

Zero Gravity

It was the moment. It felt so right to her. She picked up the scissors from the kitchen area and floated through the space shuttle. . . .

Something inside her snapped during the preparation on Earth, and it took control of her view. It was after the physical and psychological tests, after putting on her suit. She was walking up the stairs to the space shuttle, and something snapped. The crowd behind her was suddenly different, and her crew members gave off different auras. She's a scientist, she shouldn't believe in demons and auras.

But that afternoon gave her a reason to believe.

Hours after takeoff into the dark space far away from home, she was in the doorway of the bedroom where her fellow astronauts slept. Two of them were from her country. The sleeping bags floated slightly inside the rectangular pods like cocoons, and there was a male moving around a bit in his sleep.

You deserve this, you bastard.

It was years ago, but the pain still remains. She used to just disregard it, but she can't anymore. The things this man did to her were unforgivable. The scar could never heal fully, leaving her emotionally vulnerable to every little reminder. She felt that despite the reopening, she was close to being at peace. But that was a lie to herself.

His eyes were still closed as she pierced his heart with the scissors, using more strength than needed. His blood poured out in small balls, some the size of a cranberry. She tried to stop the flow, but his body was floating away from the force of the stab. Fortunately, he was going back inside his sleeping bag, and all she had to do was zip it up.

But now she had a new problem in zero gravity. Reality hit her as she snapped back to her normal self. Looking at her bloody hands, she could hear her inner voice screaming at herself: *How could you? How dare you? All this hard work, and now you will get arrested just because you couldn't control yourself.*

Then she replied to the voice: *Why didn't he control himself then?*

Silence took over the bedroom like a blanket, nothing seemed to move. Out of the window was the blue planet slowly turning, and she knew that one way or another, she was going to find herself back on Earth. But first, she must try.

Gripping the bloody scissors, she left the room, careful to use only her legs to navigate in zero gravity. She had to wash her hands, but being in space, her only option was wet towels. Where could she dispose of them?

The trash. The spaceship is the most advanced in the fleet, and the trash gets burned into energy as a way to save space and power costs. *The wet towels and scissors will be gone. Sure, the stab wounds will still remain but—*

A loud piercing scream travelled through the corridors. *No time to think, just do it!* She floated to where the wet towels were stored, carefully grabbed one, and wiped her hands furiously. The trash bin nearby had a chute to the energy generator, so after inspecting her face, hands, and body in the mirror, she threw out the scissors and towel.

The screams were followed by more sounds as she could hear her co-workers waking up. Part of her felt as if she would still be caught. After all, how could anyone explain the stab wounds?

Plant Earth continued to spin, and she decided to go back to the bedroom. As soon as she got through the doorway, the stressed-out chatters suddenly stopped.

No one was there. The sleeping pods were still closed. It was as if the past fifteen minutes had not happened. Everything was still.

But the view outside the window suggested that time did pass by. So what was going on? She knew that it would take about ninety minutes for the ship to orbit once around Earth. She could see South America, and she remembered that at the moment of stabbing, she was seeing the blue ocean.

Immediately, she felt a strong grip on her right shoulder, and she had no time to pull away. Turning around, she saw her co-worker staring at her, his body covered in pain but still alive. In that moment, she realized that justice is limited: a flawed human being deciding another flawed human being's fate.

Zero gravity had never felt so heavy.

by Dar'ya Heyko
Guelph, Ontario