

How I Spent My Day

"I think its March today," I said to the computer.

"You are correct, Captain. Today is the first of March, 302,115 Earth-reference, and the first of March, 2415 local time."

It happened every so often, the days synchronizing like that. Onboard the *Best Hope*, we tried to celebrate and reflect on Earth, so far away, and ever-receding.

I walked over to the quantum capsule dispenser (I called it the Coke machine), and let it recognize me. It plopped a pea-sized quartz element into my outstretched hand. The procedure was meant to make me feel useful, like the *Best Hope* couldn't function without a human in charge or something like that. Anyway, for a moment, I stared at the quantum capsule. I swear that I can see swirling force-lines in the center of the intense white power element, but I know that can't possibly be true. The microscopic bit of anti-matter that will power us for the next cycle could be blown away with a sneeze.

Right on cue, in comes Lieutenant Yui, conveniently floating by in the buff. When Sony created her line of cyborgs, they went out of their way to create a perfect woman – and then they went past that about 20%. For the last few cycles, she'd decided to disrobe, and she made absolutely sure that her poses and postures were as provocative as possible, trying to lure me into some kind of liaison, I guess. *Geeze, I've been up here too long!*

I handed her the power capsule and she floated off towards the main propulsion area to install it. Her noiseless anti-gravs made her even sexier, if that was possible – I suspected that she'd programmed the AG's to make her ample chest bounce up and down more... *STOP IT – CONCENTRATE!!*

I got my mind back on track by talking to the logging computer. "When is the next holiday?"

"Convergence of 12th September, 302,400 Earth-reference, and 2489 local time, sir."

Well, near-light-speed travel is never boring. "Well, remind me so we can have a celebration."

"Yes, sir. May I remind you that the *Gla'dada* are gaining on us. We will be in weapons range in a few hours."

"*Lousy pirates! Why don't they leave us alone?*"

"As you've said, sir, it takes all kinds to make a universe."

It was going to be an interesting, but irritating day. Our radar picked up the *Gla'dada* vessel a couple of light-minutes away, closing on a hyperbolic intercept course. I guess they've forgotten that we know how to take care of ourselves – these are the 4th encounter with hostiles, and they won't be the last.

Lieutenant Yui came floating back to the Command Center and took a moment to make sure I was aware of all of her ample charms. "Quantum capsule installed, sir. Power 100%," she said in her warm Japanese voice, and then she blinked her raven-black eyes in that certain way. I can't tell you how many times I cursed Sony Corporation over the years for creating such a nuisance. *I'm responsible for over 1 million souls, so I need to concentrate on the job of blowing pirates to hell, not fantasizing about a naked cyborg!*

"Lieutenant. Yui, please prepare our offensive weapon."

"Yes, sir."

As the quantum capsules tore the universe apart by intersecting matter and anti-matter, endless strings of energy warped the very fabric of space, under control of quantum magnetic monopoles. But when the M-AM reaction occurred without magnetic containment, *aha!* The ultimate power of the universe was unleashed as a totally destructive force, against which there was no possible defense. The M-AM reaction was first used by the Chinese in the *Last World War*, but their containment magnets failed, and that was the end of their country. Afterwards, when the ocean flowed into the gaping hole formerly known as China, ocean levels world-wide dropped by several feet, and then global climate change doomed the human race. Fortunately, the Japanese and Americans were working on an advanced stellar drive system at that time, and within less than 100 years, the world produced a few hundred ships like *Best Hope*, and sent us out here to populate new planets, wherever we could find them. A few scientists were sure that we'd encounter hostile forces, even though that was a completely absurd idea at the time. They were right, and we've certainly been attacked several times by races that would have been far more powerful than us – except for our solution to the M-AM reaction equations. We've kicked butt because of those great thinkers, and the human race actually has a chance of surviving because of them.

Best Hope is heading for a small yellow-white star, not too far away, relatively speaking, of course. We used the black hole located at the Sun-Jupiter L5 point for our initial thrust, and now we're on a hyperbolic intercept course to *Lyonai IV*, but it will take millions of Earth-reference years to finally get there – so what's the rush? The other ships are all on different vectors to different targets, and I assume they're meeting and defeating pirates, just like we've encountered. I'm confident that we'll save the remnants of the human race, and that's what counts. Our radar scan of the *Gla'dada* ship showed heavy armaments, and some kind of electromagnetic jamming device was present, but inactive.

Our two main computers argue all the time: the big one says that we'll never reach our destination because the universe is expanding faster than our velocity, but the NAV computer says that we'll reach it, but in 6 million years, give or take. It's beyond me to even comment on such things – I'm just the Captain, after all. I've been doing this job for a long time, and when I expire, a backup will replace me. The medical cyborgs keep me in good shape and replace my organs whenever they fail, so I'll be here for a while yet, but I know that I'll never see *New Earth*.

Lieutenant Yui floated back toward me – *ah – a picture of perfection*; but it's time to concentrate on the demise of the *Gla'dada* menace. "Compute intercept vector."

"Yes, sir. Computed. Optimal launch time in 3 minutes, local time."

Traveling at such a high rate of speed means that we can't do anything but go in a straight line. Well, that's not exactly and precisely true – we're on the long leg of a hyperbola, so it seems straight, but if you recall from calculus, it's only approaching straight, and will never get there. If we try to veer off course, the equations of force, mass and energy would rip us to shreds and leave a lovely purple trail of highly-ionized stuff where we used to exist, so no, we can't just change direction and run away from the *Gla'dada*. But we can shoot off a small rocket on a tangent course, and said rocket can have a pea-sized chunk of anti-matter in it; and said chunk of anti-matter can and will self-destruct, taking with it a small portion of the universe at a predictable location. "Launch when ready," I ordered.

The utterly quiet Command Center suddenly erupted in a cacophony of sound as computer after computer reported the results of the hit, or, more exactly, the destruction of a certain portion of our universe, which included the enemy vessel.

"Target destroyed, sir."

Did Lieutenant Yui just do a fist pump? I think so!

"Thank you Lieutenant."

"My pleasure, sir."

A million souls slept in their force-field beds, unaware of time and space outside of their individual habitat capsules. Liquid food flowed in; waste flowed out, and was recycled; and so on, and so on. We'd used the quantum torpedoes before, and we'll use them again, I'm sure.

My thoughts turn to Earth that was, and the scientists who caused our demise, and the scientists who will be responsible for our salvation. They equipped *Best Hope* with the capability of survival, and we're surviving. I'm sure that we'll get to *New Earth* eventually.

"Lieutenant, how long to New Earth?"

She chuckled softly "Are we there yet? No, sir. The NAV computer reports approximately six million, two hundred-forty thousand, eight hundred sixty years to go, sir. As you know, the main computer disagrees completely."

Geeze, she looked good! Thank you Lieutenant – you may continue your duties.

She gently bounced her naked self down corridor 17L14 as I tried not to stare at her ass and I actually tried to compose myself.

Is this day finally over? I'm so tired. There goes Lieutenant Yui again, conveniently floating by in the buff – I bet she knows that I'm staring at her voluptuous self – should I or shouldn't I? I must be going insane – *she's a cyborg for cryin' out loud!*

Later that evening, in a soft, warm Japanese voice she bowed her head slightly and asked "*Is there anything I can do for you this evening, sir?*"

GET CONTROL, FOOL!! She's a machine! "No, Lieutenant, I'm going to enter the daily log and crash."

And then she struck a pose that would make a Buddhist monk question his vows of chastity – *Damn, I've been up here too long, that's for sure. She's doing that pose on purpose! She wants me! AARGH! STOP IT, FOOL! GET CONTROL OF YOURSELF! God, she's so beautiful...*

"COMPUTER: LOGGING ACTIVE. Record today's entry as "*How I spent my day...*"

I heard the logging computer chuckle softly, but as usual, I ignored and stated:

"Quantum capsule installed this date.

Gla'dada ship encountered; destroyed same.

End log entry."

And now for bed.