

“Kaleidoscope” (1951) by Ray Bradbury

Questions for discussion

1. The opening line is: “The first concussion cut the rocket up the side with a giant can opener.” What do we get from this?
2. What happens to the astronauts right after the accident?
3. How does Stimson react?
4. Applegate tells Hollis to shut up (page 2). What does this reaction show us about their situation?
5. Hollis kills one of the men because he is screaming (end of page 2). How does this scene make you feel?
6. How does their situation affect the crew’s hierarchy?
7. Discuss the conflict between Applegate and Hollis (page 3).
8. Discuss the conflict between Hollis and Lespere (page 4) and their different views on life and death.
9. What is Lespere’s most important line?
10. Why does Applegate’s attitude towards Hollis change after Hollis’ and Lespere’s conflict?
11. Discuss Stone’s situation and his reaction when he ends up in a meteor swarm.
12. Discuss the metaphor between a human body and a spaceship (end of page 6).
13. How do you interpret the last scene of the short story?
14. How does the setting function in the story?
15. What are the humorous elements in the story and how do they function in relation to the story?
16. Discuss the science fiction genre of the story.