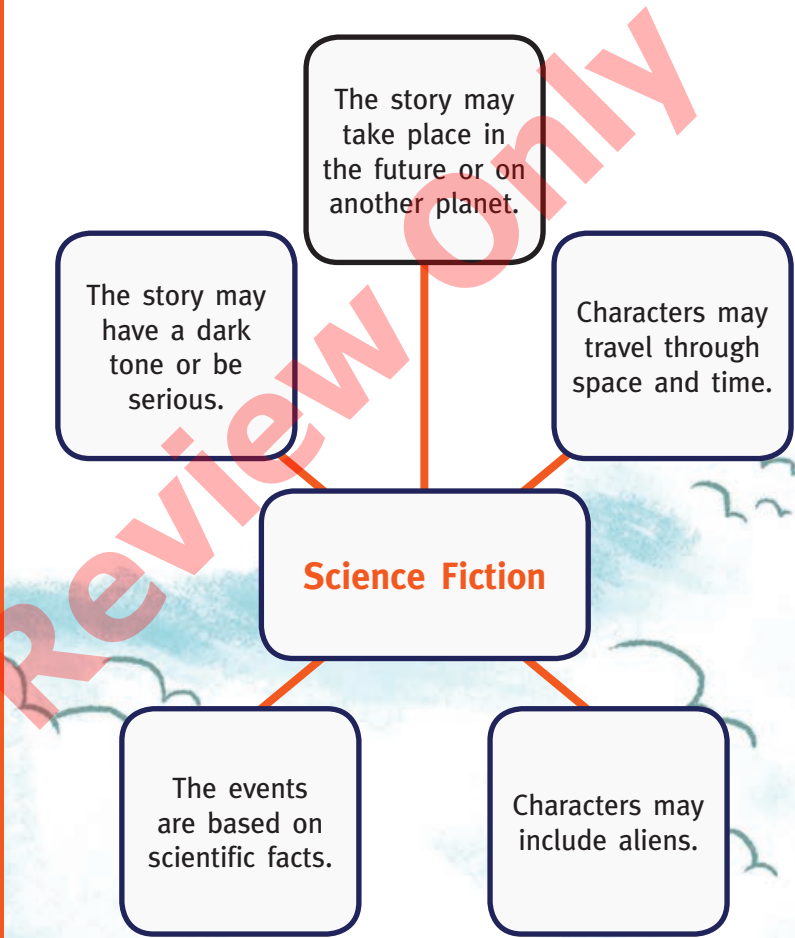


DR. SUZO'S BLIZZARD BUSTERS



Science Fiction

Look for the genre features noted below as you read this book. Use the features to help you understand the text.



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THE DAY AFTER THE STORM

Crack! Bang! Boom!

The sound of the crash woke Wenzel up. He leaped out of bed to see what had caused all the noise.

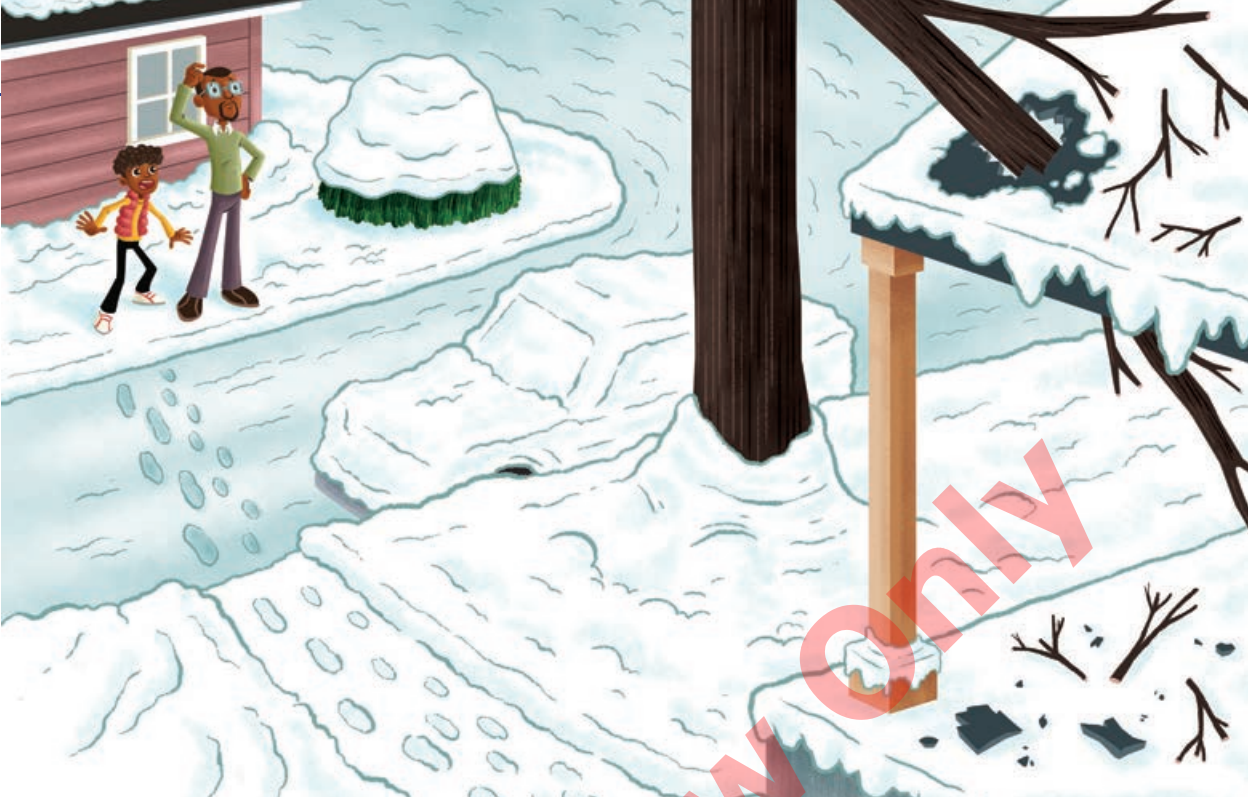
When Wenzel looked out of his bedroom window, he saw his father was already outside, inspecting the damage. A large branch, heavy with ice and snow, had split from the maple tree in the front yard and fallen down onto the roof of the front porch. Wenzel quickly got dressed and walked outside toward his dad.

“Yikes,” shouted his dad, “that was close. I’ll have to call the insurance company—once we get phone service back. That was one strong blizzard last night. It took down trees, power lines, and telephone poles.”

Wenzel looked around. “No school today, I’m guessing,” he said.

“No chance,” said his father. “It looks like you may get the whole week off. More snow is expected over the next few days.”

“Maybe I’ll go check on Dr. Suzo and see what he’s doing,” Wenzel said thoughtfully.



“Great, just come back later to help shovel the driveway,” responded his dad.

“Sure thing, Dad,” said Wenzel as he turned to go.

Dr. Suzo lived in Wenzel’s neighborhood. His old house stood at the far end of their long, winding road. Dr. Suzo was a scientist, an inventor, who worked at home in his basement lab. And he always had a solution whenever Wenzel had a problem. As Wenzel made his way to Dr. Suzo’s house, he thought of all the times Dr. Suzo had helped him, like during last summer’s heat wave.

During the summer, Wenzel worked at the town pool's snack bar. It was so hot in July that the frozen juice pops he made melted off their sticks before kids could finish them. The area around the pool became covered with slick puddles of sticky melted juice.

Wenzel went to see Dr. Suzo and explained the problem. Before Wenzel was done telling the story, the doctor already had a solution.

"Snow sticks," he said, "I invented them a few years ago but never put them to use."

"What are ... snow sticks?" asked Wenzel

"They replace the wooden sticks you use to make ice pops. They remain frozen even in the summer heat. So as the pop melts into liquid, the snow stick freezes it back into a solid. Pops stay frozen bite after bite, no matter how hot the weather."



Dr. Suzo handed Wenzel a box filled with hundreds of the snow sticks. “So glad they will finally get used,” he said. The sticky-mess pool problem was history.

The doctor had also helped Wenzel with his bus pass problem. Wenzel kept losing his bus pass. He left it at school. He lost it in the library. He forgot it at friends’ homes. Most of the time, it didn’t matter, but there was one serious bus driver who wouldn’t let Wenzel on the school bus without the pass.

“I try not to lose it,” Wenzel told Dr. Suzo, “but no matter how hard I try, I still do!”

“You need a pigeon,” said Dr. Suzo.

“How would a bird keep me from being forgetful?” asked Wenzel.

“Nothing can keep you from being forgetful, I’m afraid,” said the doctor. “But a robo-pigeon can help you when you are.”

Dr. Suzo pulled out a tiny mechanical bird from his pocket, about the size of a library pencil. “This one finds my keys. Watch this.”

The doctor pushed a button on the back of the tiny bird. The bird's miniature wings began flapping rapidly. Then, the robo-pigeon zoomed out of the doctor's hand and glided down the hall. A few minutes later, it reappeared with the doctor's key ring grasped firmly in its beak.

"It's portable and powerful. I'll program one to find your bus pass. Of course, if you lose the pigeon, I can't help you," the doctor chuckled.

The robo-pigeon turned out to be a lifesaver. Whenever Wenzel lost his bus pass, the little flying robot retrieved it.



And then there was the floatboard. On the night before a big skateboard competition, Wenzel was practicing a trick and snapped the back wheels off his board. He took the broken board to Dr. Suzo, hoping that the doctor could fix it.

“Piece of cake!” said Dr. Suzo when Wenzel showed him his broken board. Wenzel was relieved; he had thought fixing it would be impossible.

But the doctor had new wheels securely in place in minutes. The next day, Wenzel took first place in the skateboarding competition.

When he rode over to Dr. Suzo’s to tell him the news and thank him again for his help, the doctor had a surprise for him.

“Congratulations! Now that you’ve mastered a board with wheels,” said Dr. Suzo, as he pulled a new board off a shelf, “I’d like you to give this **prototype** a try.”

“Dr. Suzo, there are no wheels on this,” said Wenzel.

“No need,” said Dr. Suzo. “The floatboard never touches the ground. It uses magnetic force.”

“Whoa, how?” asked Wenzel.

“You know how you can make magnets repel each other?”

“Sure. You place like poles together.”

“Precisely. This magnetic steel-skinned board basically does the same thing. It generates an opposing magnetic field that repels the metallic **elements** in blacktop, concrete, and soil. So, the ground and the board repel each other. You can hover about however you like.”

“Whoa!” said Wenzel. He didn’t fully understand the science, but he definitely became the coolest skateboarder in town.

Wenzel had plenty of time to contemplate the doctor’s incredible inventions as he walked down the street. The snow was so deep that trudging through it seemed to take forever. Finally, he reached Dr. Suzo’s house, climbed the steps, and rang the bell.



THE REAL-WORLD TEST

Wenzel waited a long time for Dr. Suzo to come to the door. That wasn't unusual. When Dr. Suzo was working in his laboratory, it often took him a few minutes to get upstairs. What happened next was unusual. Dr. Suzo opened the door and started speaking before Wenzel could even say hello.

"Wenzel, you're right on time. I've got a problem."

"You've got a problem?" said a surprised Wenzel. "I'm usually the one who has the problem."

"Things change, Wenzel. I need your help."

"I'll be happy to try." Wenzel never imagined he'd be the one doing the helping.

Dr. Suzo led him down to the lab. "Take a look," he said. "This may be my greatest invention yet, just what everyone needs after a winter storm like this."

Sitting on top of the lab table was a pair of interesting-looking snow boots. Wenzel was confused.

"Snow boots, Dr. Suzo?" asked Wenzel. "People certainly need them in weather like this, but they've already been invented!"