand up to his dad from the beginning he would've stayed on earth. But by the end he has the choice because he stood up to his dad but now all of a sudden he wants to go back to his home planet.

