Name: _____ Date: _____

Ottilie Gets Pluto

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 396 words

Ottilie's class was making a sky parade. Each child would carry a world on a stick. Ottilie pulled Pluto from the hat.

A boy looked over at her paper. He said that Pluto is not a planet. Ottilie frowned and went to ask Mr. Ferro.

Mr. Ferro said that Pluto is still there. "But a planet has three jobs," he said. He held up three fingers.

"Job one is to go around the Sun," he said. "Pluto does that," said Ottilie. He put down one finger.

"Job two: a planet pulls itself round, like a ball." Pluto is round, so down went a second finger.

"Job three is the hard one," said Mr. Ferro. A planet must be the boss of its path. It clears the other big things away.

Pluto shares its path with many icy neighbors. There are thousands of them out there. So Pluto does not do job three.

In 2006, sky scientists made a new name. Some small round worlds share their paths. They are called dwarf planets.

Pluto is the most famous dwarf planet. Lots of people were upset about the change. Ottilie was a little upset too.

So she found out more about Pluto. It is about half as wide as the United States. Even our Moon is wider.

Pluto is very far from the Sun. It is dark and cold there. Noon on Pluto is as dim as sunset here.

Pluto pulls on you much less than Earth. Say you weigh one hundred pounds here. On Pluto you would weigh seven.

Pluto goes around the Sun very slowly. One Pluto year is 248 of our years. Ottilie would never have a Pluto birthday.

Pluto has five moons. The biggest is Charon, half as big as Pluto.

On one side of Pluto, Charon hangs still. It never rises or sets.

In 2015, a spaceship flew past Pluto and took pictures. It saw tall mountains made of ice. It saw a big pale shape like a heart.

Ottilie found one more true thing. Long ago, a girl of eleven thought up Pluto's name.

She said it at breakfast. Her mother and grandfather were at the table.

Ottilie cut a pale paper heart and glued it on. At the parade, she held her Pluto up high.

It was small and round and very far away. What would you put on your Pluto?

Questions

1. Which job does Pluto not do?

A. Go around the Sun
B. Clear the big things out of its path
C. Be round like a ball

2. What is a dwarf planet?

A. A small round world that shares its path
B. A planet with no moons
C. A star that has gone out

3. In this book, what does "neighbors" mean?

A. People who live next door
B. Icy things that share Pluto's path
C. Moons that go around Pluto

4. Why did Ottilie glue a paper heart on her Pluto?

A. The spaceship saw a heart shape on Pluto
B. Mr. Ferro told her to
C. Her paper Pluto was broken

5. How long is one Pluto year?

A. One of our years
B. Twelve of our years
C. 248 of our years

Words to know

planet: world circling Sun
dwarf: small kind
path: way it travels
neighbors: things close by
parade: show walking together

Answer key: Ottilie Gets Pluto

1. B. Clear the big things out of its path
2. A. A small round world that shares its path
3. B. Icy things that share Pluto's path
4. A. The spaceship saw a heart shape on Pluto
5. C. 248 of our years