They were not railway children to begin with. I don’t suppose they had ever thought
about railways except as a means of getting to Maskelyne and cook’s, the Pantomime,
Zoological Gardens and Madame Tussaud’s. They were just ordinary suburban children,
and they lived with their Father and Mother in an ordinary red-brick-fronted villa, with
coloured glass in the front door, a tiled passage that was called a hall, a bathroom with
hot and cold water, electric bells, French windows, and a good deal of white paint, and
‘every modern convenience’, as the house-agents say. There were three of them.
Roberta was the eldest. Of course, Mothers never have favourites, but if their Mother
had a favourite, it might have been Roberta. Next came Peter, who wished to be an
Engineer when he grew up; and the youngest was Phyllis, who meant extremely well.
Mother did not spend all her time in paying dull calls to dull ladies, and sitting dully at
home waiting for dull ladies to pay calls to her. She was almost always there, ready to
play with the children, and read to them, and help them to do their home-lessons.
Besides this she used to write stories for them while they were at school, and read
them aloud after tea, and she always made up funny pieces of poetry for their
birthdays and for other great occasions, such as the christening of new kittens, or the
furnishing of the doll’s house, or the time when they were getting over the mumps.

These three lucky children always had everything they needed: pretty clothes, good
fires, a lovely nursery with heaps of toys, and a Mother Goose wallpaper. They had a
kind and merry nursemaid, and a dog who was called James and who was their very own.
They also had a Father who was just perfect - never cross, never unjust, and always
ready for a game - at least, if at any time he was not ready, he always had an excellent
reason for it, and explained the reason to the children so interestingly and funnily that
they felt sure he couldn’t help himself. You will think that they ought to have been
very happy. And so, they were, but they did not know how happy till the pretty life in
Edgecombe Villa was over and done with, and they had to live a very different life
indeed.

I pulled on my elastic haptic gloves and flexed my fingers to make sure none of the
joints was sticking. They were an old model released in 2040, but they still worked fine.
Then I grabbed my OASIS console, a flat black rectangle about the size of a
paperback book. It fit snugly around my eyes like a pair of swimmer’s goggles, blocking
out all external lights. Small ear buds extended from the visor and automatically
plugged themselves into my ears. The visor also housed two built-in stereo voice
microphones to pick up everything I said.

I powered up the console and saw a brief flash of red as the console scanned my
retinas. Then I cleared my throat and said my log-in phrase. After it was accepted, the
familiar phrase I had saw so many times appeared before me. These three words were always the last thing an OASIS user saw before leaving the real world and entering the virtual one: READY PLAYER ONE.

Text three:

As the young girl opened her window, she could see the moons Europa and Callipso rising in the distance. A comet flashed by, followed by a trail of stardust, illuminating the dark, endless space that surrounded the spacecraft; the only place she had ever known as home. As she gazed at Jupiter, she dreamed of a life where she wasn't stuck orbiting a planet, but living on one. She envisioned stepping onto land, real land, like in the stories of Earth her father had told her about. She tried to imagine the taste of fresh air, the feel of a cool, salty ocean, and the sound of wind rustling through a tree's green leaves. But these were only fantasies, not memories. She had been born on the ship, and if they didn't find a new inhabitable planet soon, she would surely die there too.

Text four:

I remember him as if it were yesterday, as he came plodding to the inn door, his sea-chest following behind him in a hand-barrow—a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man, his tarry pigtail falling over the shoulder of his soiled blue coat, his hands ragged and scarred, with black, broken nails, and the sabre cut across one cheek, a dirty, livid white. I remember him looking round the cover and whistling to himself as he did so, and then breaking out in that old sea-song that he sang so often afterwards:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest-- Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

in the high, old tottering voice that seemed to have been tuned and broken at the capstan bars. Then he rapped on the door with a bit of stick like a handspike that he carried, and when my father appeared, called roughly for a glass of rum. This, when it was brought to him, he drank slowly, like a connoisseur, lingering on the taste and still looking about him at the cliffs and up at our signboard.
A flash of light and I was 'awake' again. I took a moment to process my surroundings and then started my daily routines. I checked my joints and power core and ran several diagnostics on my processors. After a moment, I rose up and disconnected my power supply and made my way through the ship. As I moved from room to room, the ship's lights blinked into existence, as if the ship was itself waking up from a long slumber. I made my way into the crews' quarters and monitored their vital signs as they slept peacefully in their stasis units. They had been asleep for almost 40 years now but would not look a day older than when they first left Earth when they finally awoke in a week's time. The thought of them up and walking around the ship filled me with fear and excitement. Well, what I considered to be fear and excitement. I wasn't really sure to be perfectly honest.