

2014 MCC Creative Writing Contest

Fiction Category

Second Place: Excerpt from “*The Kastron Virus*,” by Matthew Meier

The starship, Nightfire, rocketed through space towards hundreds of similar ships. This was the fleet that made up the majority of the Resistance, the rest of their forces were scattered across the universe, hiding on distant planets, asteroid fields, and the most remote systems in the universe. Their numbers did not even come close to those of their enemy, Kyrell’s Teazonian Empire, but they had put everything they had into it, and they were too far into the war to pull out now.

Other than rogue Teazonians, the Resistance was made up of two other alien races. The Enegoids used to be humanoid peace lovers, and were easily recognized because their pitch black skin was made out of solid energy. When aggravated, their ‘skin’ would float off them in the form of visible gaseous energy. Sadly, this species was all but extinct, nearly being wiped out by Kyrell’s empire, leaving Cobline, the Resistance’s ace pilot, the last Enegoid in existence. The other race was known as Reddas. These aliens resembled giant limbed snakes, and were feared by beings all across the galaxy for many reasons. Not only were they emotionless, blood-thirsty killers, but their race was easily angered, and had extremely short tempers. That coupled with their habit of eating any form of living or dead meat made Reddas feared by both friends and foes alike.

On the bridge of the Nightfire, Liten, the leader of the Resistance stood with Barlam, a Teazonian scientist, Cobline, and a large muscular Redda looking at a glowing orange liquid, known as the Kastron Virus, which they had stolen from an enemy research facility the Kastron Virus before the war

whoever is exposed to this will gain supernatural powers. It’s our only chance at winning the war.”

“Having those kinds of abilities would be a good asset to have,” Cobline muttered, “but does it work?”

The large Redda that stood next to Liten chuckled venomously, causing Cobline to slowly inch away from the being.

“Oh, it works.” he hissed.

“So...you can't die?” Cobline asked.

“Exactly.” Treert said, his voice gradually rising in anger. “I can no longer touch anything, fight, take revenge on the Empire for slaughtering my family...I can only float around, existing as a barely visible spirit, fresh from the gates of hell!”

Cobline turned to Toxic, leaving Treert to rant on about his ‘gift’ of eternal life.

“So what can you do?”

Toxic didn't respond. He just simply spat on the ground, narrowly missing Cobline's foot. The instant his saliva hit the ground, it began to eat away at the metal floor until a large chunk of it vanished.

The engines of the Nightfire roared as Cobline quickly guided the ship through the tear in space, leading his friends away from the Empire, and to temporary safety. As the fleet escaped, Barlam sat back and sighed in relief.

“My technology is the only thing keeping us alive. Too bad the device needs time to recharge.” Barlam said. “We can’t escape through there again if we get caught.”

Liten frowned. They had no way to successfully flee from their enemy, and that left them with only so many options. Fighting was certainly out of the choice. Any previous attempt to attack the Empire had only resulted in the loss of lives.

“We’ll have to find a habitable planet. Maybe the native species can help us against Kyrell’s forces.”

“Because everyone listens random beings that come down from the sky.” Barlam said sarcastically.

“If we do that,” Treert said grimly, “maybe the Empire will wipe out another race.”

“It’s not like we have many options.” Toxic hissed. “We’re basically a still target the instant we emerge from this wormhole. Treert, you’ve been like kin to me since we met, but you need to stop worrying about every life form in existence. Some beings will die, this is a war!”

“I hate to admit it, but he’s right.” Cobline said thinking about his nearly extinct race, “Barlam, where’s the closest planet?”

Barlam moved towards a corner, and began to toy with a piece of technology. After hitting a few buttons and switches, a hologram of a planet lit up the room.

“This is the closest planet.” he said. “We’ll be able to see it when we exit the wormhole... and it’s capable of supporting life.”

“It looks kind of small.” Liten said. “What planet is that?”

Barlam shrugged. “It doesn’t appear on any official records. Yet, I punch in the conditions of a planet capable of sustaining life, and the scanners pick it up.”

“I wonder what its inhabitants look like.” Cobline wondered aloud.

Barlam hit a few more switches, and a hologram of a human appeared beside the planet. Toxic’s eyes widened at the sight.

“I know that race.” he said.

“What are they?” Treert asked, not liking the way his friend was eyeing the hologram.

“I don’t know what they call themselves,” Toxic said, “but Reddonian scripture refer to them as them as ‘Jafuo’.”

“Meat?” Barlam translated in a frightened whisper.

“What if those starships pick up the planet’s natives?” Treert snapped, “They’ll be wiped out like millions of others! Have you not thought this through?”

“They’ll join us.” Liten said, wincing as another ship above Nightfire exploded, its charred remains scraping the Nightfire’s hull. “As long as we can keep the Virus out of Kyrell’s reach, then our cause survives! We must be willing to give everything we have, and fight until the very end for what we believe. We will end this war that has purged countless planets and restore peace to