



RICHMOND READERS

## Permission to Leave

THREE SHORT STORIES ABOUT ESCAPE.

### **Permission to Leave**

It is 2147. Indira and Craig live in a very protected, very organised society - under the Earth's surface. Why do they want to leave?

### **Can Helen Escape?**

Helen must escape from her father. Can she get out of the house before he wakes up? And does she really know where she is going?

### **Raimundo Sánchez - Superstar**

Raimundo has the solution to a boring lesson on world geography. He invents his own world - where he plays the principal role.

.....

**Steve Buckledee** was born in Kersey in Suffolk. After graduating from the University of Hull, he taught English Language in Oporto, Madrid, Milan and Rome. He currently works at the University of Cagliari in Sardinia. He is the author of a novel 'Cleghorn' as well as a number of articles and stories. In his leisure time he enjoys reading and walking in the countryside.

.....

**LEVEL ONE**

.....

# RICHMOND READERS

---

**STARTER LEVEL (300 headwords)**

---

The Man from Peru  
Ricky Banks – Music Star!  
Supercomputerman Radio Boy

---

**LEVEL 1 (500 headwords)**

---

Oscar Jack's Game  
Maria's Dilemma Permission to Leave  
The Boy from Yesterday The Black Mountain

---

**LEVEL 2 (800 headwords)**

---

Saturday Storm  
Craigden Castle Mystery  
Jason Causes Chaos Where's Mauriac?  
The Road through the Hills

---

**LEVEL 3 (1200 headwords)**

---

Cold Feet A Christmas Carol  
The Canterville Ghost and Other Stories  
Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde  
A Trip to the Stars  
Frankenstein

---

**LEVEL 4 (1800 headwords)**

---

Dracula Jane Eyre  
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer  
A Trip to London  
Sense and Sensibility

# Permission to Leave

Three Short Stories

.....  
STEVE BUCKLEDEE



Richmond Publishing  
19 Berghem Mews  
Blythe Road  
London W14 0HN

© Steve Buckledee 1997  
Published by Richmond Publishing® 1997  
First published 1997

*All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.*

ISBN:84-294-4922-1

Depósito legal: M-8.777-1997  
Printed in Spain by: Palgraphic, S.A.

Cover Design: Giles Davies Design

Cover Illustration: Anne Magill

Illustrations: Stephen Player

# Permission to Leave



*Everybody lives in a Warren. A Warren is a very big city under the ground.*

## Permission to Leave

The year is 2147. It is a normal day in Warren\* Number 5. It is always a normal day here. Today is no different from yesterday or tomorrow. In Warren Number 5 there are no seasons: there is no spring or summer or autumn or winter. There is no difference between day and night. The only light is electric; natural light does not exist. Most people do not know the word 'sun'.

Everybody lives in a Warren. A Warren is a very big city under the ground. Think of the Paris metro or the London tube, but a thousand times bigger. And a Warren is not a transport system; people live there all the time. They are there all their lives, from the day they are born to the day they die. People *must* live in a Warren. They cannot leave their city under the ground. Millions and millions of people live in these Warrens. There are nine Warrens in the world and Warren Number 5 is the biggest.

Two young people - a girl and a boy - are waiting near an office. It is a very special office: the office of the Chief Controller, the most important person in Warren Number 5. They want to talk to the Chief Controller, and they are waiting for permission to go into the office. The girl is carrying a bag. She is a pretty\*, dark girl aged seventeen. Her name is Indira.



*Two young people - a girl and a boy - are waiting near an office.*

The boy is also seventeen. He is tall, with light brown hair. His name is Craig.

‘I’m afraid,’ Indira says. ‘Are you afraid, Craig?’

‘Yes,’ Craig answers. ‘People say the Chief Controller is a terrible old woman.’

‘I hope\* it isn’t true. I hope she ...’

The red light on the Chief Controller’s door changes to green. They hear an electronic voice: ‘You can come in now. You can come in now.’

Indira looks at Craig. They are both very nervous. The Chief Controller can make them very happy. But she can also make them very sad. There is something that Indira and Craig want to do very much. It is their dream\*. The Chief Controller can say ‘yes’, and make

their dream come true. Or she can say 'no'...

The office is small. All the rooms are small in Warren Number 5. Space is a big problem here. An apartment for a husband and wife without a child is 30 square metres. A husband and wife with a child can have an apartment of 40 square metres. Only one child is permitted. It is a serious crime to have a second child.



*Space is a big problem here. An apartment for a husband and wife without a child is 30 square metres.*

The Chief Controller is sitting at a white table. Her clothes are white. Her face is white. The only colour is in her eyes. These are pink\*. She is very old. Indira thinks she is probably about 120.

‘I understand you young people have something important to ask me,’ she says. ‘Is that right?’

Craig starts to answer. ‘Y ... yes. We ... um ... we ...’

‘I want to listen to the young woman,’ the Chief Controller says. ‘Men do everything wrong. Men caused the Third World War\*. Because of that, women make all the decisions now. All the Controllers of the nine Warrens are women. Men must never make the decisions again. Women must always control the world. So, young woman, what do you want to ask me about?’

Indira is afraid. It is difficult to speak to this terrible old woman. ‘Well, Chief Controller, we want ... we would like to leave Warren Number 5.’

‘Do you want to move to a different Warren? That is not a problem. Warren Number 8 is not completely full, so you ...’

‘No, Chief Controller,’ Indira says. ‘You don’t understand. We don’t want to move to Warren Number 8. We don’t want to live in a Warren at all.’

The Chief Controller is surprised. She looks into Indira’s brown eyes. Indira doesn’t like the old woman’s pink eyes. ‘What is your name?’ the Chief Controller asks.

‘Indira.’

‘Well, Indira, tell me: are you stupid?’

‘No, Chief Controller.’

‘Do you think you are intelligent?’

‘Yes, Chief Controller. I hope I am intelligent.’

‘I don’t agree; I think you are stupid. You say stupid things. Don’t you know that everyone lives in a Warren? Humans *must* live under the ground. There is nowhere for us to live except in the Warrens.’

‘But there *is* somewhere,’ Indira says. ‘The natural home for humans is not under the ground, but on the surface\* of the earth\*. We want to go up to the surface.’

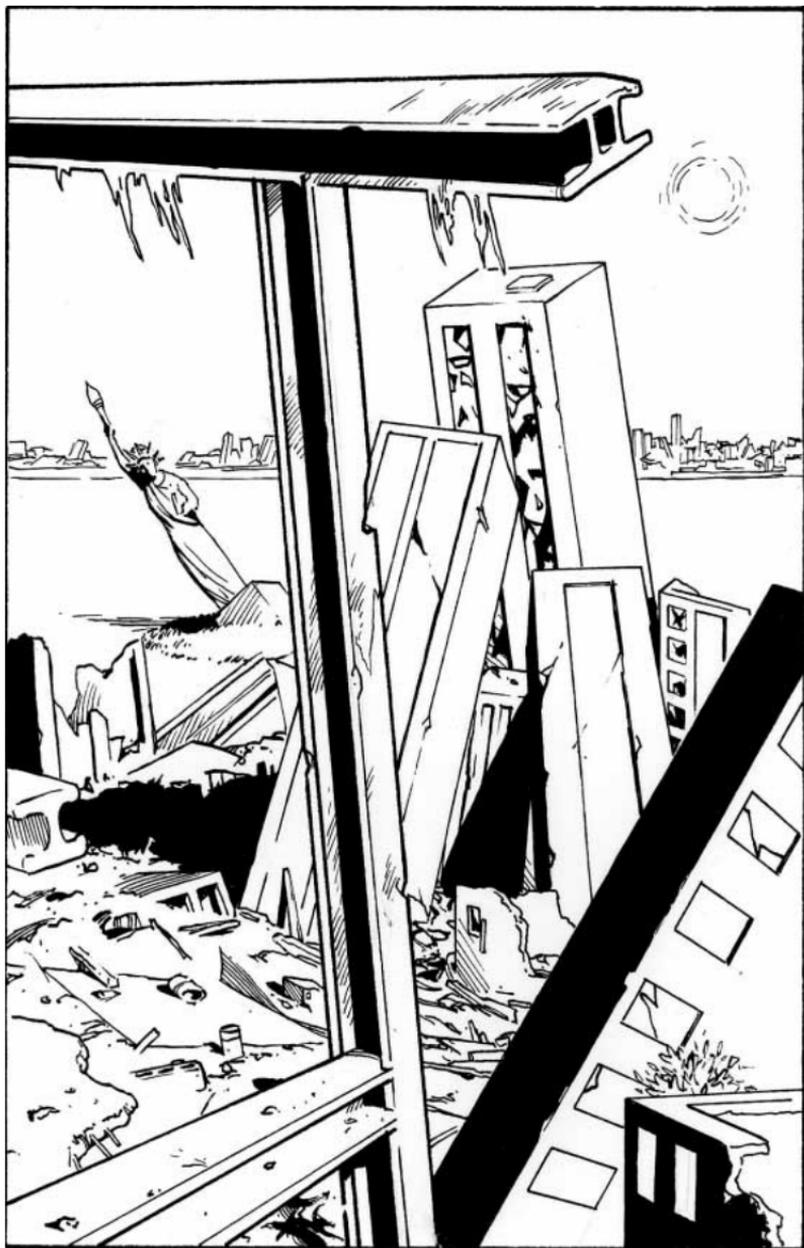
‘The surface. Indira ... you must study your history books. You must learn about the Third World War. Because of that war, we cannot live on the earth’s surface now. People die on the surface.’

‘We know our history,’ Craig says. ‘We know that ...’

‘Quiet!’ The Chief Controller is angry. ‘I am not interested in what you think. You are only a boy. Indira can speak for both of you.’



*‘I am not interested in what you think. You are only a boy. Indira can speak for both of you.’*



*But because of the war - because of the destruction - the sun is dangerous for people now.*

‘But Craig’s right,’ Indira says. ‘I know he’s a boy but he isn’t stupid. We know about the Third World War. We know the consequences of that war. Now the sun is dangerous\* for people ...’

‘The sun?’ The Chief Controller is more surprised now. ‘You know the word ‘sun’?’

‘Yes, we know the word,’ Indira answers. ‘And we know what the sun is. It is good. It gives us light and it makes the earth warm\*. But because of the war - because of the destruction - the sun is dangerous for people now. It kills people.’

The Chief Controller studies the two young people before speaking again. She is interested in their faces and their eyes. ‘You are right, Indira: you are an intelligent girl. And you too, boy ... what is your name?’

‘Craig, Chief Controller.’

‘Craig ... you are not as stupid as most boys. Most people don’t know what the sun is. But there is something that I don’t understand: you know that the sun can kill you, so why do you want to go to the earth’s surface?’

Indira starts to speak: ‘Chief Controller, please listen to Craig. He knows a lot about these things. He can explain everything. Please, tell him that he can speak.’

The Chief Controller looks at Craig. After a moment, she says: ‘All right. Speak, Craig.’



‘This is the situation, Chief Controller,’ Craig says. ‘We know that we are safe\* in Warren Number 5. Here we

can have a long life; we can live to the age of 120 or 130. But it's a terrible life here. It's horrible. It isn't a life for humans. We have no space. There are millions of us in the Warren, and it is impossible to get away from other people. We are living like animals, not like people. And we can't do the things that are natural for humans. We can't walk in the country. We can't look at the flowers and the trees ...'

'Flowers? Trees? You know these words, too? Usually only very old people remember these words.'

'Yes, Chief Controller,' Craig continues. 'We know a lot of things. We know that there are animals on the earth's surface. And birds in the air. We know that there is a very big area of water called the sea. There are animals in the sea; they are called fish.'

'Who told you about these things?' the Chief Controller asks. 'You do not learn these things at school.'

Craig speaks to Indira: 'OK, Indira. Give her the book.'

Indira opens her bag and takes out a very old book. It is a geography book from 1997, 150 years ago. It has pictures from all parts of the world: South America, Africa, the Pacific Ocean, the mountains of Tibet, and many others.

'Where did you get this book?' the Chief Controller asks.

Indira answers, 'It was my mother's. She got it from her mother, my grandmother. And my grandmother



*Indira opens her bag and takes out a very old book.*

got it from her mother, my great grandmother. It is the only book we have in our family.’

‘You are not permitted to have a book like this one,’ the Chief Controller says. ‘It is a crime, a serious crime. The Controllers of the nine Warrens tell people that they cannot read books like this. We prohibit these books because they are dangerous. They are bad for people.’

‘But why?’ Craig asks. ‘It is only a book. And it tells us the truth\*. It tells us about the earth before the Third World War. The truth isn’t dangerous. It isn’t bad for people.’

The Chief Controller’s face changes. She isn’t angry now, but her face is sad. ‘How old are you, Craig?’

‘Seventeen. We are both seventeen.’

‘Well, Craig, I am 118 and I am a sad old woman. All the Controllers of the nine Warrens are sad. And do you know what makes us sad? It is the truth. The truth makes us sad. You young people are sad, too, because you know the truth.’

‘I don’t understand,’ Indira says.

‘It is difficult to understand, Indira, but I want to explain things to you. You are right, Craig: in Warren Number 5 we live like animals, not like people. This is not a natural life for humans. But we must stay down here under the ground because it is dangerous on the earth’s surface. The sun is changing, but very slowly. Our experts tell us that we must stay under the ground for hundreds of years before we can live on the surface again. But life is terrible down here. You know the truth about the earth’s surface so it is impossible for you to be happy in a Warren. But do you know how beautiful the earth is? Do you know about the colours and the open spaces there? Then it is impossible to be happy down here. That is why we never give you information about life on the surface. Ignorant people don’t think about the surface and they are not sad. Your crime and your mistake\*, Indira, is to have this old book. Because of this book, you and Craig are sad.’

‘But it is the truth,’ Indira says. ‘Isn’t it?’

‘Oh, yes. Every word is true. And these old photos are true. The earth’s surface is really beautiful.’

‘Do you know the surface?’ Craig asks.



*Our experts tell us that we must stay under the ground for hundreds of years before we can live on the surface again.*

‘Yes. Controllers can go to the surface. But it is dangerous, so we can only stay there for a short time: thirty minutes, maybe an hour. I am always very sad when it is time to come back to the Warren. I tell you, Craig, it is better not to know the truth.’

‘We cannot forget the things we read about,’ Indira says.

‘You are right,’ the Chief Controller says. ‘And because you cannot forget, you can never be happy again.’

‘Yes, we can,’ Craig says. ‘We can be happy on the earth’s surface.’

The old woman smiles, but it is a sad smile. ‘I’m sorry, Craig, but that is impossible. The sun is too dangerous.’



*The old woman smiles, but it is a sad smile.*

‘We think we can live on the surface for a number of years,’ Indira says. ‘We know what the sun does. It doesn’t kill people quickly. After some years in the sun people die, but it is possible to live a little first.’

‘That is correct,’ the Chief Controller says. ‘Death\* is not immediate. You can live for seven or eight years, before the sun kills you.’

‘That is what we want,’ Craig says. ‘Seven or eight years of life.’

‘Do you know what you are saying? You are only seventeen. In Warren Number 5 you can live another hundred years. Maybe 110 years.’

‘But 110 years down here is not living,’ Indira answers. ‘We can exist for another 110 years, but we cannot have a real life. That is not what we want.’

‘Are you serious?’ the Chief Controller asks. ‘Do you prefer a short life - a very short life - on the surface, to a long life in Warren Number 5?’

‘Yes! Yes! Yes!’ they both answer.



The old woman thinks for a moment. It is a difficult decision. These young people are intelligent and they know what they want. She can permit them to go to the surface. But this can have only one result.

‘No,’ she says. ‘I understand why you want to leave. I agree with you: it is not a real life down here. But I cannot give you permission to go to the surface. It is suicide to go to the surface. I cannot give you

permission to die.’

‘Oh, please, Chief Controller,’ Indira says. ‘Say we can leave.’

‘We are dead now,’ Craig says. ‘Down here we are dead. You can give us life. Please say we can go to the surface.’

‘We want to be happy,’ Indira says. ‘Here we can never be happy. No one is happy here. People don’t know about the surface, but they are not happy with this life. Please, Chief Controller, give us some years on the surface. Not many years, I know, but that is better than a long, sad life down here.’

Craig speaks again: ‘Everyone must die one day. But we want to live before we die. Please give us this opportunity.’

The Chief Controller does not speak. She thinks for a minute. She wants to do the right thing. And she thinks about her life in Warren Number 5. She wants to leave too. She is old and cannot live many more years. She would like to live on the surface in her last years. But for her it is impossible. She is the Chief Controller and she must be an example for all the people in Warren Number 5.

‘Give me your identification numbers,’ she says.

They tell her their numbers, and she works with a computer. Then Indira and Craig see something on the computer screen\*. It is something that most people in Warren Number 5 never see. But Indira and Craig know what it is.



*Then Indira and Craig see something on the computer screen.*

‘This is a map,’ the Chief Controller says. ‘Do you know that word?’

‘Yes,’ Indira answers. ‘There are some maps in my geography book.’

‘Well this map shows the world before the war,’ the old woman continues. ‘The blue parts are the sea and the other colours are countries of the world. Indira’s family comes from here, India, a very beautiful country. Craig’s identification number tells me that his family home is here, Australia. Warren Number 5 is under this part: Europe. And Europe is going to be your new home.’

‘What? Our new home? Do you mean that we can go to the surface?’ Indira asks.

‘Yes.’

‘Oh, thank you, Chief Controller,’ Indira says. ‘Thank you, thank you, thank you.’

‘I don’t understand it,’ the old woman says. ‘You are going to your death. So how can you thank me?’

‘Because you are giving us life before we die,’ Craig says. ‘And we are happy. Very, very happy.’

The Chief Controller smiles. Indira and Craig don’t think that she is a terrible old woman now. She speaks again: ‘I would like to give you different names: not Craig and Indira, but Adam and Eve.’

‘Who are Adam and Eve?’ Indira asks.

‘Oh, it isn’t important. It’s another old book. It’s a crime to have that book now.’

‘When can we leave?’ Craig asks.

‘Soon. In four or five days. I hope you like your new life up there.’

Indira and Craig are very happy. They smile and laugh. Indira kisses\* Craig. Then Craig kisses the Chief Controller! They are happy because they are going to live before they die.



*They are happy because they are going to live before they die.*

Can Helen Escape?

## Can Helen Escape?

It's 3 o'clock in the morning. Helen is in her room. She is putting clothes and things in a suitcase\*. Her mother and father are in their bedroom. They are sleeping. Helen works very quietly because she doesn't want to wake\* her father. She is going away. But this is not a holiday for Helen; she is leaving home.

Helen is only sixteen, so she is young to leave home. But she wants to go away. She isn't happy at home. The problem is her father. He doesn't understand that Helen is not a little girl now. She is a young woman and she wants to be more independent. She wants to go out in the evening with her friends. She wants to meet new people. But this isn't possible because her father thinks she is a child. He says she can't stay out after six o'clock in the evening. He tells Helen that she must stay at home and be a good girl.

Helen thinks about her mother's situation. Her mother is a nice woman but she doesn't have a strong character. Helen's father always says, 'I wear the trousers in this house!' This means that *he* makes all the decisions. His wife's opinions are not important. Helen's mother doesn't have a job. She doesn't have any friends. She doesn't have any independence.

Helen doesn't want to live like her mother. She wants something different. But with her father it is



*But this is not a holiday for Helen; she is leaving home.*

impossible to be independent. He always wants to know where she is. He wants to know what she is doing. Helen talks to her friends at school. Their fathers are different. Helen tells them, 'I don't live in a house. I live in a prison. I can't go out and my friends can't visit me. I want to escape from this prison!'

Helen is different from her mother. She has a strong character. She is not always quiet and obedient. She tells her father that she doesn't always agree with his decisions. For example, Helen's brother, Michael, can go out in the evening. He can do what he wants.

Helen tells her father that this is not right. She says, 'Michael is only one year older than me, but he can go out when he wants. Why is it different for me?' Her father always answers, 'Because you are a girl.' Helen is angry when she hears that answer. She insults her father. Then he gets angry too, and he insults Helen. In these situations, Helen's mother doesn't know what to do. So she doesn't say anything.



*She insults her father. Then he gets angry too, and he insults Helen.*



Lots of girls have these problems. Sixteen is a difficult age. At sixteen a girl is not a child, but she is not a woman. There is often a conflict between a girl of this age and her father.

But Helen has another problem. Two months ago a special boy came into her life. His name is Gary. Helen liked Gary immediately. She saw that he was different from other boys. They talked and laughed a lot. Then Gary asked, 'Can I see you tomorrow?' And Helen answered, 'Yes, after school.'

Everything happened very quickly. Helen saw Gary again. Then Gary came to meet her after school every day. Helen was very happy when she was with Gary. He was special. He didn't think she was a child. With Gary she was a woman.

One day Gary said, 'Let's go out later this evening. Let's go to a pub.' But Helen answered, 'I'm sorry, but it isn't possible. My father says I must be home at six o'clock.' Gary didn't understand this. He said, 'Your father is stupid. Modern girls don't go home at six o'clock.' And Helen didn't have an answer.

Helen and Gary met regularly after school. Sometimes she came home at 6.15 or 6.30, and her father was angry. He wanted to know why she was late. Helen always invented a reason. She didn't tell her father about Gary.

One day her father was very angry. 'I saw you today,



*Helen and Gary met regularly after school.*

Helen,' he said. 'You were with Gary Farmer. I know that boy. I know his family. They are not nice people. Gary is no good. You must not see him again. Do you understand me, Helen? You must not see Gary Farmer again!'

'But why not?' Helen answered. 'Gary is a nice boy. He says nice things. He says that I am beautiful ...'

'He says that to every girl he meets. And he probably knows a lot of girls ...'

'No! That's not true! I am special. He says that I am special.'

‘He tells all the girls that they are special. Don’t listen to him. You don’t know him, Helen ...’

‘Yes, I do! I know everything about him.’

‘Do you? OK, has he got a job?’

‘Yes ... no ... well, I don’t know ... Yes, he has got a job. He always has money, so I know he has a job.’

‘And what does he do exactly, Helen?’

‘Well, I don’t know ... He sells something, I think.’

‘You think he sells something. And how old is he, Helen?’

‘I don’t know ... twenty-one, twenty-two ... his age isn’t important.’

‘It is important, Helen, because you are only sixteen. You are only a child ...’

‘I am not a child!’

‘You are not eighteen, so you are a child! I am your father and you must do what I tell you. And I am telling you that you must never see that boy again!’

‘No! I’m going to see him tomorrow, and the next day, and the next day. I’m going to see him every day. You can’t stop me. Gary says you are stupid. He is right. You are ...’

Then something terrible happened. For the first time in Helen’s life, her father hit her. He hit her face with his open hand. There was silence. This was a real surprise for Helen, and she didn’t know what to say. Her mother wanted to say something, but she was afraid. Her father walked out of the room.

Later Helen’s mother said, ‘Your father is sorry he



*For the first time in Helen's life, her father hit her.*

hit you, Helen. It was wrong. He was very angry. But he loves you, Helen.'

'No, he doesn't,' Helen answered.

'Yes, he does. He loves you very much. He's your father ...'

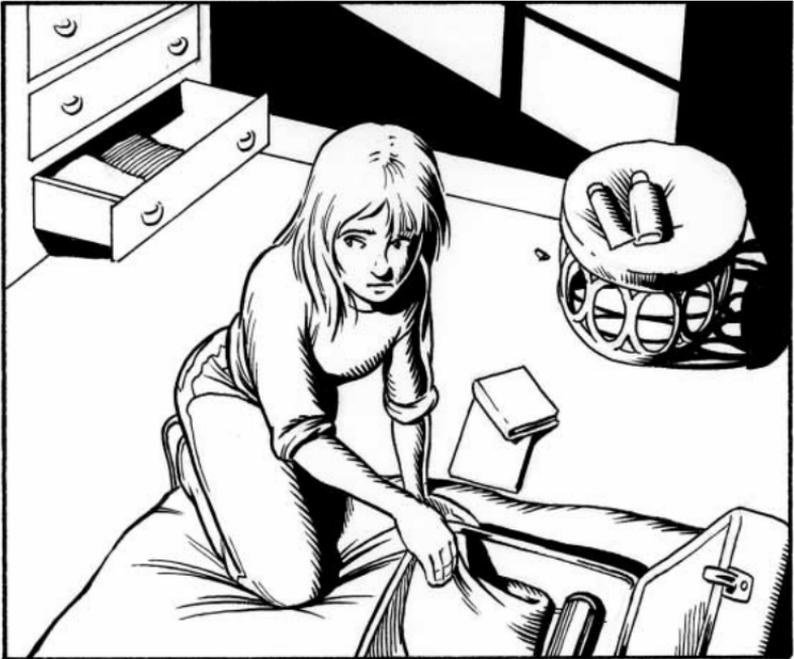
'Father? No, he isn't. I haven't got a father.'



And now Helen is preparing her suitcase. She can't stay in this house. The problems with her father are more serious every day. Helen and her father can't have a normal conversation. Her father always offends her, and she always insults him. There isn't any communication.

Helen hears something. She stops preparing her suitcase and listens. Someone is moving in the next bedroom. Who is it? Is it her mother? Or her father? 'Oh, no,' Helen thinks. 'He mustn't open this door and see this suitcase ...' She doesn't move. She is afraid. She remembers the day her father hit her. He mustn't know that she is preparing to leave home.

Now she hears someone leave her parents' bedroom. Helen thinks it is her father. He is only two metres from Helen's door. 'Please don't open it!' Helen thinks. 'Please don't stop me now. I only need five minutes to finish my suitcase. Then I can escape. Everything is ready.'



*She stops preparing her suitcase and listens.*

Gary and Helen have a plan. Helen is going to meet Gary in the street. He has a car. They are going to drive to a town 100 kilometres away. Gary has some friends in this town. These friends have a big house. Helen and Gary can stay in this house for two or three days. Gary is happy with this plan. Helen is happy too.

Her father doesn't open her bedroom door. He walks past her door and goes to the kitchen. 'I must be calm,' Helen thinks. 'He is only going to get a glass of water.' But it isn't easy to be calm. The next five minutes are very important. She can escape now and then her life can be different. She can be a woman, not a child. But first she must leave the house.

She looks at her watch. It's 3.25. She is going to meet Gary at 3.30. Why doesn't her father go back to bed? What is he doing? She can hear him. He goes from one room to another. He opens a window. Why? It's a cold night. Then he closes the window again. What is he doing? He's in the kitchen again. Then he goes to another room. 'I must be calm,' she thinks. But the minutes pass and Helen's father doesn't go back to bed. It is impossible for her to be calm.

Helen thinks about the future. They can stay with Gary's friends for two or three days. And then? How are they going to live? Gary always says, 'No problem. Money is no problem for me. Everything is going to be OK, Helen.' But Helen thinks about these things. She hasn't got a job. And what exactly is Gary's job? What are they going to do? 'I don't need a job,' Gary



*'I don't need a job,' Gary says. 'I can always get money.'*

says. 'I can always get money.' Helen doesn't understand. What does Gary mean? 'Don't think about jobs and money,' he says. 'You are going to be with me all day and all night. Think about that.'

3.40. 'I'm ten minutes late,' she thinks. 'Poor Gary is waiting for me. What is he thinking? Maybe he thinks I'm not going to meet him.' Her father opens the window again. Ten seconds later he closes it. What is he doing?

Time is passing. 3.45. Fifteen minutes late. Helen puts the last things into her suitcase and closes it quietly. The suitcase is not very heavy. She can run with it if necessary.

At 3.50, Helen's father goes back to his bedroom. But he doesn't want to sleep. Helen's parents are talking. She can't hear the words, but she knows that her father is angry. Her mother is talking a lot too. What can Helen do? She is afraid of her father. She doesn't know what to do. Can she leave the house now? It's difficult, but if she is very quiet maybe she can do it. But she mustn't make a sound\*.

Then she thinks about another thing. It is nearly 3.55 and Gary is waiting in his car. Or is he? She is twenty-five minutes late. Maybe he got tired of waiting. 'No!' she thinks. 'I know Gary. He is waiting for me. I know he is waiting.'

4.00. Helen knows that she cannot wait any more. She must leave at once. It is now or never. She opens her door very quietly. Her parents don't hear her because they are talking a lot. She stands near their door for a moment. Now she can hear what they are saying:

'How do you know it's Gary's car?' her mother asks. 'Lots of young men have ...'

'I tell you it's Gary Farmer!' her father says. 'I know his car. And it's easy to see it from our window!'

Now Helen understands everything. Her father knows that Gary is waiting in the street. She must move quickly. Ten seconds later she is out of the house. She runs out to the street.

The sound of brakes\* wakes everyone in the street. People look out of their windows to see what is



*'I tell you it's Gary Farmer!' her father says. 'I know his car.'*

happening. Helen's parents are the first people to look out.

The car stops a few centimetres away from Helen. The driver is angry: 'You stupid girl! Why did you run into the street without looking? You're going to ... Oh, Helen, it's you.'

'Gary! You nearly killed me!'

'Don't exaggerate. Well, now that you're here, get in the car. We're late.'

Helen doesn't move. She looks into Gary's eyes. There is something different about him. She sees something for the first time. 'But, Gary,' she says, 'you didn't want to wait for me. You decided to go home.'

'Well, I can't wait all night. But you're here now. So there's no problem.'

'I don't know ... I ...'

'Get in the car, Helen! Everything's going to be OK now. My friends say we can stay in their house for a week. Think about that, Helen. A week with me!'

'And after that week? What are we going to do then, Gary?'

'Don't think about stupid things like that, Helen. Well, are you coming or not?'

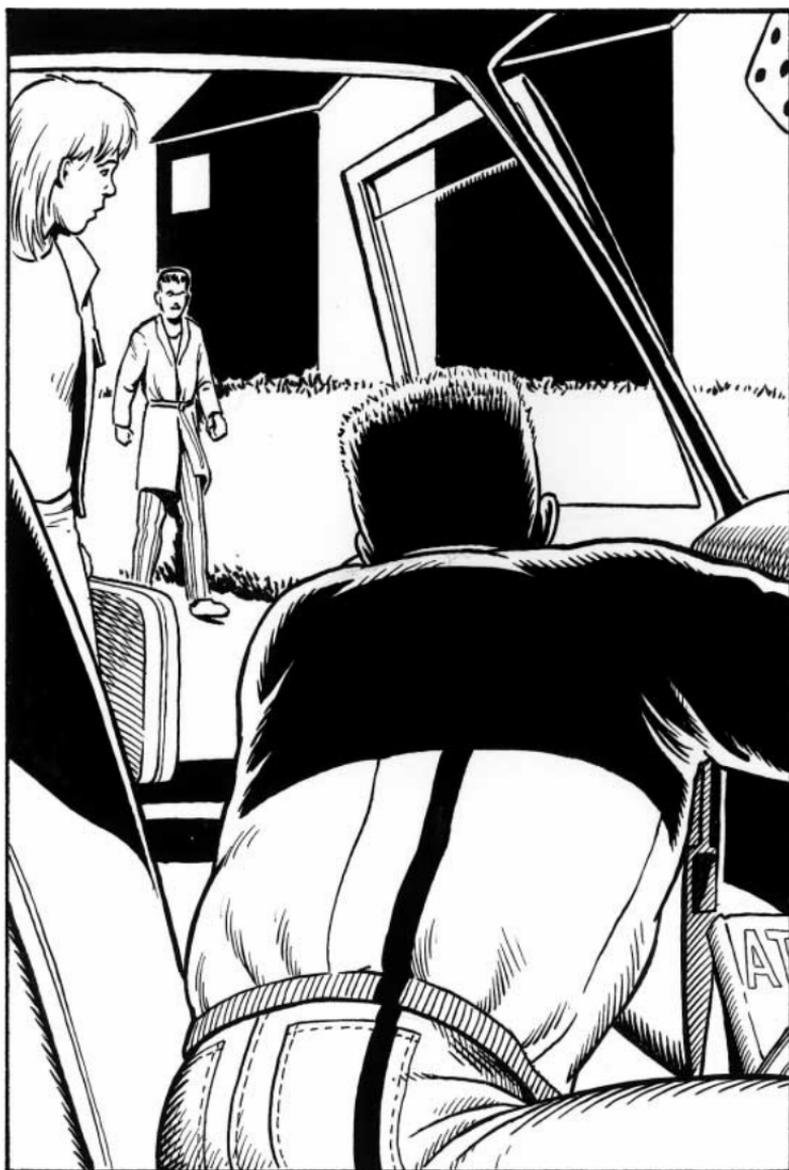
Helen doesn't know what to do. Five minutes ago everything was clear. But now she is confused.

'Helen! Wait! Don't get into that car!'

She sees her father coming out of the house.

Gary opens the car door for her. 'It's your decision, Helen. Do you want an exciting life? Or do you want

to live in 'a prison' with your parents? You have five seconds to decide.



*'Helen! Wait! Don't get into that car!'*

Raimundo Sánchez -  
Superstar

## Raimundo Sánchez - Superstar\*



*He thinks about the actors, and the films, and the famous people, and ...*

Raimundo's class is having a geography lesson. The teacher, Mrs Guillamas, is indicating things on a big map of North America. She is talking about cities and states in the USA.

Raimundo is not listening to the teacher. He doesn't like geography. He doesn't like school very much. Raimundo is thirteen. Boys of that age never like school.

‘This is California,’ Mrs Guillamas says. She indicates California on the map. ‘It’s a very rich state. The biggest city is Los Angeles ...’

Raimundo isn’t listening. For him the most important thing in California is Hollywood. All the famous actors and actresses live there. People see Hollywood films in every country in the world. Raimundo thinks about Hollywood. He thinks about the actors, and the films, and the famous people, and ...



*This is the most important evening in the Hollywood calendar. It is the evening of the ‘Oscar’\* ceremony. There are a lot of people standing in a magnificent room. The women are wearing expensive dresses. The men are wearing formal suits. No one is wearing jeans here.*



*It is the evening of the ‘Oscar’ ceremony.*



*He stands up and goes to accept his 'Oscar'.*

*The people are talking a lot. They are impatient. They want to know the answer to an important question: who is going to get the Oscar for the best actor? Some people say Kevin Costner. Other people say Tom Hanks or Tom Cruise. They are all talking about this.*

*The presenter speaks into a microphone. 'Ladies and gentlemen\*, can I have your attention, please?' Now the room is quiet. No one is talking. Everyone is listening to the presenter. He continues. 'I have something important to tell you ...'*

*There is complete silence in the room. Everyone is waiting for the most important news of the evening.*

*'... The Oscar for the best actor goes to ... Raimundo Sánchez!'*

*The room isn't quiet now! There is a lot of applause for Raimundo. The people start talking again. Raimundo is very happy. He stands up and goes to accept his Oscar. This is the best day of his life. He knows that his mother and father are watching him on TV. It is a big surprise: the Oscar didn't go to Tom Cruise or Kevin Costner, but to a boy from Spain.*



‘Raimundo Sánchez!’ Mrs Guillamas is speaking to him. ‘Are you listening to me, Raimundo? I asked you a question. Now what is the answer?’

But Raimundo can't answer. He didn't hear the question. He wasn't in the class. He was in Hollywood! The other boys and girls are all looking at Raimundo. Some of them are laughing. Raimundo's face goes red.



*Raimundo's face goes red.*

‘Well, Raimundo?’ Mrs Guillamas continues. ‘I asked you about a very important man. I asked you to tell me his name. And I am waiting for your answer.’

In panic, Raimundo says the first name that comes into his head. ‘Oscar! His name’s Oscar.’

All the other boys and girls laugh. Mrs Guillamas laughs too. ‘Oh, Raimundo,’ she says. ‘I wanted the name of the first president of the United States, which is the name of the capital city, too. Do you know a president or a city called Oscar?’

‘Sorry, Mrs Guillamas,’ Raimundo says. He knows that he said a stupid thing, but now he can give the correct answer. ‘I wanted to say George Washington. He was the first president of the United States. And Washington DC is the capital city.’

‘That’s right, Raimundo,’ Mrs Guillamas says. ‘You are not stupid, but sometimes you forget to bring your head to school. Please concentrate!’

‘Yes, Mrs Guillamas,’ Raimundo answers.

And he listens to the teacher ... for five or six minutes. But soon he is thinking about other things. It’s a nice day and he doesn’t want to be at school. He wants to be out in the sun. It’s a good day for football. He would like to go out and play football with his friends.

Raimundo starts thinking about football. He thinks about the best teams in Europe and South America: Real Madrid, A.C. Milan, Barcelona, Boca Juniors. He thinks about the strongest national teams: Germany,

Brazil, Italy, Argentina. He remembers the best matches from the last World Cup\*. And he thinks about the next World Cup ...



*'We're in the last minute of the game,' the football reporter says. 'It's Brazil 2 - Spain 2 in this World Cup final. What a fantastic match! This is one of the best finals in the history of the World Cup. Brazil and Spain are both playing very well. But they are tired, and it's a hot day. Now the Spanish number 10, Raimundo Sánchez, has the ball\* . He got two goals in the first half of the match. Can he get another goal and win\* the World Cup for Spain? We're in the last seconds of the game, now. Sánchez runs at the Brazilian defence. He goes past Nadal ... and Salinas ... the ball is on his left foot ... GOAL!'*



*A splendid goal! Sánchez' foot is pure dynamite!*

*A splendid goal! Sánchez' foot is pure dynamite! In the last seconds of the game, Sánchez gets a magnificent goal. Brazil can't do anything now; there isn't time. Spain is going to win the World Cup after a third goal by Raimundo Sánchez in the last minute ...'*



'This is the Columbia River. It's named after Christopher Columbus,' Mrs Guillamas is saying. 'Who can remember when Columbus discovered America? Raimundo! What do you think?'

'What? Oh! Um ... in the last minute,' Raimundo answers.

Everybody laughs again. Raimundo knows that his answer is ridiculous. But why? What was the question? He didn't hear it.

Mrs Guillamas wants to help him: 'Think, Raimundo. It's an important date because he is one of the most famous men in our history. He wasn't Spanish, but he got money from Spain for ...'

'Oh, I know!' Raimundo says. 'Diego Maradona!'

His friends laugh and laugh. One of the boys tells him that the question was about Christopher Columbus. Raimundo understands why they are all laughing at him. And he is a little nervous. Maybe Mrs Guillamas is angry now.

But the teacher is not angry. She knows that Raimundo is not a bad boy. The problem is that he can't control his imagination.

‘You never listen, Raimundo,’ she tells him. ‘You sit here in class, but you are always thinking about other things. You can’t concentrate on the lesson for more than five minutes. Why is that, Raimundo?’ He doesn’t answer. Mrs Guillamas continues. ‘Well, I think I know why. And I know what you are thinking, Raimundo.’

There is silence in the room. Everyone is looking at Raimundo. Mrs Guillamas speaks again. ‘Raimundo, your problem is that you are in love\*!’

Everyone laughs at Raimundo. One of the girls, Inés Jiménez, smiles\* at him. She is a pretty\* girl, and Raimundo likes her very much. But there is a problem: when Inés looks at him, his face goes completely red. Now his face is the colour of a tomato.

After a moment, the class stops laughing and Mrs



*One of the girls, Inés Jimenez, smiles at him.*

Guillamas begins the lesson again. Raimundo looks at the map and listens to the teacher for five minutes ... six minutes ... seven ... Then he starts thinking about Inés and how she smiled at him. She has a pretty face and beautiful eyes. When she looks at Raimundo, he can't speak! He can't find any words. He likes her a lot. But does she like him? Or does she think he is a stupid boy with a red face? Raimundo wants to be her boyfriend but he is afraid to speak to her. What can he do? How can he be her boyfriend? He thinks about the possibilities. He has a lot of ideas. Then he has one idea in particular ...



*The criminal is driving at 160 kms per hour in his black Mercedes. There is another person in the car. It's Inés. She is the criminal's prisoner\* . She is thinking, 'This man is going to kill me! Who can help me?'*

*There's a white Porsche behind the Mercedes. It's coming nearer and nearer. It passes the Mercedes, then it stops in the middle of the road. Now the Mercedes must stop too. Raimundo gets out of the Porsche and looks at the other car.*

*'Stay where you are!' the criminal says to Raimundo. 'I can kill this girl. Look!' He has a pistol in his hand. Inés is afraid. Her face is white and she is crying.*

*'But I haven't got a pistol,' Raimundo says. 'Look. There is nothing in my hand.'*

*'What do you want?' the criminal asks.*

*'Listen,' Raimundo begins. 'I know that you robbed\* a*



*'Stay where you are!' the criminal says to Raimundo.*

bank this morning. The money is in your car. But that is not important to me; you can have the money. I don't want it. I only want Inés. Give me Inés, then you can go.'

'I need the girl,' the criminal says. 'When the police see her, they can't stop me because they know I can kill her.'

'The police don't know where you are. They don't know which road you are taking. Only I know, and I don't want to stop you. So you don't need Inés now.'

'Do you think I'm stupid?' the criminal asks. 'I know your plan: I'm going to give you the girl and drive away, and you are going to telephone the police immediately from your car.'

'No,' Raimundo says. 'That isn't true. You can take my car telephone. And you can put us in the Porsche and lock\* the door.'

The criminal thinks about this idea for a moment. It is true that he doesn't need Inés now. He is 30 kilometres from the city and the police don't know where he is going.

'OK. I accept your plan.' Then he speaks to Inés. 'Go to the Porsche! And walk slowly!'

For one second the criminal is looking only at Inés and not at Raimundo. But one second is sufficient for a kung fu expert. Raimundo is fast and strong; he hits the man five or six times. Soon the criminal is on the ground and Raimundo has his pistol.

Inés runs to Raimundo. 'Oh, Raimundo!' she says. 'You are my hero! Thank you. Thank you. That horrible man ... I was afraid of him. But my hero, Raimundo, came to help me. I love you. Yes, I love you ...'



*'Oh, Raimundo!' she says. 'You are my hero!'*



At that moment, Mrs Guillamas speaks to Raimundo.

'I love you, too,' he answers.

'Ssh, don't tell everyone, Raimundo,' Mrs Guillamas says. 'My husband must not know about this.'

The other boys and girls start laughing. Mrs Guillamas asks them to be quiet, but it is impossible. They can't stop laughing. Raimundo always says extraordinary things during lessons. But to say 'I love you,' to Mrs Guillamas! They laugh and laugh. And poor Raimundo wants to be a thousand kilometres from this classroom. He wants to be far away, where no one can see his red face.

Everyone is looking at him. Inés is looking at him. She is smiling. But Raimundo doesn't see this because

he is afraid to look at her.

Then Mrs Guillamas says to him, ‘Raimundo, sometimes I think you go to another world. You leave the planet Earth and you go to another world. What do you see there, Raimundo?’

He does not answer. Mrs Guillamas speaks again, ‘Now I’m going to continue the lesson. Look. This is the Mississippi River. It goes from ...’



*Raimundo is listening to the radio. He is listening to the news. ‘This is a memorable and historic day. It is the year 2015 and we are on the first space mission to the planet Venus. The commander is the famous astronaut, Captain Raimundo Sánchez ...’*



*The commander is the famous astronaut, Captain Raimundo Sánchez.*

---

# EXERCISES

## PERMISSION TO LEAVE

---

### **A** Comprehension

**1** These numbers are in the story. What do they refer to?

9

120

150

5

**2** Answer these questions.

- 1 Why are all the Controllers women?
- 2 How do Indira and Craig know about the sun, the sea, flowers and trees?
- 3 Why is the Chief Controller sad?
- 4 Where does Craig's family come from?
- 5 The Chief Controller gives Indira and Craig new names. What are these names?

**3** Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 A Warren is a transport system, like the Paris metro or the London tube.
- 2 The Chief Controller lived on the earth's surface a long time ago.
- 3 The Chief Controller is 120 years old.
- 4 No one is permitted to visit the earth's surface.
- 5 People can live for seven or eight years on the earth's surface before the sun kills them.

---

## **B** Working with Language

### **I** Write the correct question words in the gaps:

where who what why how

- 1 '..... do you want to ask me about?'
- 2 '..... do you want to go to the earth's surface?'
- 3 '..... did you get this book from?'
- 4 '..... told you about these things?'
- 5 '..... can you thank me?'

### **2** Match the sentence halves to make correct sentences.

- a The Chief Controller
  - b You must learn
  - c She is interested
  - d We prohibit these books
  - e We can be happy
- 
- i is sitting at a white table.
  - ii in their faces and their eyes.
  - iii about the Third World War.
  - iv on the surface.
  - v because they are dangerous.

## **C** Activities

- 1** Four or five days after the end of this story, Indira and Craig leave Warren Number 5. They go up to the earth's surface. They live in Europe. Write a letter from Indira and Craig to their parents in Warren Number 5.
- 2** You are the Chief Controller. You can go to the earth's surface for thirty minutes. Write a list of the things you want to do during your visit.

---

## CAN HELEN ESCAPE?

---

### A Comprehension

#### 1 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Helen is preparing to go on holiday with Gary.
- 2 Helen's mother makes all the decisions in the house.
- 3 Helen's brother is seventeen.
- 4 Helen knows how old Gary is.
- 5 Helen doesn't think about the future with Gary.

#### 2 Match the events with the times:

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 3.00 a.m. | Her parents' door opens.                          |
| 3.25 a.m. | Helen is going to meet Gary.                      |
| 3.30 a.m. | Helen hears her parents talking.                  |
| 3.40 a.m. | Helen is preparing her suitcase.                  |
| 3.45 a.m. | Helen's father opens and closes the window again. |
| 3.50 a.m. | Helen leaves the house.                           |
| 4.00 a.m. | Helen closes the suitcase.                        |

### B Working with Language

#### 1 Use these prepositions to complete the sentences.

into from in with out to for

- 1 Helen is different ..... her mother.
- 2 Two months ago a special boy came ..... her life.
- 3 He hit her face ..... his open hand.
- 4 Her father walked ..... of the room.
- 5 She is going to meet Gary ..... the street.
- 6 They are going to drive ..... a town 100 kilometres away.
- 7 They can stay there ..... two or three days.

---

## 2 Use these words to join the sentences together.

but so and

- 1 Helen thought Gary was special. Her father didn't like him.
- 2 Helen closed her suitcase. She left the house.
- 3 Her parents were not sleeping. She waited quietly.

## **C** Activities

- 1 What do you think Helen decided to do at the end of the story? Write the ending in 3-4 paragraphs.
- 2 Helen is only sixteen. Is she too young to leave home? In your opinion, what is the right age to:
  - have a small motorbike?/have a car?
  - vote in elections?
  - do military service?
  - see all kinds of films at the cinema?
  - get married?

---

## RAIMUNDO SÁNCHEZ - SUPERSTAR

---

### A Comprehension

**1** Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? In Raimundo's imagination:

- 1 His mother and father are in the room when he accepts his Oscar.
- 2 Raimundo gets two goals in the World Cup final.
- 3 The criminal has some money in his car.

**In the real world:**

- 4 Raimundo likes talking to Inés.
- 5 Mrs Guillamas thinks Raimundo doesn't have a lot of imagination.
- 6 The other boys and girls think that Raimundo is very funny.

**2** Find the answers to these questions.

- 1 Is the Oscar ceremony formal or informal? How do you know?
- 2 Why are the people at the Oscar ceremony impatient?
- 3 Why is Raimundo surprised to win the Oscar?
- 4 Why does the football commentator say, 'Sánchez is pure dynamite!'
- 5 Why does the criminal want to keep Inés?

### B Working with Language

**1** Write the opposites of the words in italics and then check your answers in the story.

- 1 It is a very *poor* state.
- 2 The *smallest* city is Los Angeles.
- 3 The women are wearing *cheap* dresses.
- 4 This is the *worst* day of his life.
- 5 Now he can give the *incorrect* answer
- 6 You are not *clever*.
- 7 He thinks about the *weakest* national teams.
- 8 Raimundo is not a *good* boy.

---

## 2 Match the verbs with the nouns.

to get	a goal
to win	a person
to discover	a bank
to rob	a door
to lock	a football match
to hit	a country

## **C** Activities

- 1 What happens in Raimundo's last dream about the space mission to Venus? Finish the story in two or three paragraphs.
- 2 Raimundo wants to be a famous Hollywood actor and football player, a hero and a famous astronaut. What do you want to be famous for? Write about your dream.

---

## G L O S S A R Y

**ball** (*n*) a round object used in a lot of sports

**brakes** (*n*) pedals that make a car stop

**dangerous** (*adj*) something that can make us ill or can be bad for us

**death** (*n*) opposite of life

**dream** (*n*) something that you want very much in your future life

**earth** (*n*) the planet we live on

**hope** (*v*) want something to be true

**in love** (*adj*) feel great romantic love for someone

**kiss** (*v*) touch someone with your lips

**Ladies and Gentlemen** (*n*) women and men (formal)

**lock** (*v*) close something with a key

**mistake** (*n*) an error

**Oscar** (*n*) a prize for the best actor, or actress and film-makers of the year

**parents** (*n*) your mother and father

**pink** (*adj*) a combination of red and white

**pretty** (*adj*) attractive, nice to look at (girl)

**prisoner** (*n*) a person in prison

**rob** (*v*) to take someone else's property, to take money from a bank

**safe** (*adj*) the opposite of dangerous\*

**screen** (*n*) the part of the computer that shows words and pictures

**smile** (*v*) make a happy face

**sound** (*n*) something that you hear

---

**suitcase** (*n*) a square or rectangular bag for travelling  
**superstar** (*n*) a famous person in sport, cinema or TV  
**surface** (*n*) the top part or exterior of something  
**truth** (*n*) everything that is true  
**wake** (*v*) make someone stop sleeping  
**war** (*n*) a military conflict between countries  
**warm** (*adj*) hot, but not very hot  
**warren** (*n*) holes that rabbits live in under the ground  
**win** (*v*) to come first in a match or competition  
**World Cup** (*n*) international football competition which is played every four years