

Example - Science Fiction



Career Private E Beckler was beginning to regret the previous night out hitting the station's bars. Although it was only a short test run to the *transfer station orbiting the Earth-Moon L₅ Lagrange Point* and they had only been going an hour, he was feeling a slight but growing need to visit the "rest room". Nothing much was happening, so he excused himself and went in search of the nearest toilet.

He had been shown a virtual tour of the *new vessel during his brief training session, but hadn't paid that much attention*. Since its recent fit out, it was new to everyone else on board anyway, so he forgave himself for being unfamiliar with where the toilets would be located. When they started doing the long range missions he would have plenty of time to become acquainted with the ship. Ahead of him a familiar blue toilet bowl icon showed above a small door. He hastened towards it.

Beside the door was a wide gray panel with a green-lit rim. He laid his hand on it as he came level with the panel and swung into the door. *The door did not whisk quickly aside as he had expected, but stayed resolutely and firmly closed*. He collided with it with a resounding "thud".

He rubbed the side of his face where it had impacted the door and frowned at the panel. It remained green-lit. He pressed his hand against it again more firmly. The surround flickered orange and nothing else appeared to happen.

"Stupid door." he glowered at it. It ignored him.

He sighed and went in search of another toilet. It didn't take long to find another one. He tried the panel and pushed on the door. Nothing.

"Oh come on!" he was beginning to feel a little more urgency.

"What's up?" it was one of the engineers.

"This is the second door that won't open for me."

"I presume you've got clearance to be onboard?" said the Engineer. "Let's have a try?"

The engineer pressed his hand to the panel. It flickered orange and returned to green. The door remained closed. "The green light definitely indicates the toilet is vacant, so being occupied is not the problem."

The engineer made a quick call on his communicator. "I'll get someone to bring a system analyser. Then we may figure out what's going on."

"Soon would be good." said Beckler beginning to jitter just a little.

With the *analyser in place* the engineer instructed Beckler to press the panel again. The surround flashed orange, and the analyser emitted a brief shot of static.

"A signal of some sort?" wondered the engineer. "Do it again but keep your hand down."

Beckler did as he was told. The result was the same.

"It's some sort of magnetic disturbance." said the engineer gazing at the analyser output. He thought for a bit then laughed "I think I see the problem."

"A quick fix I hope." said Beckler between gritted teeth.

"Ah...no. It's a bit tragic. You know the Ortogians?"

"I know of the Ortogians."

"And how they use magnetic glyphs to record information and magnetic pulses to communicate?"

"Yes."

"I think this is Ortogian technology."

"But.."

"Yes. No solution. Our cheap arse management in their usual cost-cutting style have ignored our advice yet again and ended up with our ship fitted with Ortogian-made toilets."

"Spare me the lecture." howled Beckler jiggling on the spot.

"The panel probably only responds to Ortogian sucker patterns."

"I said spare me the lecture." Beckler was just about crying. "What do we do?"

"This is a crowbar job."

With a final groan and hiss, the door was opened enough for Private E. Beckler to squeeze inside. There in front of him a strange curving device in stainless steel projected out of the floor. The Engineer looked in behind him. "Great! An Ortogian toilet thing. Good luck with that."

The makeshift curtain swung closed across the door. Private E Beckler turned towards the device. *With a look of determination he advanced.*



Characters: *Career Private E. Beckler*

Challenges: *The door is locked*

Locations: *In orbit*

Events: *A new device is installed*

Events: *Something is translated*

Characters: *The celebrity player of an overblown sport*

Objects: *A vehicle with an unusual defect*

Objects: *A crowbar*

Endings: *... and that is why it is better to be rich, beautiful, and empty-headed than poor and honest.*

Endings: *with a look of determination they advanced.*



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