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1,551 words.

<A New Hope>

by <Growing Desires>



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Thank you for two wonderful years

-Growing Desires

Chapter 1

Space has long since been seen as the final frontier, its vastness means that there are so many undiscovered wonders just waiting to be found. That was the aim of my ship.

Hurling through space was a tiny vessel, well tiny by humankind's standards, it was big enough for 12 people, not a small team but it was how they were being transferred that meant it was capable in the ship they were now in. Cryosleeping. Humans developed the tech in the last twenty years, most of the hiccups were ironed out and now this ship, B3-L4CT or better known as Rancher with this technology, was on a course for a "nearby" planet.

The Rancher was headed to a planet that was actually far away, the estimated journey time was 6 years, hyper speed, like you'd see in those sci-fi programs, were nowhere near being created. The planet in question was deemed habitable and the hope is that the current team of 12 could get onto the planet and set up a forward base and get the first steps for man on this newly discovered planet.

The trip was currently in the fifth year, the first four years had no issues and every system had performed its task with astounding results. However, signing up for the mission everyone knew that one single failure could be catastrophic, thankfully the only fault occurred in Cyropod 7.

My pod.

The malfunction of the power unit meant that the safety mechanisms took over. The pods had enough juice in them to run the reanimation process on their own, not requiring any power, the

battery inside meant that should the pod be disconnected and all external systems fail, it could at the very least preserve the life inside until the reanimation process had completed.

I was sitting in the pod, and I could see light, for the first time in four years. My body, thanks to the magic of science, did not suffer any issues from this, however to me it was like I had been out on a heavy night of drinking and my mum had just turned the light on and pulled the covers off.

Fuck...

I was cold, my body was shivering immediately, it made sense, I had been preserved at absolute zero for a number of years. Before the mission I had tested the reanimation process in the lead up or the flight, at least 10 times.

It never got any easier.

I knew I had a short window to bare before the pod's heating system would kick in. I grit my teeth and tensed my body until I finally started to feel that warmth spreading throughout the air and my body. My teeth were chattering, my body was almost in shock, I staved off the cold and finally felt some warm sensations around me.

Thank fuck the heating is working.

It would take 30 minutes in total, to ensure that the heat change couldn't kill me.

Why was I being woken up...

I couldn't see out of the pod, for some reason, my screen had been frozen over from the outside.

That must've been why the system triggered the emergency reanimation.

I sat tight and waited, it was only thirty minutes, but it felt like an eternity when I was stuck in this anxious little moment in time, unknowing what had happened whilst I was asleep.

The pod hissed and after a loud crack, the pod started to open. I saw a giant slab of ice and a huge puddle of water on the floor.

That can't be good.

I took a timid step out of the pod and felt the frigid water on my toes. I stood straight up and looked at the other pods, noticing that everyone else seemed to be completely still in their

scientifically induced sleep, each of the pods had their normal status lights from the outside, it just seemed that my pod was the only one showing an error.

I tapped on the console a few times and it quickly displayed the fault; the power unit failed.

Well... At least it freed me.

I walked down the walkway and into the main hallway and took my time to stretch my limbs, advice the company was so desperate to let me know.

“If you don’t do your stretches, any permanent damage cannot be claimed against us”.

I found the spaceship a bit eerie on my own walking around, it was so incredibly silent. I was mostly thankful for the gravity that we had on this thing. I was smart but not smart enough to really understand how it replicated gravity. I did some exercise for an hour, just really making sure that I got myself out of the cryosleep.

Don't want to lose a limb or anything.

Once I was sure that I was in the clear I thought it best to check in on the main console of the ship, see if there was a way to contact earth or maybe work out a way to get me back into cryo sleep, I noticed the timer on some of the other pods as I walked out of the room.

A year is a long time to wait on your own...

I spent a few hours tinkering with the computer and running simulations with the on-board AI only to find that I was never going to contact earth until I stopped moving or I was never going to get the pod back up and running.

It was a slightly harrowing thought, but I let it wash over me, opting to start looking at the ship, see if there was something I could do that might distract me for some time.

Maybe a year...

going back to the pod room I looked at my fellow crew mates still in their deep slumber. Their pods were misted up.

The ice might be doing something similar to theirs.

I played with the console for a few minutes on Pod 1 and found the reading on the vitals was a bit off.

She's frozen... how could there have even been a change...

We were all selected for this mission based on our areas of expertise, the occupant in Pod #1 was Dr Ford, chief botanist and the key to us creating a sustainable food chain on the potential new home, we just called her Kelly though.

Kelly was a very fit and slim woman, barely any body fat on her at all, most of her time before take-off was spent working long hours prepping for how to get the earth seeds she brought with us to work based on many variables. She would go on about various intangibles and if anything, she seemed like she was over prepared. The time spent working meant she ate little and what free time she had, she was exercising, she said she was making sure her body was in the best health she could be in to fly. For her lack of eating, which meant she was thin and narrow. Her brunette hair was always in a ponytail, and her face was very beautiful. When she wasn't reading and she paid you attention, her small, cute features on her face were very warm and inviting, along with her smile.

I continued to tap and read through the logs of her vitals, noticing the changes throughout the four years and I was astounded.

I was here for my medical expertise, and I was pretty handy when it came to computers and engineering, although I left that mostly to Rob and Gus. I couldn't quite believe what I was reading.

The only way these vitals would be right would be if it was adding an obscene amount of supplements to her.

Triple checking the data, I couldn't see how the device could get it wrong three times without spitting out an error code for the sensors.

Why would the pod administer this level of supplements...

Kelly's body was lithe but fit, she had the appearance of a long-distance runner, which didn't seem to suggest that the pod should've done anything to her, I couldn't really see any sign that they had been doing anything out of the normal however.. The glass was still iced up so I couldn't even see inside.

Maybe my hands can provide enough heat...

I cupped my hands around my mouth and breathed hot air into them and rubbed them

together. I let out a yelp as I pressed my palms against the glass.

Cold.

I could only stand the temperatures for a short amount of time but it was enough to demist just enough of the pod so I could see in. I leaned in and pressed my eye to the small gap my body heat had made.

Holy shit...

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