

The Wormhole

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Smack bang in the middle of space, further from earth humankind had ever been, a mile-long, raindrop-shaped spaceship spun wildly out of control.

The ship had no propulsion, and definitely no wings that would be silly. Instead it had 5 arms reaching out from it's hull. These arms had 3 metal claws each, and these claws had 2 joints each. The claws could grip onto any asteroid within reach, and if the asteroid was sufficiently heavy, the ship would use it as an anchor, pushing off and launching away. If the asteroid was small, the arm would fling it as hard as it could opposite to where the ship wished to go, relying on Newton's second law to propel the ship along.

The ship had missed it's most recent destination, hurling past with no asteroids to help. The ship and its crew had since been adrift for six months, spinning erratically the whole time and hoping to find something worth grabbing on to.

Power was waning, and sacrifices had to be made. For example, every Monday was a gravity free day. At first it was met with groans and mumbles, but now the crew was accustomed to the feeling of organs swimming around in their guts once a week. They had also learnt how to run their daily errands without a hitch. However, forgetting your suction shoes come Monday morning could leave you stranded for hours.

Inside the ship, red lights flashed at every corner. This was emergency red too, not the coral red that signified lunch time. Along with the lights, klaxons screamed warnings throughout the corridors.

"Code red! This is not a lunch break! This is code red for danger and emergency! Code red!"

Beneath the lights and klaxons, crew members hurried left and right. They were all fearful over the unknown cause of the emergency. But stronger than their fear was their nerves, nervous that someone would notice they didn't know what was going on and were only trying to look busy.

In section number 554 of the ship - which was not used for anything, they had plenty of space for everything in section 0 through 553- Captain Gledward stomped along with a very serious grimace on his face. He was flanked by all his equally serious advisors. These men were responsible for the safety of the 8000 crewmen on board. They were all integral to the piloting process. So it was inconvenient that they had twelve minutes of walking to do before they reached the control room.

Meanwhile, in the control room. Glandrew the window washer watched the wormhole come in and out of view through an enormous circular window. The distinctive, pulsing, pink shape would appear for a moment, then the spinning of the ship would pull it out of view again, then

back again, over and over.

Next to the main controls, as well as a hammer and some broken glass, his hand repeatedly slapped a red emergency button as rapidly as he could.

Glandrew stood on a podium, attached to a long walkway which extended out from a small entrance into the centre of a massive spherical room. Aside from the walkway, podium and control panel, there was only the window, which constituted half of the sphere.

Glandrew normally had one job. Clean the window. It was a big job, and Glandrew took much pride in it. Each day, Glandrew would grab his mop and suction cup shoes, rappel down from the podium onto the window and begin his work

The controls crackled and a voice came through the panel.

“This is Captain Gledward. We are on our way. Who set off the alarm”.

Glandrew scanned the mishmash of buttons and dials on the panel for something to press. There must have been more than a hundred buttons. They spanned all colours and all shapes. It looked more like a child’s toy than a tool responsible for guiding thousands of lives. There was a dial shaped like a pig’s tail, a button with a picture of an alien eating a man, and a small green button saying PRESS EACH MORNING next to a big red button saying NEVER PRESS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. But there was no button that looked like a radio button.

The closest thing he could find was a big black button near the bottom. It had a man in an oval with signal waves coming off. It was big, so it must be used often, he thought, but it wasn’t colourful, so it couldn’t do anything dramatic. It was a better guess than any. He pushed the button.

“Hello? Can you hear me?”. Said Glandrew.

“Yes I can. Is that you Glandrew? You better have a good reason. It better be a wormhole.”

He smacked the button again. “It’s a wormhole, Sir!”

There was a pause.

“Shit.”

Glandrew continued “It was a speck to begin with, and now it’s as big as my hand when I stretch it out.” The wormhole whipped past again and he noticed that it had grown a little more. “What do I do? We have no control. No asteroids at all.”

“That’s not entirely true. There is Operation Injured Crab”.

“Operation Injured Crab?” Said Glandrew.

“Yes,” Said Gledward, “I should be doing it myself, Glandrew, but we didn’t expect to come across a wormhole so soon. We’re going to need you to eject an arm.”

“We can eject an arm. It’s a desperate move but it’s all we’ve got in a time like this.”

“Eject an arm!? We can’t. We only have five.”

“Damn it Glandrew! We don’t have time! I need you to take manual control now.”

“How do I do that?”

“There should be a large green knob inside a glass panel.”

“Where?”

“Next to the eject sleeping pod button.”

Glandrew searched around. Eventually he saw a glass panel with green inside. But it was next to the big black radio button he had been slapping for the last two minutes. Barry froze.

He pulled his hand away from the console and whispered under his breath. “*Hellocanyoustillhear me.*”

“Yes. Why wouldn’t I?”

“...It’s nothing. I’ve found the button.”

“Alright, now what I want you to do is -”

The voice cut off and Glandrew was launched face first into the console. Several buttons beeped. Glandrew felt a weightlessness in his gut and he floated off the floor. He held onto the chair to keep himself in place.

“Glandrew, you’ve turned off gravity. It’s not Monday yet.”

“Yes. I know. Something threw me forward into the panel.”

“We must have hit a flare from the wormhole. We only have about a minute to change our course. Turn the knob now.”

Glandrew reached forward with his right arm, flipped open the panel and twisted the green knob. His left hand was still gripping the seat.

Glandrew flicked the switches and the whole room shook, a thunderous boom reverberated around.

Ding. The doors opened and the captain appeared at the entrance. Gledward saw the wormhole, it was dominating the entire window.

“Oh my god!”

He let out a deep exhale.

“Thank god, we nearly missed it.”

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