



Icarus

THRUM. THRUM. THRUM.

Icarus craned his neck upwards and smiled. The gentle hum of the blades cutting through the air inches from his head calmed him. He allowed a chuckle to escape his lips. He tugged gently on a shoulder strap and felt the dizzying sensation of tilting through the air. The lush vineyards of Greece slipped by far below like a tablecloth being removed by a skilled conjurer.

For the first time in his life, Icarus felt alive. “I told them!” he screamed at the clouds, though his voice whipped away on the wind. Besides, he couldn’t be heard above the propellers. He meant it. He had told them. For years, the other inventors had mocked Icarus. When he’d put forward the idea of the electric car, they’d laughed him out of their meetings. When they finally hit the road, did they apologise? No chance. It had been the same with digital music. “Nobody needs to carry thousands of songs with them,” his detractors had wailed when he’d mooted the idea.

This one was different. Their reaction had been nothing more than he’d expected when he’d first said that he could build a jet-pack capable of carrying him from their town of Corinth to the enormous capital of Athens. Yet here he was, a thousand feet in the air and gliding peacefully over them all. Trains limped through the hills and valleys. Cars sat motionless in endless lines of traffic. All the while, he soared gracefully. Sure, his device was little more than a rucksack strapped to a drone, but it was doing what it needed to do. All he needed now was to make it to Athens to gain their respect.

But, a nagging thought crept into his mind like a snake in a burrow. Athens was all well and good, but it wasn’t exactly a long journey. What if he pushed on even further, to Kos, or maybe even Crete? Then there would be nobody who would doubt him.

Glistening on the horizon, Icarus spotted the tall masts of the ships docked in the port and the shining buildings in the capital centre. The whole thing grew closer, spreading out below him



and threatening to rear up and devour him. Just as the waiting party came in to view, he made a decision. He tugged hard on the straps and felt sick as the world tumbled for a moment before he righted himself and headed south, out into the open water.

Now he truly felt alive. The feeling before paled into comparison compared to the elation that gripped him as his view filled with calm aquamarine. He spun his head at the sound of cheers; the deck of a vast cruise-liner teemed with people waving him on. He waved back frantically, but soon the ship was lost behind him. Ahead, only the aching whiteness of the sun gave him a target to aim for.



Suddenly, Icarus felt a lurch and the blades sputtered to a halt. His stomach rose as his body fell, spinning wildly. The only thought that passed through his mind was, “I should’ve remembered a spare battery.”

INFERENCE

1. How is Icarus feeling in the first paragraph?
2. Why do you think Icarus felt alive?
3. Why had he expected their reaction when he first told them about the invention?
4. Why did he make the decision to keep on going?
5. Why does he say he “should’ve remembered a spare battery”?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

What does “craned” mean?

E

Explain how you know what Icarus thought of the other inventors.

R

What type of boat did Icarus see as he went out to see?

V

Use a dictionary to find the definition of “frantically”.

S

Retell the story to your partner making sure to include all of the key events.