

Chapter 6 - The Order of the MagPi

The inside of the Chariot resembled a private jet with large leather seats, cup holders, retractable trays, coffee tables, and benches, all tastefully decorated in first class fashion. “Seat belts!” called the Medic authoritatively from the driver’s seat and the passengers dutifully buckled.

“I’ve got a ride-share business, too!” JJ announced proudly. “But you guys really know how to do it!” Sultan Gray chuckled while the Medic let out an exasperated sigh, focusing on flipping switches and turning dials.

“Can we go into space just a little bit?” pleaded Joey. “I’ve never been.”

Donnie struggled with the seat belt in his teeth, saying, “No, that’s okay. My doctor said I should avoid going into space because it makes me bloated and gassy.” Clarissa jumped up and helped Donnie get situated and buckled. Sultan swiveled around in his seat to face the passengers.

“Never been to space?” Sultan remarked in his growling tone. “What are you, a caveman? Maybe we can make a quick trip around the moon.”

“We are on a schedule,” the Medic said flatly.

“This guy and his schedules,” Sultan poked, “he’s no fun.”

“I’m rather fun when time constraints allow.”

“Please, Medic!” Joey begged. The Medic finished his switch flipping. He stared briefly at a tiny holographic display in the palm of his hand.

“One lap,” he announced curtly. “I hope everyone heeded my strong suggestion about the seat belts.”

The Medic punched a red button on the panel and the Chariot shot straight up at a blinding speed. In a fraction of a second Joey felt his skin flatten against his seat, blood and bones aching, tongue in his throat, and then total darkness.

“I thought you gave it to them!”

“No, I thought you did!”

“I was getting the ship ready!”

“I’m not a flight attendant, man!”

“Well, you probably killed them...”

“No, they’re...”

“...so you’re not a very good flight attendant!”

“...breathing, maybe, hey, I think Joey is awake.”

Joey became conscious, blinking, head throbbing, managing to squeak, “What?” He looked around at his sister, Donnie, and JJ as they started to blink as well.

“Yeah, sorry,” said Sultan, “G-forces. They’re a real stick in the eye, huh?” He was breaking off small squares from a chocolate bar, which he handed to each of the passengers.

“Here, eat this. It’s like anti-G-force or something.” They each ate their piece of chocolate in the grogginess of regaining consciousness.

“How does chocolate help?” asked Clarissa.

“It’s the medicine inside,” explained Sultan. “It was my idea to make it into a chocolate bar. It used to be just a liquid that tasted like the wrong end of a rat.”

“How would it combat G-forces?” Joey asked.

“Do I look like a scientist? We only made it about a mile up before you guys all went dark.”

“Everyone ready now?” asked the Medic.

“That’s pretty good,” said Donnie, perking up a little. “I’m still feeling the Gs here - can I get a couple more?”

“Pace yourself, man,” said Sultan as the Medic hit the button again.

The Chariot shot upwards at blinding speed once more, but Joey and the others did not feel the pancaking effects of the G-forces. The Medic punched another button and the walls of the ship turned into windows, giving the passengers the sensation that their seats were flying by themselves. They could see the Earth rapidly shrinking and the gray ball of the full moon growing larger.

“Wow!” said Joey with astonishment. “How fast are we going?”

“Relative to what?” asked the Medic. He sighed, “I suppose you Earthlings want some sort of kilometer explanation.”

“No,” said Sultan, “we’re Americans.”

“I’m not,” said JJ.

“We are right now,” Donnie mumbled.

“We like miles,” Sultan stated.

“Yes,” said the Medic, “I forget Americans eschew logical base ten measurements.”

“Eschew you,” Sultan continued, producing a calculator. “Let’s do the math. So light travels...”

“180,000 miles per second,” said Joey.

“Right,” said Sultan, “and there are how many feet in a mile?”

“5280,” answered Joey proudly.

“Divided by 5280,” Sultan tapped, “so light travels at about 34 miles per hour. Now, the moon is how far from Earth?”

“About 240,000 miles,” Joey answered again, although looking doubtful of Sultan’s calculations.

“Divided by the speed of light at 34,” Sultan continued, “and it takes us five minutes, so how many seconds in five minutes?”

“300,” Joey offered half-heartedly.

“Divided by 300. And then multiply by the five minutes. So, we are going about 117 miles per hour.”

The passengers stared with dubious disappointment. The Medic offered, “If you want that to sound faster, that’s about 188 kilometers per hour.”

The moon grew very large and the earth appeared to be a small bluish coin. “Keep your eye on the earth as we whip around the moon,” the Medic instructed. “Everything will go a little dark but then it will pop out on the other side.”

Clarissa took the opportunity to start some questioning. “So where are we going in the Caribbean? To a certain island?”

“We are meeting the Order of the MagPi on a ship far out to sea,” the Medic offered.

“MagPi?” Clarissa repeated.

“Magic pirates,” Sultan said with some disdain. “They are really annoying.”

“Pirates who know magic?” Joey asked quietly.

“Yes,” Sultan continued. “Picture some pirates. Now imagine those pirates know magic. You see how annoying that is already?”

“That sounds so cool!” JJ exclaimed.

“If by ‘cool’ you mean ‘irritating’ then, yes, you are on the money.” Sultan took a big drink from his glass. “They have something we need so I suppose we have to get it.”

“The treasure chest,” said Clarissa.

“Treasure *box*,” Joey corrected.

“Are we starting this again?” Donnie said with some excitement, “I think maybe it’s an ottoman!”
