

# Grade 4

A Humorous Fictional Story  
("The Day Gravity Failed")



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# A Humorous Fictional Story ("The Day Gravity Failed")

## The Task

Students were asked to write a humorous fictional story describing a specific event that could have occurred in their lives on a day that gravity failed. They were asked to use a story map to develop their ideas and to suggest a solution to the challenges faced on that day. They were reminded to work with peer editors to check each other's work for errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

The following are the "overall expectations" that relate to this task:

*By the end of Grade 4, students will:*

- communicate ideas and information for a variety of purposes and to specific audiences;
- organize and develop ideas using paragraphs (e.g., to tell a story);
- use simple and compound sentences and vary their sentence structure;
- produce pieces of writing using a variety of specific forms (e.g., a humorous story);
- revise and edit their work, using feedback from the teacher and their peers;
- proofread and correct their final drafts, focusing on grammar, punctuation, and spelling;
- use and spell correctly the vocabulary appropriate for this grade;
- use correctly the conventions (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation) specified for this grade.

During this task, students worked on the following selected "expectations in specific areas" from the Grade 4 curriculum:

*By the end of Grade 4, students will:*

- use a variety of sentence types correctly and appropriately (e.g., questions, exclamations);
- choose words that are most effective for their purpose (e.g., to describe vividly);
- use a dictionary and a thesaurus;
- use proper form for paragraphs (e.g., indentation, spacing, margins).

## Previous Learning Experiences

It was suggested that before attempting the task, students should have had experience with the following:

- using visual organizers for planning a story
- process writing
- using a dictionary and thesaurus for editing
- reading and writing humorous stories
- comparing their work to criteria outlined on task-specific charts like the rubrics included in this booklet

## The Process Used

Teachers used the following process:

**Prewriting.** Teachers introduced the concept of gravity by showing a video clip, illustration, or photograph that illustrated people or objects suspended in space or by describing or reading a description of how the force of gravity affects us. Students then discussed what life on earth is like with gravity and what it would be like without gravity (e.g., if you brushed your teeth without gravity, the toothpaste would float away, the toothbrush might only brush the top teeth, and the tap water would float upward in the room).

Using a think-pair-share activity, students thought of scenarios from their daily lives that would be humorous if “gravity failed for a day” and then discussed their ideas with partners. As students orally presented their scenarios, teachers helped them organize their thoughts for their stories by charting their ideas under the headings “Setting”, “Character”, “Problem”, and “Solution”:

Setting	Character	Problem	Solution

**Drafting.** After reviewing the components of a story map (presented in the student package) and discussing how a first draft of a story is created from the ideas written on a story map, each student constructed his or her own story map and then wrote a first draft of his or her story. (The class might also cooperatively develop a set of achievement-level descriptors at this time.)

**Revising.** Teachers reviewed with their students the criteria for a quality story using the checklist included in the student package (or any similar alternative).

**Editing.** Teachers reviewed with students the criteria for revising and editing using the checklists provided in the student package (or any similar alternatives). Students revised or edited their own work and then worked in pairs to complete a peer revision or edit of their work.

**Publishing.** Students wrote their final copies using resources such as computers, dictionaries, and thesauruses.

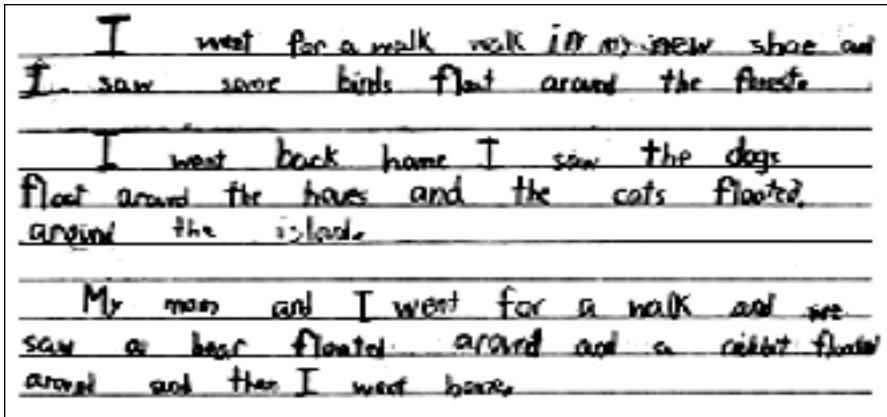
**Reflecting.** After finishing their final copies, students reflected on the process they had used by filling out the reflection sheet provided in the student package.

Teachers then evaluated students' work using the rubric reproduced on the next page.

## Grade 4: Rubric for a Humorous Fictional Story

Categories	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Reasoning</b>	<b>The student:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– complexity of ideas and connection to the story line</li> <li>– number and relevance of supporting facts and details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– uses only a very few simple ideas that have little or no connection to the story line</li> <li>– uses very few supporting details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– uses simple ideas that are connected to the story line</li> <li>– uses some supporting details</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– uses developed ideas that are connected to the story line</li> <li>– uses sufficient supporting details to clarify the point of the story</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– uses well-developed, interesting ideas that advance the story line</li> <li>– uses imaginative details that develop the story line</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<b>In the student's story:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– purpose: to write a humorous story</li> <li>– voice (feelings, opinions, attitudes)</li> <li>– word use and vocabulary (e.g., descriptive words)</li> <li>– sentence variety</li> <li>– use of literary elements such as humour and exaggeration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the purpose of the writing is unclear to the reader</li> <li>– the writer's voice is not evident</li> <li>– the vocabulary is limited or used inappropriately, with few descriptive words</li> <li>– only simple sentences are used</li> <li>– literary devices are not used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the purpose of the writing is somewhat clear to the reader</li> <li>– there is some evidence of the writer's voice</li> <li>– a limited variety of vocabulary is used appropriately but with limited effect</li> <li>– some variety in sentences is evident, but the types of sentences are limited</li> <li>– there is limited use of literary devices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the purpose of the writing is clear to the reader</li> <li>– there is clear evidence of the writer's voice</li> <li>– a wide variety of vocabulary is used appropriately to add descriptive detail to the story</li> <li>– a variety of sentences are used</li> <li>– some literary devices are used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the purpose of the writing is clear and engages the reader</li> <li>– the writer's voice is clear and sustains the reader's interest</li> <li>– an extensive vocabulary creates images or pictures for the reader</li> <li>– a wide variety of sentences enhance the writing</li> <li>– a number of literary devices have been used effectively</li> </ul>
<b>Organization</b>	<b>The student's story:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– overall structure (beginning, middle, and end)</li> <li>– paragraph structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– has no clear beginning, middle, or end</li> <li>– contains ideas and details that are unconnected and has no paragraph structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– shows some evidence of a beginning, a middle, and an end</li> <li>– includes ideas and details that are somewhat connected within paragraphs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– has a clear beginning, a middle, and a logical end</li> <li>– has sentences that are linked together in paragraphs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– flows smoothly, progressing logically from the beginning to the middle to the end</li> <li>– has sentences that are clearly organized in paragraphs to develop the story line</li> </ul>
<b>Conventions</b>	<b>The student:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– grammar, spelling, punctuation</li> <li>– visual presentation (e.g., indentations, spacing, margins, title)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– uses very few of the conventions studied correctly</li> <li>– produces a visual presentation that is not clear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– uses some of the conventions studied correctly</li> <li>– produces a visual presentation that is basically clear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– uses most of the conventions studied correctly</li> <li>– produces a clear visual presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– uses all or almost all of the conventions studied correctly</li> <li>– produces a clear and effective visual presentation that enhances the story</li> </ul>

"THE DAY GRAVITY FAILED"



I went for a walk walk in my new shoe and I saw some birds float around the forest.

I went back home I saw the dogs float around the houses and the cats floated around the island.

My mom and I went for a walk and we saw a bear floated around and a rabbit floated around and then I went home.

### Teachers' Notes

#### Reasoning

- includes only a few simple ideas
- provides few supporting details

#### Communication

- the purpose of the writing is unclear to the reader
- the writer's voice is not yet evident
- the vocabulary is limited and few descriptive elements are included
- only simple sentences are used; literary elements of humour and exaggeration are not evident

#### Organization

- the beginning, middle, and end are unclear
- the ideas or sentences are unconnected, and the paragraphs are incomplete

#### Conventions

- correctly uses some of the conventions studied
- produces a visual presentation that is somewhat clear

#### Comments

Although the printing is neat, the lack of details and clear purpose make it a level 1.

## "THE DAY GRAVITY FAILED"

One sunny morning Gravity Failed  
 Tyler and Brandon started flot South  
 and Staed of Noth our bite were going  
 crazy. The handel bars i were going  
 up and down and back and forth. Brandon  
 and Tyler graded on to each other.

There were other bikes and  
 an imals are folating in the air  
 Grabag cans and bule boxs.  
 Other bikes and people were  
 floting.

Brandon grab the pole. "I will  
 grad on to you". Then we will try  
 to go dound the pole To pone my mom  
 or my Nana. Then she can come to rescue  
 ues.

One sunny morning Gravity Failed. Tyler and Brandon started flot South and Staed of Noth our bike were going crazy. The handel bars were going up and down and back and forth. Brandon and Tyler graded on to each other.

There were other bikes and animals are folating in the air Grabag cans and bule boxs. Other bikes and people were floting.

"Brandon grab the pole". "I will grad on to you". then we will try to go dound the pole To pone my mom or my Nana. Then she can come to rescue ues.

## Teachers' Notes

## Reasoning

- includes little description
- provides a few supporting details

## Communication

- the purpose is stated but not developed
- words are omitted

## Organization

- the beginning is clear, but a middle and an ending are not evident
- some sentences are not complete; periods are missing

## Conventions

- there are many spelling inconsistencies and many spelling errors in simple words
- word endings are frequently omitted

## Comments

Several letter reversals and incomplete sentences made this story difficult to read.

## "THE DAY GRAVITY FAILED"

One day when I woke up, I realized there was no gravity because my bed was floating.

I floated downstairs, But it's kind of hard to walk downstairs when your floating. I had a big bruise on my head. The man on the news said that gravity will only be gone for a day.

"Good," I said. "Because if it goes on for more than a day, I'll have to get stitches on my forehead from bumping it so hard!"

I floated to school. All of the other people were floating, too. When I finally got to school, I saw my 2 friends, Bob and Fred. They said that it's kind of weird that there's no gravity either.

I also saw my teacher, Mrs. Wrinkle Dinkle. She looked really funny floating around. School finally ended, and I floated back home.

After I got to my house, I was glad that gravity would be back tomorrow.

"Steph, bad news!" mom called from downstairs.

"Gravity is not back till next week!"

One day when I woke up, I realized there was no gravity because my bed was floating.

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"Steph, bad news!" mom called from downstairs.

"Gravity is not back till next week!"

## Teachers' Notes

### Reasoning

- includes simple ideas that have some connection to the story line
- provides some supporting details (the story mostly makes sense)

### Communication

- the purpose of the writing is somewhat clear to the reader
- there is some evidence of voice
- the vocabulary is used appropriately but with limited effect
- some compound sentences are used, but the variety of sentences is limited
- an attempt has been made to use literary elements of humour and exaggeration

### Organization

- there is some evidence of a beginning, a middle, and an end
- the sentences are somewhat connected and paragraphs are partially developed

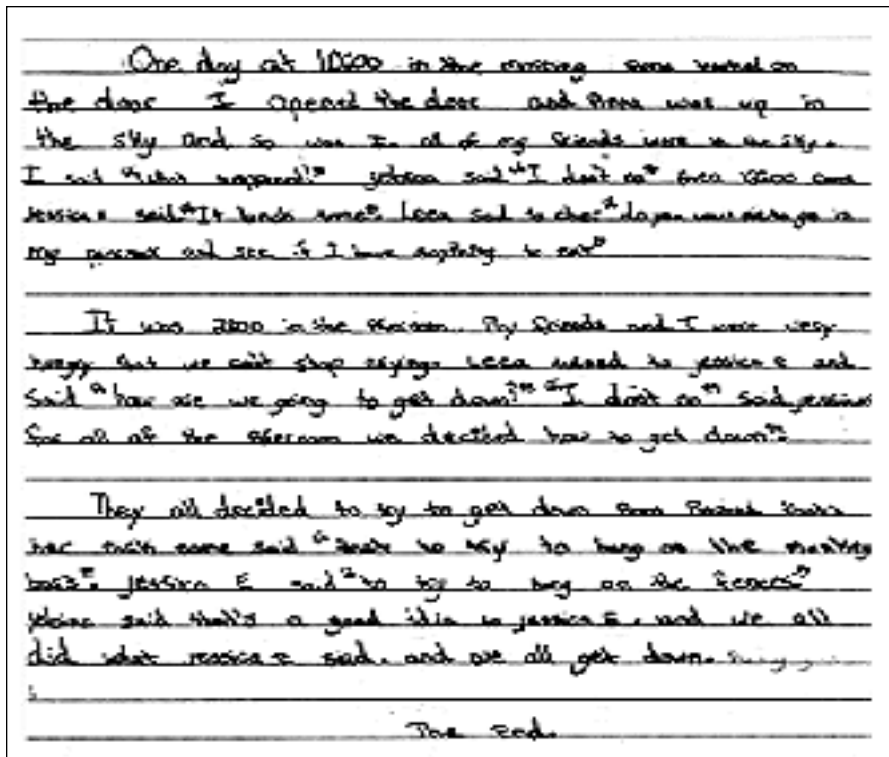
### Conventions

- correctly uses some of the conventions studied
- produces a visual presentation that is somewhat clear

### Comments

Spelling is very good!

"THE DAY GRAVITY FAILED"



One day at 10:00 in the morning Anna knocked on the door I opened the door and Anna was up in the sky and so was I. all of my friends were in the sky. I said "What happened!" yolaina said "I don't no" then 12:00 came Jessica E said "It lunch time". Leea said to cher "do you want me to go in my packsack and see if I have anything to eat"

It was 2:00 in the Afernoon. My friends and I were very hungry that we can't stop crying. Leea turned to jessica E and Said "how are we going to get down?" "I don't no" said jessica E for all of the Afternoon we decided how to get down".

They all decided to try to get down Anna Banana that's her nick name said "that to try to hang on the monkey bar's". jessica E said "to try to hang on the fences." yolaina said that's a good idia to jessica E. and we all did what jessica E said. and we all get down.

The End.

### Teachers' Notes

#### Reasoning

- includes ideas that have some connection to the story line
- provides some supporting details (the story mostly makes sense)

#### Communication

- the purpose of the writing is somewhat clear to the reader
- there is some evidence of the writer's voice
- the vocabulary is used appropriately but with limited effect
- some compound sentences are used, but the variety of sentences is limited
- an attempt has been made to use literary elements of humour and exaggeration

#### Organization

- there is some evidence of a beginning, a middle, and an end
- the sentences are somewhat connected and paragraphs are partially developed

#### Conventions

- correctly uses some of the conventions studied
- produces a visual presentation that is somewhat clear

#### Comments

The student communicates surprise and anxiety to the reader and would benefit from instruction on how to use dialogue.

"THE DAY GRAVITY FAILED"

The Day Gravity Failed

It was 7:00 Monday night. I had just arrived at the soccer field on my bike when I saw my team-mate Vincent, he was practicing shooting at the net. I asked if I could join in, he said "sure dude". After a few hard kicks we noticed that we couldn't kick the ball into the huge net, it just kept going over. Then the ball started floating. We noticed that the ball wasn't the only thing floating we were floating too.

After a while I noticed a radio floating about thirty feet away from me. I told Vincent about it and we started to move slowly toward the radio. Finally we reached the radio. We turned it on and listened. It said that the evil Doctor Mad-Man had shrunk the earth with his super-sonic ray gun and all gravity had disappeared. David and Vincent didn't know what to do.

After a while Vincent had an idea, it was to blow the planet back up with straws. They said it on the radio and then at exactly 5:00 everyone on earth put a straw into the earth and blew as hard as they could into it and the earth grew back to normal. Oh! and Dr. Mad-Man, he got zapped by the ray gun and died.

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## Teachers' Notes

### Reasoning

- includes developed ideas that are connected to the story line
- provides many supporting details

### Communication

- the purpose of the writing is clear to the reader
- there is clear evidence of the writer's voice
- vocabulary is used appropriately to add descriptive detail to the story
- a variety of both simple and compound sentences are used
- literary elements of humour and exaggeration are evident

### Organization

- the progression from the beginning to the middle to the ending is logical
- the sentences are linked together in paragraphs, and paragraphs are used to tell a story

### Conventions

- correctly uses most of the conventions studied
- produces a clear visual presentation

### Comments

The student engages the reader through the use of asides and speech. The student makes minor errors in punctuation. We enjoyed his novel solution to the problem. Who is David? I assume he is the storywriter. However, if not, he only appears once in the story.

"THE DAY GRAVITY FAILED"

"The day gravity failed"

Tiffanie and Grace were racing on a race track and Grace was in the lead by 1m. It was 12:00 on a Saturday morning. Tiffanie was catching up. Then suddenly that was the time gravity failed.

In 1 milisecond they were in the air. Tiffanie asked Grace "What's wrong?" "Did I ever tell you I was motion sick?" Grace squealed "No." Tiffanie said looking puzzled. "The gravity must have failed!" Yelled Tiffanie. "Exactly" Grace snapped. "Then how are we supposed to race?" Tiffanie wondered. I don't know Grace answered.

"I have an idea!" suggested Grace. "Maybe we should have a flying contest." "Yeah!" exclaimed Tiffanie. "We could fly home after." Grace won the race. When they were almost home Grace whispered "Oh, no, I have to brush my teeth or else my mom won't let me go to a concert." "Well I hope you deal with it." Said Tiffanie. By the time Grace came home the gravity came back and she got to go to the concert.

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## Teachers' Notes

### Reasoning

- includes developed ideas that are connected to the story line
- provides many supporting details (the story makes sense)

### Communication

- the purpose of the writing is clear to the reader
- there is clear evidence of the writer's voice
- vocabulary is used appropriately to add descriptive detail to the story
- a variety of both simple and compound sentences are used
- literary elements of humour and exaggeration are evident

### Organization

- the progression from the beginning to the middle to the ending is logical
- sentences are linked together in paragraphs, and paragraphs are used to tell a story

### Conventions

- correctly uses most of the conventions studied
- produces a visual presentation that is clear

### Comments

The use of humour and synonyms helps engage and clarify the piece for the reader.  
The writer fails to use capitals in the title.

## "THE DAY GRAVITY FAILED"

The Day Gravity Failed

One day I woke up on the wrong side of the bed. I didn't bang into the wall! Everything was floating! Even I was floating. I went to go wake up my sister but I couldn't reach her! I went to go wake up my Mom but she was already awake. She was white! I mean real white! I asked her, "how did this happen?" My Mom didn't say anything. Just then my dog came in the room. He was floating upside down! We laughed. "Where's Terra?" asked Mom. I couldn't answer. I tried and tried but not a peep came from my mouth.

Then we heard a loud scream. "Ahhh!" It was my sister. She was sideways in the air! "Help!" she cried. "I can't get up!" We helped her up. "What's going on?" she asked. "Well, there's not any gravity" said Mom. "This can't be happening" said Terra. Terra tried to talk but she couldn't! "What happened to your voices?" asked Mom. We didn't answer.

We searched around the house for are voices. I felt really silly, and I think my Mom did too. We didn't find are voices and now it was time for bed. Then I floated up to the ceiling and hit my head. I couldn't say ouch so I just rubbed my head. The very next day we had gravity again. I put a chair on my bed and stood on it and I tied a pillow to the ceiling where I hit my head. I only did that so if gravity ever failed again I wouldn't hurt my head. I also got my voice back or should I say my sister's! What am I going to do? Oh well I guess I'll have to live with it!

The End

**The Day Gravity Failed**

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We searched around the house for are voices. I felt really silly and I think my Mom did too. We didn't find are voices and now it was time for bed. Then I floated up to the ceiling and hit my head. I couldn't say ouch so I just rubbed my head. The very next day we had gravity again. I put a chair on my bed and stood on it and I tied a pillow to the ceiling where I hit my head. I only did that so if gravity ever failed again I wouldn't hurt my head. I also got my voice back or should I say my sister's! What am I going to do? Oh well I guess I'll have to live with it!

The End

## Teachers' Notes

### Reasoning

- includes well-developed ideas that are all connected to the story line
- provides imaginative details that advance and develop the story line

### Communication

- the writing has a clear purpose and engages the reader
- the words used create images for the reader
- the sentence variety enhances the story

### Organization

- the story is well developed
- the paragraphs flow

### Conventions

- there are a few minor errors
- overall a level 4 for conventions regardless of different indentations

### Comments

The story has an interesting ending.

"THE DAY GRAVITY FAILED"

We need Gravity

One morning, I got up to get something to eat like some cereal or toaster strudels. While I was going to eat, I realized it wasn't working, so I went to see if there was still food. There was food all right, all over the ceiling. Then I realized gravity had failed.

I went to get dressed. I chased after my underwear and my socks. They were in the lead but I caught up thanks to swimming lessons. I went outside boy was that unsmart. I got stuck on a hydro pole. Luckily I escaped and remembered I was hungry. I went to a snack bar and got a double beef patti Big Mac. I was literally in heaven because when I was eating I got pulled up to the angels. They told me to move to the moon. I was like "what?"

Somebody told my mom and dad that the planets were going clockwise instead of counter clockwise. He also exclaimed that the moon had all the gravity. I didn't believe him but if he was telling the truth, then I could eat again. On Tuesday everybody on earth was moving to the moon. By Wednesday everybody was settled in and ready to start again and invent new food for me because I own Subway now. Cool huh!

**We need Gravity**

One morning, I got up to get something to eat like some cereal or toaster strudels. While I was going to eat I realized I wasn't walking, so I swam to see if there was still food. There was food all right, all over the ceiling. Then I realized gravity had failed.

I went to get dressed. I chased after my underwear and my socks. They were in the lead but I caught up thanks to swimming lessons. I went outside boy was that unsmart. I got stuck on a hydro pole. Luckily I escaped and remembered "I was hungry". I went to a snack bar and got a double beef patti Big Mac. I was literally in heaven because when I was eating I got pulled up to the angels. They told me to move to the moon. I was like "what"?

Somebody told my mom and dad that the planets were going clockwise instead of counter clockwise, he also exclaimed that the moon had all the gravity. I didn't believe him but if he was telling the truth then I could eat again. On Tuesday everybody on earth was moving to the moon. By Wednesday everybody was settled in and ready to start again and invent new food for me because I own Subway now. Cool huh!

## Teachers' Notes

### Reasoning

- includes well-developed ideas that all connect to the story line
- provides imaginative details that advance and develop the story line

### Communication

- the purpose of the writing is clear and engages the reader
- the writer's voice is clear and sustains reader interest
- the vocabulary used creates images or pictures for the reader
- the sentence variety enhances the writing
- literary devices have been used effectively

### Organization

- the progression from the beginning to the middle to the end is logical and well developed
- sentences are clearly organized in paragraphs to further develop the story line

### Conventions

- the writer correctly uses all or almost all of the conventions studied
- there is a clear and effective visual presentation that enhances the story

### Comments

This most enjoyable story is an interesting explanation for gravity failing.