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Escape From Pluto

By: Maggie O'Dell

A loud, urgent alarm went off in the sleeping room, and I was jolted awake. My best friend, W91, who had been sleeping in the cot next to me, sat up only to bump her head on the person laying in the hammock above her, “What’s going on, V45?” she groaned. I replied, a bit distracted, “I don’t know.” We quickly changed into our dull green uniforms and rushed out the opening door along with the other space agents. As we ran down the hallway, I looked out the thick paned windows of the spacecraft and didn’t see anything wrong with the starry world around us so I assumed there was something wrong with the engine. A deafening tweet of a whistle caused us to hurry into our positions.

“Our journey to planet X was cut short due to engine failure.” Announced Captain Tanhal in his usual strict tone, “We will need to emergency crash land on Pluto, enemy territory. If you survive, look for and find their space crafts then get back to Mars. Make sure to stay out of sight. You know what will happen if they catch you.” For the first time I saw emotion in his eyes as he looked over the green sea of frightened agents for the last time, “Letters A through J go to the south exit, the rest of you head to the north.”

I listened to the breathing of W91 huddled next to me and the breathing of the other fifty agents bracing for impact. *Just get out of the door before the spacecraft explodes*, I thought. The ship was now jolting violently so I looked out

of the window and saw the gigantic buildings on Pluto getting closer and closer. About thirty seconds later I heard the sound of metal on concrete. Then everything went black.

My eyes slowly started to open and I saw something that looked like a blurry W91 pulling me up on my feet. I shook myself awake and helped her gather up a few more people before sprinting out the door. We didn't stop running until we were at the very end of the mostly empty parking lot. Our small group agents leapt behind a cluster of decorative boulders and laid on the floor with our hands over our heads. A second later the spacecraft exploded sending chunks of metal over our heads along with fire hot air blowing at our ears. There was silence. It had to be more than two whole minutes before the ringing ceased in my ears and I heard the other survivors stand up. Immediately I noticed a man lying on the ground that I recognized as T12. There was blood leaking from his head and a shiny, bloody piece of metal was lying nearby. I checked his pulse. Nothing.

We turned around to see what's left of the spacecraft. We were the only five survivors. An angry shout echoed through the parking lot. I turned around to see a pair of Plutions, their yellow-brown mutated oversized heads gave me chills. A sizzling sound caught my attention and the smell of burning flesh made me gag. The two agents next to me were on fire, M60 and Q89. I had forgotten Plutions can catch things on fire with only their sharp glare! The remaining three of us ran as fast as we could to a nearby alley, the horrid creatures after us. They are very slow runners so we made it to the alley but I could see the busy streets of the city

at the end of the alley. The Plutions would soon be here. I stepped on something that made a loud CLANG! Below me was what seemed to be a sewage manhole. “Come on, this is our only way out.” I whispered as I began to open the round trapdoor. W91 and T62 nodded and climbed down after me. The putrid smell was unbearable so I covered my mouth with a handkerchief, but it *still* smelled terrible. The Plutions must have seen us go underground because one of them said, “Never mind. The rats will get them anyway.”

The tunnel seemed endless; twisting and turning and leading nowhere until we found another manhole that seemed quiet above. I pushed it open with a stick and W91 helped me climb out into blinding daylight. Peering into the darkness of the hole, I pulled W91 out next and the only one left was L34, the third survivor. As I reached down we heard a threatening sound of thunder, it was footsteps of something large down in the sewage. Then there was a flash of gray fur and gleaming white teeth as L34 was ripped from my grasp! A scream of agony echoed in the tunnel with only the sound of the creature scurrying away. Standing up, shocked, I looked around to see a sign. “The spacecrafts!” I exclaimed, extremely relieved, “We made it!”

Twenty minutes later, in a stolen Plution spaceship we were nearing the edge of Pluto’s atmosphere nearing the speed of light. Never again would I go on another mission; my time here has ended as an agent. Both W91 and I were glad to soon be home.