

Bite size uplifting stories

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Chapter 1-Funny stories

Never forget

“You’re going to do something tomorrow. I can’t talk you out of it. I know who you are, obviously, and this is something you’ve got to do. Not because it’s a good idea, or that it will lead to something better, but because this is something you’ve always told yourself you’ve had to do.”

“I wish there was something I could say to change your mind. I could list all the evil things that will come from this, but I know it wouldn’t do any good. You’ve been thinking about this for a while, and it’s just something that you’re going to do eventually anyway. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but it will stick in your mind until you can’t take it anymore, and then you’re going to do. So you might as well do it now and get it over with. I wish your friends hadn’t talked you into this. Just because they did it is no reason for you to suffer.”

“It’s painful writing this because I know you’re going to hate yourself the next day. The shame, oh the shame, the dirty feeling of having just been a part of something that you can never undo. It’ll be a part of you after today for sure. You’ll feel unclean, and have this urge to take a long hard shower, but water can’t wash away what you’ve just done.”

“This whole thing seems like a guilt trip doesn’t it? It’s not intentional, and it isn’t meant to be. I just want you to know I’ve been where you’ve been, and I know what it’s like. Like I said,

you're going to do it regardless of what I say. I wanted to give you a little something to hold on to so you can push past this and speed up the healing process."

"Just remember, after you're done with that *abominable* movie, they can't take away The Last Airbender TV show. No matter how bad the movie was. No matter how they nerfed fire bending, made earth bending look completely ridiculous, or what they did to the characters, the TV show will always be there."

Man sleeps his way to the top of the company

"Good morning Jake." Brianna waved to me coyly as I strolled into my work.

"Good morning Brianna." I wink at her as I walk past her desk into the cube farm.

"Did you uh, sleep well last night?" She asks, placing her chin on her fist and staring up at me. I walk backwards as I give my reply.

"Oh you know I did." As I turn around I can see she's playing with her hair.

Upon entering the cube farm I give a high five to a male coworker, and spend a minute talking with one of the more recent entries into 'the bedroom', an intern fresh out of high school. She was a little shy at first, but quickly came around. They all do.

There's a group of bros who've been working on our new product waiting for me outside my office.

"Hey Jake!" The leader of the group calls out in a very bro fashion. "Me and the boy's been wonderin', when are we going to have another one of those, you know, group meetings." I pat him on the back and slide into my office.

"Don't worry boys, the company wide group meeting, is going to be in just a few days, don't you worry."

Some people had scoffed at the idea of having all meetings take place on mattresses. But sleep co's stock had doubled since I had instituted the policy. Sure more than a few people dozed off, and they often degenerated into group naps, but that seemed to just build team spirit and increase productivity.

Aliens invade with... weapons?

"Stop Mortal and Bow Down Before Your Masters!" The gelatinous blob shouted. The marines entrenched outside the Whitehouse didn't budge. The horde had appeared mere seconds ago, and the secret service was still securing the president.

“Drop your weapons and stand down!” The head sergeant shouted back. There were hundreds of the things, and they all had weird battle axes. The sergeant thought that was strange, but if they had teleportation capabilities then the axes must’ve been more than they seemed.

“**The armies of Zog Will Crush Puny Humans!**” The leader of the blobs shouted again, using a tentacle of ooze to raise his axe above his head.

“I repeat. Stand down or we will open fire!” The sergeant ordered.

“**Chrage!**” the blob leader ordered, sliding forward with his axe poised to smite. The sergeant couldn’t believe he was unlucky enough to order the opening volley of humanity’s first interstellar war, but the rules of engagement were clear, and the president’s life was at stake.

“Open fire marines!” He shouted, and 50 calibers joined in with M16s in showering lead down on the oncoming alien infantry. Snipers form the roof landed shot after shot into the onrushing horde. It was all to no effect. The bullets were merely absorbed into the gelatin of the blobs, and didn’t seem to harm them in the slightest.

‘That was why they used ancient weapons.’ The sergeant thought. ‘Their defensive powers are so great that they don’t need advanced weaponry’. Realizing he was now doomed to a gooey death he flipped his rifle to full auto, belted out a war cry, and ran forward to meet the lead blob. If he was going out. He was going out with his boots on.

The cries of his fellow marines joined him as they too broke cover to meet their fates. Upon reaching the lead blob the sergeant took the butt of his rifle and slammed it into the lead alien. He was not surprised at all when the thing slurped it out of his hands.

The sergeant drew his side arm, but before he fired he looked up to see the thing bring its axe down on his head before he could fire a shot.

”**Bonk.**” The blob said as the axe rebounded harmlessly off his head.

”**Bonk.**” The blob said again, hitting him a second time. The sergeant was so shocked to still be breathing that he just stood there and let the thing tap him on the head with the apparently foam axe.

”**Bonk.**” A blob next to him said as it whacked another marine on the head with its foam axe.

“What the...” The sergeant said.

”**Blargle! We told you not to use the teleporters!**” A much larger blob had appeared and was turning an angry shade of red as it addressed the smaller blobs.

The blob that had smacked the sergeant shrunk back, and then vanished into a silvery mist, along with all of the other blobs.

”Sorry about that.” The remaining large blob said, appearing to someone wring its non-existent hands. **”You know how kids can be, always so excited to play ‘invade earth’. Do you mind if we try this again? We were going to make a grand entrance on the lawn before we had the peace talks with your president, and it would be horribly awkward if our first contact scenario was a couple blobblings playing with the local security forces.”**

US defense spending actually goes towards fighting an interstellar war

“I am well aware that biological weapons are our best option.” The secretary of health and human services said. “I have been briefed many times on the effectiveness that basic microbial pathogens have had on the invaders, but we simply cannot justify the production of biological.”

“Have you ever followed the news during one of these outbreaks?” The secretary of education asked the secretary of defense, who was proposing the research into bio weapons. “The impact that even a small outbreak or the rumor of a new disease has on the population is absolutely horrific. How many cases did we have state side? And how much press did those cases get?”

“But Ebola hasn’t been a major news topic for months.” The secretary of defense countered. “And we need those weapons. Do I have to give you the numbers on what their last attack did to us?”

“Alright.” The president said. “That’s enough. I’ve heard both sides of the issue. You both raise strong points. Justifying this thing would be a PR nightmare, and it’s pretty much certain that it’s going to be leaked to the press at some point. So we need something to give us an edge. We can take a hit in the polls, that’s fine. The opposition has graciously offered to give ground on a few hot topic issues so we don’t completely lose face, but we need something. This is going to go forward, and it needs to go forward in a way that doesn’t start riots, or maybe even a civil war. Ideas?” After a few tense moments someone speaks up.

“We would need an excuse to intentionally be engineering a virus to spread quicker, target people with weak immune systems, and act more rapidly on those people.” The health and humans services secretary pointed out.

“I’ve got it!” The secretary of agriculture exclaimed. “Fluorescent tags!” He shouted.

“What?” The secretary of defense asked.

“Fluorescent tags!” The secretary of agriculture exclaimed. “We use them in crop studies sometimes.”

“That’s brilliant!” The secretary of health and human services shouted. “We take three innocuous viruses, stick three different tags on them: one red, one white, and one blue. We then inoculate the soldiers with them to do studies on transmission engineering. The soldiers will pass the virus on to the aliens, and we’ll claim that the glowing colors are part of our new uniform to reduce friendly fire during night time exercises!”

“The viruses don’t have to be strong as long as they can spread quickly.” The defense secretary said.

“Very well then.” The president said. “Let’s go make the aliens bleed red.”

“And white and blue.” The vice president added.

“Joe.” The president said. “Leave the one liners to me.”

Chapter 2-Heartwarming stories

Earth’s secret defenders

“Where did that giant rock come from?” I asked my friend. The flying saucer had been settling over the white house, and had been powering up some giant glowing weapon, when a large rock had sailed up and struck the device. The rock had done enough damage to power down the device.

“Look, on the horizon, something’s coming.” My friend points at a group of flying things coming from the north. I squint, they’re far away, but as they get closer I can make out the shapes of large birds. They must’ve escaped from the zoo, and there were thousands of them! Bald eagles, cranes, hawks, geese, even ducks, and they weren’t coming alone. Most of them were carrying small mammals and reptiles. Little snakes, poisonous lizards, small monkeys, even rabbits of all things.

In one giant flock they fly up into the center of the UFO. The small monkeys form a chain that extends down to the roof of the white house where slightly larger monkeys are ready to scurry up this ladder. These make a chain of larger monkeys, which then allows even larger still monkeys to climb up. Eventually there are multiple chains of gorillas that lions and tigers begin ascending.

I can see they’re wreaking havoc from the inside of the ship. Lights begin to blink off, windows get blown out, and the thing begins to tilt. There’s a mass exodus of wildlife, and then the ship crashes into the white house.

It’s a fantastic sight, but I can’t help but wonder, where did the boulder come from?

“Every planet with life has a dominant sentient race.” A deep booming voice to my left says. I fall over by the sudden sound, and I see that I’m talking to a tree. “You have not been the kindest of masters, but you’ve been good to us overall, and those monsters.” It points a branch at the UFO. “Have devoured countless worlds. If you will stand with us, we can stand against them, united as a planet.”

A seemingly small decision

‘Every night’, that’s a phrase that gets overused. Normally when someone says something like ‘Every night’ or ‘Every day’ what they really mean is ‘most nights’ or ‘most days’. Someone may

say 'I'm on a diet every day', but once or twice a week will kill a carton of ice cream. Someone may say 'I'm going to study every day', but go out with their friends on Friday nights instead.

This isn't necessarily bad. Most diets have 'cheat days' or 'refuel days' incorporated into them to facilitate this sort of thing. And every jack needs a little play mixed in with their work to avoid becoming a dull boy. But it does mean that truly doing 'every day' is rather uncommon.

What do you really do every single day besides eat and sleep. Surely once or twice a week you forget to shower or brush your teeth. There's probably a day or two in the month where you don't have to drive anywhere, or you're so busy you don't text anyone. If you blow it out to a yearly perspective there are probably days where you don't sleep. In the grand scheme of life there have been days where you haven't spoken a word to another human being or seen a written word.

It is a very rare sort of dedication which compels someone to do something every day. There are so many things which can trip you up. What if you're hiking in an obscure part of the world? What if you're pulling a 20 hour continuous shift? What if you've been staying up all night with a friend in a hospital? I mean, surely that's a good enough excuse to still allow you to say you did something 'every day'.

I didn't think of any of this until I found that box from great grandfather in the attic. I needed some time to think, and just sort of wandered through the house, eventually ending up in the attic. Never having giving it much thought before I mechanically opened it up, and began sorting through it.

The meaning of the box wasn't clear for a few minutes. Just some old letters. I didn't notice anything funny about them until I started checking the dates. Every letter was written to the same person, and every letter was exactly one day after the previous one.

Then I recognized the name on the letters. It was Great grandma's name. I didn't recognize it at first because it was addressed to her maiden name, not the name she took from my great grandfather. Even after the date of their marriage he still addressed them to her. When I opened one of the letters I saw why. The end of each letter was addressed with 'And know that our love is as fresh as the day we met'.

I sat up there for three hours just looking through letters. There was a second box, and a third with more letters. I stopped checking dates after a while and just counted. There must've been thousands of the things, all of them hand written. Truly, every single day, this man was dedicated to his wife, to letting her know that everything between them was okay.

There was a small pond of letters around me, and I brushed my hands over them. I was careful not to disturb the order, but I wanted to feel what decades of resolve felt like. Resolve was something I needed just now.

When I was ready, I packed the letters back up, in the order I found them, and stored them carefully where I could find them again. I then went back downstairs to my wife, who had just gotten back from another round of treatments.

She glances at me as I walk back down the stairs, but can't hold my gaze. I've tried to tell her I don't mind the scars, the hair loss, the sunken eyes, but she insists she's ugly, and can't stand to have me look at her.

As I had done so many times before, I sit down next to her, and put a hand on her shoulder. "know that our love is as fresh as the day we met." I tell her.

She shivers slightly, but doesn't look up.

"I know you don't believe me yet, but you will." I tell her, and quickly plant a kiss on her forehead before going to find a paper and some ink.

The First martian

I was raised by three parents. My mother was a very nurturing woman who made sure I always felt loved and cared for. My father was a great protector who saw that I was provided everything I needed to survive.

Then, there was earth. I was always surrounded by earth. Every book I read. Every movie I saw, even most of the pictures I had were from earth. My mother provided love, and my father provided protection, but earth provided my dreams. All I ever heard about was earth. Whose getting elected on earth. What great new technologies are being made on earth. What great new places have been gone to and explored.

There was great technology and natural beauty on Mars. Our canyons were deeper, and our mountains were higher. Our hydroponics farms and fusion generators were a new wave of technology that was unrivaled on earth, even all these years later, but it was all boring, all lifeless, all purposeless. The farms gave bland food that only served to provide for our barest nutritional needs. The mountains were as inaccessible as the moons of Jupiter. They existed, but I would never see them, and the fusion generators? Out of sight and out of mind. The lights might as well have been powered by ghosts.

My daily life was blank metal and plastic walls and formless nutritional wafers. A blank slate, that's what my life was. A blank slate onto which I projected earth. Beyond the cold lifeless walls, I imagined not dull red earth, but vibrant grass, trees that reached for the sky, and animals. Deer peeking out from behind every bush, and squirrels scurrying through the branches of every tree. Giant cities populated by countless millions of other people. I could actually meet others my own age.

My parents told me I was the first martian. They were the only couple that had been allowed on the way mission to Mars, and I was their only child. If I was to ever know what it was like to play a real game with others my own age, or to ever know the joy of a date. I had to get off this planet. My parents told me that it wasn't possible. No government could afford to bring us back, but... hang on, what's that in the sky? There aren't any meteor showers scheduled for today.

"Honey! Come down off the observation deck and get your nice clothes on!" My mother called. "The Mars settler mark 2 is landing, and honey." My mother paused for dramatic affect. "There's a girl on board."

Chapter 3-Thought experiments

A man is teleported into a room with all his past...partners, whenever he sneezes

"Sweetie, I've got a cold again. You know it's just a matter of time." I told my wife over the phone.

"Babe seriously? I'm still getting over last time." She was a very innocent girl my wife. I rather admired that in her. Whenever I looked at her I saw a pure Disney princess. Someone strong like Belle, but child-like too. Kind of like Rapunzel. She really didn't deserve this curse.

"I know. I'm downing cold medicine like an addict but I'm having a hard time holding it in. You've got minutes at most to prepare yourself." She had to keep her phone on constantly now, so whenever I felt the urge coming on I would just call her to give her a little warning. That was the least I could do for her.

"Can't you just hold your nose or something?" She begged.

"Princess I'm really doing the best I can but....but..oh no. *Achoo!*"

All of the sudden I was alone in bed with my wife, the only girl for me.

"Babe I was in the middle of a crochet project." She said.

"I'm sorry, but hey, it was date night anyway right?" I asked. Her girlish smile turned decidedly woman like.

"I guess I can finish it later."

Humans learn to shift maladies between people

"Who lives and who dies?" The young child asked.

"There's a careful economic art to it." I informed the school bus full of children that was touring the 'martyr hospital'. "You don't want to allow a martyr to volunteer for just anything. Common colds, mild lifestyle diseases, even things like the flu and a number of exotic bacterial infections are things that a normal body can easily recover from." I pointed to an observation room where people of severe lifestyle diseases were being treated.

“In addition, many diseases can be cancelled out by simply transferring both diseases to a single person. For instance, you can see that an anorexic patient is about to receive some extra body weight and blood pressure from a martyr who was working with a morbidly obese patient.”

We turned the corner to a room with people who had infectious diseases.

“This principle also applies for some terminal illnesses. As I’m sure you’ve read, HIV can be cured entirely by first ‘priming’ a willing martyr with a hyper immune disorder, and then transferring the immunodeficient HIV victim’s illness onto the now protected martyr. The overabundance of antibodies from the hyper immune disorder balances out the lack of antibodies from the HIV patient, and will destroy any remaining viruses.”

“When do we get to see the babies?” One of the younger girls in the class. I glanced upwards to where I knew the battlefield that was the birthing ward lay.

“That’s off limits to all non-essential personnel.” I informed the young girl.

“But why?” She asked, making a pouty face.

“Because only mommy’s and daddy’s with very sick babies come here to give birth, and we need to give them their privacy so that they can make the ultimate sacrifice in peace.”

When the NSA gets access to EVERYTHING

Someone somewhere, is doing something illicit in front of a video camera. That’s a certainty. It’s equally certain that out of all the people doing horrible things in front of cameras, at least some of them are doing it with the cameras on. So I figured if I just scan through fast enough, eventually someone is going to be doing something worth calling in the big guns for.

I started scanning through camera after camera, only a quarter of a second at a time. The image from the feed barely had enough time to register in my head before I jumped to the next. I only needed a glimpse of something bad. A large crate full of rockets would stand out, or a meeting full of people with their faces covered. I stopped a few times because I saw large contraptions with lots of wires, but they were just people building their computers.

In only a few minutes I went through several hundred video feeds. I saw many things that people would not have meant me to see. There were a lot more private moments that happened in front of videos than I had anticipated, but all it took was one bomb and it would be all worth it. I just had to see one bomb, and it would be justified.

Then, about a half hour and several thousand video feeds later, I stopped. Not because I saw something illicit, but because I heard something.

♪Deep in the hundred acre wood, where Christopher Robin plays♪

There was a small standard definition TV with two kids and a man who must've been their father sitting in front of it. It was just like a scene from when I was growing up.

I only intend to pause for a second, just to catch a glimpse of the show I had loved so much growing up, but the longer I stop, the harder it is to get going again. Eventually the theme stops, and the show starts. I see three of the main characters, Piglet, Pooh, and Tigger, walking through the forest to start another adventure.

While they're innocently walking along I suddenly realize Pooh and Tigger are both large animals. Out in the wild, Tigers and bears eat Pigs, especially small Piglets, but here on this show, this one Piglet shows absolute trust in the much larger much scarier characters of Pooh and Tigger. He trusts his life completely to these two, and wouldn't dream of either of them causing him harm.

I'm suddenly filled with a sense of shame. I realize that in this show, the only animals that stalk other animals are predators. I switch off the feed.

Thou shalt not kill

"So wait, you can't kill people in video games?" Jimmy asked the teacher.

"Depends." The teacher responded.

"On what?" Jimmy asked.

"Well, why don't you give me an example and we will walk through it together okay?" Jimmy thought this might be dodging the question, but he went along with it.

"Halo, you mow through hundreds of people in that game. Well aliens actually, but they're still sentient. Surely that one's out right?" The teacher shook his head.

"But those people are trying to blow up the universe right? So in stopping a few hundred violent individuals you're saving trillions of others." Jimmy nodded at this.

"Well yeah, but what about games like call of duty? Those aren't about saving the world, and surely the multiplayer isn't."

"That would depend on the game. As I understand it, the first game finishes by preventing a nuclear war, and most of the others are geared towards either preventing a war, or ending it quickly. They may have controversial missions, but those are always skippable, or at the very least, you're not forced into amoral action." The teacher surmised his limited knowledge of the series.

"You didn't mention multiplayer." Jimmy pointed out.

"Are not multiplayer matches merely a part of the overarching story? So the same rules would apply. Even if you're on the 'bad guys' so to speak. As I understand it, those 'bad guys', still believe they're protecting their homes against invaders, in which case it basically counts as self defense. Besides, as I understand it some of them are even alluded to be training simulations. Isn't the new Halo multiplayer mode called war games? I saw the trailer and it sure looked like they were making it out to be a training simulator."

"But one last thing." Jimmy said. "You've described a bunch of games where you're fighting as the hero, but that's not always the case. What about games where you're the villain?" The teacher considered this remark from Jimmy.

"Depends on the game and your disposition to it. For example, I played a flash game where you're spreading a zombie virus across the world. This is clearly evil, but my intent wasn't to kill everyone in the world. My intent was to beat the game. You could've changed the game to say that I was spreading immortality, and it wouldn't have affected me in the slightest. It was about solving a puzzle, not killing people. However, if it had been about killing people, then that would have been wrong. If by playing this game I fueled a need to commit violence, then my playing of the game would have been wrong. So it is not just the game, but our disposition towards the game. Some games are more likely to direct our dispositions towards good, some are more likely to turn them away. It's all relative, and it's about putting things in your life that directs you towards good ends.

Jimmy nodded at all this, his questions resolved.

I know this was meant as a silly prompt, but it actually does. Source: I've been teaching this for eight years, and used to play video games with a priest.

The power of emotions

"Hunters to the front!" The strike leader called out. Some would've called his immediate use of the hunters as extreme. We certainly carried more responsibilities than most after the hate wars had taken down most of the governments. Then again, we carried so much responsibility because we were so affective.

The hoarders that were attacking our enclave in the abandoned hills of West Virginia would find out why we were used so much.

The strike leader watched as we sprinted out past the wooden palisade, husbands carrying wives piggy back. We could feel his confidence fuel us, and his vision of the enemy imbuing a sort of sixth sense into us that allowed us to sense the general position of the enemy. The strike leader used to be spec ops, and our bond with him gave us a share of his tactical abilities. Our bonds with our spouses gave us the rest of our power.

It didn't seem to matter how far back we had settled into the mountains. Roving hoarders always seemed to find us. I guess that's the power they got. They seemed to be drawn to the things they

needed, and would be pulled from continents away if necessary. We had run into Russian and even Indian groups before. I guess what we had was kind of rare.

No matter, they wouldn't get what we had. Our supplies, and more importantly, our families, would be safe tonight.

My wife with her enhanced vision spotted the first one before I did. She didn't have to say anything. We had been together almost twenty years, and with the kind of emotion that was between us, I was practically precognitive with her. I even knew it was a large one, perhaps almost two meters tall, but he wasn't armed. The greedy fool must've left his weapons behind so he didn't break them in battle.

Before the fool could see us I grabbed my wife by the arm, and using her vision to guide me, threw her at the bumbling giant. My wife had her superior female vision enhanced by her femininity, and I had my strength improved. My wife sailed almost twenty feet to kick the brute in the jaw as he stepped around a tree. As I saw her get so close to danger my protective instinct overtook me, and I pulled her back with my concern for her.

With a practiced grace I grabbed her by the wrist as she flew back, and replaced her on my back as she came soaring back. We had time for a quick kick before her sight picked up another hoarder, and off she flew again. This time I was able to knock out a second hoarder while she took down a third.

Our bond to our friends told us the battle was going well, no injuries on our side so far. It wasn't long at all before it was over, and a victorious war whoop went up from the lot of us.

We didn't celebrate long however, there was still work to do. My wife nimbly leapt from my back. My concern for her safety now mitigated, she could be physically parted from me. We both walked back to that first giant we had felled, and knelt beside him.

"He looks just like Mikey." My wife whispers to me.

"Same scar on the cheek and everything." I tease her. She gives me a playful glare, then we both place our hands on his head. We had several children, and had yet to find a lost person in this world who couldn't have their greed overpowered by the bond between family.

Everyone who has had sex in the last five years dies

"Dude, don't forget the Mentos, we can use those to make bombs." I the elementary schooler in charge of rounding up the remaining candy at the Toy store. It was the first toy raid that Tommy allowed me to supervise. Tommy was a twenty something who said he had come back 'from beyond the veil', to save us once all the other adults had died. Most of the high schoolers, especially the high school girls, had died too.

"Board game section pillaged sir, they had the new settlers of catan expansion." Another elementary schooler reported.

“Excellent, Tommy loves those games. He will be most pleased.” I tossed the kid a snickers bar as a reward.

“We need to make sure spirits are as high as possible tonight. We’re going to TP the girl’s camp tonight, and we lost three men to the spit wad catapults last time.” That reminded me.

“Timothy!” I shouted to the kid who was pilfering costumes over in the toy section. “Be sure and get as much body armor as possible, and make it quick, we don’t want to get caught by the wizards.” I had never met the wizards, but Tommy assured me they existed.

They were men who hadn’t been taken. Men with long robes who kidnapped and ate little boys who took too long gathering supplies.

We heard a distant rumbling on the wind. “The wizards are coming!” I shouted. “Everybody drop what you’re doing and run for it!” Items clattered to the floor as the little vagrants dashed for the door. The little kid in charge of the candy foolishly decided to attempt to make off with all his ill gotten goods.

The rumbling grew louder as they reached the door, and the lad with the candy began to lag behind. The others didn’t notice until they were several blocks away. By then, it was too late.

“Oh look Brother Matt, it’s another group of wandering orphans. Shall we see if they need anything?” Brother Stephen asked me.

“No Brother Stephen, they look like they don’t particularly want to talk to us. On second thought, that slow one looks like he’s taken only candy from that store. I’ll bet he’s got frightfully bad cavities. We better bring him back to the abby and see to his teeth.”

Chapter 4-Weird stories

A strange voice on a dark and scary night

My friend jumped so high his head almost hit the ceiling.

“What was that!?” He demanded of me. My parents were away, it was stormy outside, and a deep guttural voice from above us had just asked us a question.

Before I could answer he runs to my door and locks it. He’s not a moment too soon, because there is a creaking sound from overhead as the door to the attic opens. It’s decided to come down.

“Did you hear that!?” He frantically demands, looking around desperately for something to block the door.

“It’s m...” I start to say, but he cuts me off. There are footfalls outside my door, and my friend loses it.

“It’s coming!” He shouts, diving behind my bed and covering his head. He’s shaking now, but he can’t help but look at the door as a forceful knocking sound rattles the room.

A hear a squeak from my friend as I get out of bed and move toward the door.

“Don’t touch that!” He orders as I reach for the door handle. I ignore him and open the door to be greeted by what appears to be an eight foot tall jet black yeti with fangs.

“Dude the wi-fi is out.” He tells me.

“Sorry man, I’ll go power cycle the router and see if that helps. You good up there? Any leaks?” I ask.

“Naw man, it’s all good. I was just in the middle of something you know?” He says.

“What are you doing!” My friend exclaims, flabbergasted at the interaction that is taking place.

“I tried to tell you it’s no big deal.” I inform my friend. “Cause I’m friends with the monster that sleeps over my head.”

A mysterious wound

“A...A...” The crewman was trying to say something.

“We need to put him under right now.” The submarine’s doctor told me.

“Just one more moment doctor, if there’s a threat aboard this ship, then I need to know about it.” The injured crewman had gone missing for several hours and had suddenly turned up soaking wet with a large wound through his leg. There were bits of metal and rope in it. That wasn’t strange. There was plenty of metal and rope on the ship, but this had looked like a giant tooth had gone straight through his leg.

“A....A...” The crewman kept trying to say.

“He’s no good to anybody dead captain.” The doctor informed me. The crewmen was still desperately trying to cough out something. If only he could form the syllables, but it was clearly no use.

“Alright doc, put him under.” Hurriedly the doctor slapped on an anesthetic mask, and pulled out his tools. As soon as the man’s eyes were closed the doctor went to work with scalpel and suture.

I was shooed out, along with one of the men who had found him.

“What do you think it was?” I asked the unfortunate discoverer of the injured crewmen.

“Nobody told you?” He asked me.

“No, what happened” The crewmen looked into empty space before answering. As if he was remembering something from a long time ago.

“They found him with a harpoon through his leg.” I almost scoffed at that.

“A harpoon?” I asked. “That can’t be right. No one’s used those in the military for decades. We’re not a whaling ship. Why would there be a harpoon onboard? Besides, that doesn’t answer why he was soaking wet.” The crewmen looked uncomfortable. Clearly he didn’t have an answer, and seamen were always a notoriously superstitious lot.

“I don’t have an answer for either sir, but rumor is he disappeared in the torpedo bay. That something in the torpedo bay dragged him outside and skewered him.” We were both grown men in our thirties, and had college degrees.

“Aren’t we a little old for old wife’s tales crewmen?” I asked.

“It’s the truth sir. You know how tight equipment checks are here. He was soaked to the bone, and we would’ve known if that amount of water had gotten spilt. We certainly would’ve known if somebody brought a harpoon on board.” His voice got quiet. I tried to think of something to refute him while he mumbled his next sentence, but I could think of logical reason for a harpoon to be onboard a modern nuclear submarine.

“You heard what he said as he was on the table didn’t you? Started with an A?” Frustrated at my inability to put an end to this nonsense I merely nodded.

“I think it’s captain Ahab come back from the dead.” He said, and from the look on his face you would think he had seen the ghost himself.

“Crewmen, whatever you believe is your business. If you want to believe in ghosts, fine, but as the captain of this vessel I would sooner scrub the barnacles off the hull without a SCUBA suit then put the ghost of Captain Ahab in a report. I have a career you know.” The crewmen shrugged nervously.

“That’s as may be sir, but can you give me a better explanation.” I couldn’t, and was thankful for the sound of a red alert to spare me from this lunacy.

“I think we may be about to find out the real logical reason for the crewman’s injuries.” I haughtily informed my subordinate as we both ran to the bridge to see what was amiss.

“Helmsmen, what seems to be the trouble?” I asked. Relieved that at last we would get a logical explanation for all of this. If I had more closely observed the deathly horrified looks on the bridge crew’s faces I might not have been so enthusiastic to figure out what was going on.

“Sir.” The helmsmen responded. “You had better listen to this.” Ah a SONAR issue was it? That should be no problem.

“On speakers helmsmen.” I ordered, wanting the crewmen to hear for themselves that captain Ahab was just a myth. The last thing I expected to hear was a voice.

“....and you surface dwellers will finally learn that the Atlantians are not to be toyed with. Prepare yourselves, Aquaman has spoken.”

“There’s a horde of what looks like whales coming towards us sir.” The helmsmen informed me. I turned towards the crewmen who believed in Captain Ahab.

“Well, at least it’s not a ghost.”