

The Pampshifter: Chapter 5

Written By: CrissieBaby & the Interactive Story Club

WHOOSH!

...

A blast of air rushed out of the airlock, whizzing around the three figures standing in its center. And then, nothing. A void without sound or gravity. The only thing any of the three astronauts could hear was the sound of their own breathing.

“Let’s get to work,” said Donnie, clipping a safety rope to his utility belt before stepping out into the loading bay. Both Meg and Luna followed suit, kicking themselves off from the ground and hovering through the air for a few seconds before reuniting with the ground.

Clicking a flashlight on, Meg began searching the parameter of the docking area, quickly finding thanks to the sparks of electricity alerting her to its location. “Surprised the shield didn’t stop it. The hole can’t be more than about a foot wide,” she commented, remarking on the ship’s shockingly minimal damage.

“Could be some kind of hard metal or alloy. Heck, maybe we struck diamond,” said Donnie, giggling at the thought of having something as valuable as a football-shaped space diamond fall into his lap. Sadly, his fantasy was cut short as Luna accidentally whacked him across the head with her guideline, “Ah, fuck! Luna, watch your surroundings.”

Leaping up into one of the cargo hauls, Luna looked and waved at Donnie meekly. “Sorry, I was just getting used to moving around in here,” she said, not accustomed to walking in zero gravity conditions. That didn’t stop Donnie and Meg from rolling their eyes over Luna’s lack of training and know-how.

Keeping an eye on the placement of the hole, Donnie attempted to predict its trajectory to help narrow down where the unidentified space object was hiding. Lo and behold, upon circling around one of the all-terrain vehicles housed in the loading bay, he spotted a wealth of smoke wafting along the floor without motion or gravity, giving off an effect akin to dry ice. He waved his foot around in the cloudy area, pushing it aside until he spotted its source. Much like a normal asteroid, it had craters, sharp edges, and divots shaped over eons of flying through space. However, unlike your average space rock, this one was so white that it was practically glowing. In all his years of space travel, he had never seen anything like it. “Woah...yo Meg...you’re gonna wanna see this,” he said as he crouched down to get a better look.

“Ugh! Can’t it wait until after I get this fucker patched?” said Meg, grunting as she twisted the liquid carbon canister into place on the repair device.

Unfortunately, Donnie’s impatience wouldn’t stave off for that long. “Not a chance, Meg. Get your butt over here. You too, Luna. Maybe you’ll know what it is,” he said, climbing up onto the nearby vehicle and waving the two girls over to his position.

“Okay, that’s freaky,” scoffed Meg, having watched one too many sci-fi movies for her own good, “Yeah, I don’t fuck with weird space shit.” She began backing away, hoping to return to the post that only minutes prior she had cursed her crewmate for sticking her with.

Donnie, however, was all too happy to stick his nose in close to the asteroid. He gently grazed his hand against it, surprised to find that it actually felt warm to the touch despite existing in the dark vacuum of space up until this point. After a few test prods, he placed both hands on the rock and slowly lifted it out of the crater it had made on the floor. “You’re paranoid, Meg. Look at how cool this thing is,” he said, grinning like an energized kid as he rotated the glowing orb in his hands.

“I wonder what could be causing it to glow. I don’t see traces of anything phosphorescent, nor is it in a state of combustion,” posited Luna, musing over the strange anomaly, “You could very well be holding a new element, Lieutenant. Fascinating.

“Well, doc, I’ll make sure you get all the time you want to look at it, so long as credit for its finding goes to me. I was the one who found it, after all,” replied Donnie, chucking to himself over his potential scientific discovery. Continuing to rotate the asteroid in his hands, Donnie stopped suddenly, raising an eyebrow at the small but noticeable crack on the rock’s exterior, “Oh shit, is it crumbling?” He brushed his thumb against the miniature fissure, recoiling the moment he felt a slight prick and dropping the asteroid on the ground. Only now, the asteroid was no longer glowing. Instead, it was the small lump of space putty stuck to Donnie’s fingers that continued to hold its bizarre glow.

TO BE CONTINUED...