



The War

of

Wars

Richard Shekari

The War of Wars

By

Richard Shekari

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Peter Barwa

Emmanuel C. Sambo

Dedication

Krazillian Z.K. Mutebela

Chapter One: 3-2-1 Lift-Off

The three main engines of the shuttle started almost simultaneously. When the countdown clock ticked down to zero, the Solid Rocket Boosters ignited, and the Space Shuttle cleared off the Launchpad.

About two minutes into flight, the crew watched on a small screen as one of the cameras from the shuttle picked up the boosters as they separated themselves from the external tank and fell back down to earth.

“We won’t be needing you, babies!” The Pilot joked. “Say me hi to mother earth!”

“If earth was a human being,” said a woman among the crew, “how do you think the impact would be on her as the boosters hit the ocean?”

“Well, I’ve got a poor sense of humour, Flight Engineer Johnson!” The Commander said, “But I think it’ll be like Hilary’s breath around Trump’s neck; won’t feel it!”

“Whoa!” The crew yelled as they laughed.

“Guess what, Johnson.” The pilot said.

“Yeah?” Responded the Flight Engineer.

“Commander Barry here’s with the feminist team,” added the Pilot, “His wife is the Head of the Women’s Right Brass. So don’t take it personal!”

“Why should I?” She said, “Any man who gets splattered out of a woman, wouldn’t make fun of women!”

“Whoa!” The Pilot remarked, “I wish the guys in the Middle East and Africa heard that!”

James, a young man in his late twenties was quivering as the shuttle pierced through space. The warmth memories of his mother fluxed into his heart, he managed to join the rest of the crew to savour the gag thrown by the Commander

“I promised my mom that I’d be an astronaut someday!” James said, in a shaky voice.

“Aww!” Johnson remarked, “Isn’t that sweet? Well, I guess she just watched your scary butt thrust into space on TV!”

“Well, maybe from above!” He said, “She passed away about two years ago.”

“Ring! Ring! Apology time!” The Pilot said, “Flight Engineer Maurine Johnson, what do you have to say?”

“I’m so sorry, James!” She said, “I didn’t know.”

“It’s okay,” he replied.

“I’m so sorry for your...great loss!” She added, “I believe she’s in a better place!”

“There you go!” The Pilot said, “It wasn’t that hard, was it, Johnson?”

“Shut up, Caleb!” She said.

“Enjoying the view huh, first timer?” Caleb said.

“Yeah?” James responded, “Why is it shaking like this?”

“On an average, a cowboy sits on a horse that’s around 1,123 pounds of flesh or there about,” answered the Pilot. “We on the other hand are stuck like sardine in a can that’s attached to some huge cylinders containing about 383,000 gallons of liquid hydrogen and 143,000 gallons of liquid oxygen or more, son!”

“Wow!” James remarked.

“Sitting ducks in a giant tank of a huge propulsion system that is essentially a controlled bomb! That’s how someone put it!” The Commander said, “Like ants hung to your wife’s cooking gas cylinder back at home. She blows! We’ll all get vapourised!”

“Stop scaring him, guys!” Johnson said.

“I’m not married!” James said.

“Oh! You lucky son of a gun,” interjected the Commander. “I wish we’d switch places. Huh! Just kidding!” He mocked, “I love my wife and kids, and if I’m to come back to this God-forsaken world after this life...I’d want to spend my time with them all over again! You don’t know what you’re missing!”

“How’s it going out there sport?” Said a voice over the radio, “BX9, do you copy?”

“Mission Control, we’re good!” The Commander said, “Caleb’s trying to scare the bit Jesus out of our young Spaceflight Participant here. But we’re all good! Copy?”

“I hope our young Spaceflight Participant left his religious beliefs down here on earth with us, where it belong,” said the voice over the radio. “If he carries that crap up into space he might not survive a millisecond there! Copy!”

The entire crew laughed as the shuttle sailed the orbit.

“You shouldn’t take away the only thing that gives a man hope!” The Commander added.

“You’re right, Commander Barnabas!” Said the voice over the radio, “Sail on!”

Chapter Two: A Boy in Space

The crew got to their destination and docked the shuttle on the space station. After a routine check and debriefing, most of them retired to their small cabins.

As James walked to his cabin, he sighted earth from a window, he stopped to have a good look.

“I can see that the sight of the big blue lady takes your breath away!” Caleb said as he tapped James on the back, “Look at her; so sexy from up here. But down there?” He giggled, “Nothing but war, hatred, prejudice and sheer ignorance!”

“True, you’re right!” James said.

“Hmm! What a beauty!” Caleb added, “These sexy eyes of mine need some sleep. You need to see us at the club the other night; these chicks just couldn’t take their hands off of me when my friend told them I was an astronaut. Maybe when we hit home, you and I could hang out with my homies! What do you say, eh quiet one?”

“Alright, man!” James said, “It’ll be fun!” He sighed, “Earth looks peaceful from up here!”

“Sure, she does!” Caleb added.

“It’s our greed that’s destroying her from down there!” James said, “Who would’ve thought a beautiful thing like this would have thousands, even millions of hungry kids, and a thousand more caught up in some unjust war! If I’d told you I don’t feel sad every time I switch on the news channel, I lied!”

“You’re right!” Caleb said, “For me, it is guilt that overwhelms me. I feel bad for not being able to do anything to stop these wars but hey, life goes on, right?”

The men stayed mute staring down at the giant globe.

“It’s all recorded in the book of Revelation.” James added, “All these tragedies!”

“Oh boy!” Caleb said, “Here we go!”

“No, I’ve got to tell you the truth!” He said, “I know you don’t believe in God and all that but as a scientist maybe you should flip a couple of pages. Look at the world and tell me what you think about all the things that’s unfolding around us!”

“James, really?” Caleb said, “What’s this like...You had to ride your evangelic-horse up into space? Come on, man!”

“Well, if that’s how you see it. So be it.” James said.

“How did you get trapped in this whole religious applesauce?” Caleb asked.

“I came from a Christian home,” James answered, “but trust me; I frowned upon the idea of religion from the start and the whole concept of...”

“Wait! Wait! Wait! I think I know where we’re headed,” Caleb interjected, “You’re going to go all cliché on me; telling me about how much of an unbeliever you were and how some saviour came and saved you from some enemy or perils then you saw this white light bla-bla-bla now you believe in God, and believe in the crappy old 2,000 year old tale about some guy being born of a virgin, who died and rose on the third day. Who’d soon come and save mankind and the world at large from...evil, right?”

“Yeah! You’ve got that right!” James said, “It’s almost like that but I had to seek for Him even after what happened to me, and I...”

“Found Him?” Caleb interjected.

“Yes, you’re right about that too!” James said, “I found Him!”

“And I thought I’d introduce you to my beautiful sister when we get home!” Caleb said, “You just crushed my nuts, man! In space? Not good! This is not good, man! And your profile says you went to Harvard?”

“Well, yes!” He answered, “You see...”

“Gotta go, son!” Caleb tabbed him twice on the back again, “However, I’ll still buy you a drink when we get home but you ain’t gon’ see my cute sister! Sleep tight, buddy!”

“Sure, that’d be cool!” James replied.

The Pilot left him. James turned to the window and sighed.

“Amazing, right?” Johnson said, she stopped and gazed through the same window.

“What?” James said as he turned to Johnson.

“The big blue lady?” She added, “Earth?” she smiled.

“Oh, yeah!” He responded, “A giant big blue marble she is!”

“First time I came up here, I couldn’t take my eyes off of her!” Johnson said, “She’s so beautiful, ain’t she?”

Johnson moved closer to the window and the light from the sun rested on her face.

“Wow!” James said, “You’re...beautiful!” He had a feeling of euphoria as he gazed at Johnson’s face.

“What?” She said, she turned and caught his eyes set in a fixed stare.

“Oh, I mean um...I can’t take my eyes off of um...her...you, you know, earth?” He said, haltingly. “It’s um...she’s more beautiful from up here, right?”

“Yeah!” She replied as she smiled at him.

“I’m James Shinoman!” He said, “We were never properly introduced.”

“Are you sure?” She teased, stretching for a handshake.

“I mean um...well, you know,” he added. “I didn’t want to bug you when I first saw you during my training. You know, I didn’t want to be disqualified or jettisoned for not being serious and all!”

“Yeah,” she remarked. “I noticed that. But if they had wanted you off the mission they would’ve done that the very day you puked in the simulator, James!”

“Oh my God, you heard about it?” He grinned.

“I’ve been working for the agency for six years.” She said, “Let’s just say I know things!” She laughed, “Anyways, I’m

going to uh...go to my cabin. Maybe we'll talk some other time?"

"Alright, Johnson!" He said.

"Uh...please call me, Maurine." She emphasised, "Don't make me miss my name like the rest of the boys do! Catch you later, James!"

Her smile left him frozen by the window.

"Okay," he added, "Catch you later!"

James stood there for a while before moving to his cabin. He tucked himself into his sleeping bag and doze off.

They all rested for some hours.

The crew later got up to begin their mission. At the galley area, James added some water to his beverages through a special tube.

"Alright, guys! Listen up," said the Commander's voice over the speaker. "As you all know we'll be here for just a short period, so we only have 16 days to update the damn computer, check the support systems and clean the damn filters. Our duty is to ensure the smooth operation of the investor's interests up here and fly back home once done, guys!" He cleared his throat, "As much as it is a big deal to

find myself up here, I just can't wait to go back to my family back home. So, safety first. Do your duties and know that we can only survive here as a team! Flight Engineer Johnson, you and your team will go out at exactly twenty-three hundred hours *UTC!*”

“Aye aye, *captain,*” Johnson said. “Twenty-three hundred hours *UTC!* Copy that, Sir!”

The entire crew burst into laughter.

Chapter Three: The Visit

Maurine Johnson and her two man crew got suited up for their first task outside the station but a couple of things went wrong; the station lost communication with the Mission Control Centre, so Barry advised they wait until communication is established.

In the meantime, James gently moved towards Maurine and the duo got into a chat. He managed to lure her into telling him a bit about herself. She told him about Tom, her three year old son and all she needed James to know at that time, including how she got the job. He was the quiet type, so he listened more.

“Well, I guess big Tommy is a proud little man,” he said. “If my mom was an astronaut, I can’t even imagine the thrills and how I’d go about bragging in school and in the neighbourhood.”

Maurine couldn’t stop laughing.

“My mom is the coolest of all the moms!” He mimicked a kid’s voice, “A real super-heroine!”

“Oh my God,” she said as she tried to control her laughter, “But we don’t fly up here to save anyone! The real heroes are

the men and women who put their lives on the line day and night down there, trying to make the world a better place for us all!”

“You’re right,” he said. “But I think I’m kinda feeling like I’m being rescued up here!” He gazed into her eyes.

She was speechless. She took her eyes away from his stare as she smiled.

“Alright, put your helmets back on,” Barry instructed. “Check your visors, guys!”

James helped her with the helmet, she then pressed a button on her helmet and her sun visor extended. She pressed the button again and it retracted.

“I don’t need your phone number up here, do I?” said James.

“Sure, you don’t!” She said, “I’m just a stone throw away!” She smiled.

“I’m never gonna throw a stone at you,” he said. “Wouldn’t want you hurt. Maybe something softer, like my heart?”

“What if I decide to keep it, and not give it back?” She replied.

“I think people naturally only throw away things that are not useful to them!” He responded.

“Is this how you talk to all the ladies?” She asked, “Or is it the zero gravity that’s messing with your brain?”

“It’s not every time you need your brain to make decisions!” James said.

“Yeah, you’re right!” She added, “The last time I let my heart override my brain, I ended up with something in my womb! And I don’t even know where the other party is!”

A scent of discomfort diffused their presence.

“The last time you let your heart override your brain, you ended up with something beautiful in you womb!” James said. He looked her deep in the eyes and smiled, “And I can’t buy you roses from up here either!”

Maurine heaved a deep sigh then wore a beautiful smile.

“If you’re serious about giving me roses, maybe you should find a way to plant them!” She said.

“Would they grow up here?” He asked.

“Nothing is impossible, James!” She replied, “If the little time I’ve spent with you makes me feel the way I’m feeling

then, you can plant anything you want even on the surface of the sun, and it might grow! You'll never know until you try!"

They both smiled at each other. James gazed into her eyes once more, she blushed.

"You're going to make this mission a bit tough for me," she said. "I don't think this is going to be healthy!"

"Why is that?" He asked.

"Well, the truth is..."

"Okay, we're a green, Juliet!" Said the commander, "Romeo can wait for your return! Copy?"

"Affirmative, sir!" Maurine said, "I guess I'll 'see-you on-my-return?'" She mimicked Barry's voice.

James and Maurine laughed.

"Hey!" James said, "You take care of yourself out there, okay?"

"Okay!" She responded, "See you soon!"

At exactly 1159 hours *UTC*, she exited the spacecraft for a spacewalk through the Quest airlock. Followed by two men.

"Can you hear me, Johnson?" The Commander said.

"Loud and clear, sir!" She responded.

James watched them from a window.

“Christopher, how’s the sound?” Barry asked.

“As clear as the sound of my teacher’s high heels during exam back in high school, sir!” Answered the first man behind Maurine.

“Good!” Barry said, “Gregory, can you...”

“Loud and clear, boss!” Interjected the second man, “Hey guys! Who wanna photo-bomb my Selfie, eh?”

“You’ve got to be kidding me!” Maurine said.

“Son of a gun, he took a camera out!” Barry added, “Could you believe that?”

The whole crew laughed. James shook his head as they watched from a screen; Johnson and her team posed for a Selfie outside the station.

After the photo-shoot, Johnson and her team called to Barry’s attention.

“Uh...guys, can you see that?” She said.

“See what, Johnson?” Barry replied.

They described something they saw as *a strange cloud* coming towards them.

A shadow was cast upon the spacecraft.

“Is it a satellite, a shuttle or what?” Barry said, “Damn Chinese, I thought the arrangement was that they’d show up a week from now?”

“I don’t know,” she said. “It’s not a shuttle! It’s no satellite! It’s something like...like a dark cloud. A thick smoke, like it’s...like it’s alive! Barry!”

Using their nitrogen-propelled backpack, Christopher and Gregory flew toward the spacecraft.

“We’re coming in, sir!” Gregory said.

“What’s going on out there?” Barry asked. As he moved a control column to get a good view from one of the external cameras. He could only see the two men. Maurine was out of sight.

James and the rest of the men in the spacecraft set their eyes on the screen. There was tension. James’ heart began to beat fast.

“Johnson, Can you describe what you see?” Barry asked.

“Something like uh...Oh my God! Barry! Help me!” She cried, “Oh God! Get it out of me! Get it off of me!” She sounded as though she was losing her breath.

A dark cloud covered Christopher and Gregory, their scream came over the speakers and the sound of their agony sent shivers down the men's spine. James left the men and tried to get his hand on a spacesuit.

“What the hell are you doing?” Caleb said.

“We need to help them!” He said, “They need us, they need our help!”

“When did you become the shot caller here?” Caleb asked, “Help them against what? Do you have any idea what is out there or what will happen to us in here if you open any of the airlocks?”

James ignored him and continued wearing his suit. As soon as he was ready to go, a loud bang hit the station. There was a co-occurring explosions around the station, Caleb's head hit a metal and he fainted. Debris radiated from the station as though sucked by a black hole. The station was tearing apart, the spacecraft ripped off from the station and flung into orbit.

James tried to grab hold onto a handle when something like a thick black smoke made its way into the spacecraft. It grabbed hold of James and pinned him against the wall. The

dark smoke then released him and hovered above him, James could tell the dark cloud was alive. Fear gripped him. A figure like the head of a horrible demon came out of the thick smoke and stared at James, it whispered his name then sank its head back into the smoke, and the dark cloud left James. It maneuvered through the spacecraft and got to Barry, who was already in his suit. James watched as Barry's soul was ripped from within him. His body was left floating as his soul got sucked into the dark cloud. James began looking for a way to escape from the terror that presented itself before him. But he watched as the cloud did the same thing to Caleb and the others who were in the spacecraft.

James began to breathe fast. The dark cloud came back to him and something stretched out like hands and into his spacesuit. Death whispered his name three times then grabbed his soul and tried to pull it out. James felt the roots that anchor his soul to his body being ripped, like roots of a tree being ripped from the ground violently. As he got pulled close to the dark cloud, he turned his face away only to realise his own body was about two feet away, he realised that his soul was already out of his body and his body was dead. James tried to

break free but he found himself helpless against the great evil force that held him. He had come face to face with Death. He tried to open his mouth in order to call out for help. His lips were glued.

“He can’t hear you!” the thick dark smoke whispered.

James struggled with the entity, his entire strength drained and he was helpless and hopeless. James had given up; he shut his eyes and in his heart began crying out to God, but the force that held his soul was stronger than steel. However, he believed in his heart that his God would not forsake him. He kept his eyes shut and called out to Jehovah one more time. Death lost its grip and set James free. James’ soul fell back to his body, he awakened to see that the thick dark cloud was furious. The entity floated away and then ran back to James again. It smashed James’ head against the wall and his helmet broke. Discovering the power in the name he trusted, James closed his eyes and called out once more, then a great white light broke through the surrounding and Death departed from him. James began to hear voices, he lost consciousness.

Moments later, James opened his eyes and found himself outside the spacecraft. He didn’t know how he got there, he

was enclosed in a glass like dome, something that looked like a Force field. James was still in his spacesuit but the transparent shell and sun visor from his helmet were shattered. He stood there in the open space, marvelled at the sight of the galaxy.

A voice said to him, *“James, look at what befall the earth in days to come, and the worlds around it!”*

James was lifted up in the force field and over a stretch of time, this was what he witnessed; a catastrophic event occurred in the cosmos; the Fallen One came in form of a mighty dark angel, bigger than all the worlds combined. Like a blanket of destruction, so terrible it roamed irritatedly. The Fallen One wrapped itself on top of the worlds and enfolded the worlds with its wings, the Fallen One altered the formation of the universe by tampering with the shield that protected the worlds; causing an imbalance in the universe that shifted all the planets from their location. Leaving all the worlds bare; each world left to defend itself.

The Fallen One began to devour some of these worlds, but a handful put up a fierce fight by being on the offensive, causing injury to the Fallen One. One of the planets, the

strongest among them was able to swallow the Fallen One; the angel of destruction got trapped in its belly. The strongest of them all among the worlds finally imprisoned the Fallen One for a while.

Then James heard the voice again saying, *“You have seen with thine own eyes. So go! Go warn the people! Tell them the blood of the innocent cried out to me. Tell them they have made the voice of innocent children fill My throne room and their tears drenched the grounds on which I walk. Tell the people, if they do not turn away from their wicked ways, calamity worse than death shall befall upon the worlds. Tell them, I can no longer stand the stench of hatred that stems from their heart. Tell them this; that I, The I Am that I Am, shall pour My wrath upon the earth and Mine ears shall I shut from their self-centred prayers, and if from Mine eyes they turned not away from wickedness and self-righteousness. Tell them that My spirit shall depart from their midst, and in My absence, darkness shall cover the earth!”*

Chapter Four: The Recoverer

James woke up to the sound of an electrocardiograph machine on a hospital bed. He had no idea how he got there. He made an attempt to sit up.

“Easy, champ!” Said a voice not far from him.

James turned and saw a man dressed in a black suit sitting on a chair next to the window.

“Who are you?” James asked.

“I’m agent Victor,” said the man, “I work with the...”

“How did I get here?” said James.

“Oh um...after the agency lost contact with your station. Truth is there was nothing anyone could do at that time because well, let’s face it; the entire world was thrown off balance and there was chaos all over. So you guys were the least of the world’s problems. But uh...somehow, things got back to normal and then three days later, you were found lying fully kitted on top of the Launchpad.”

“What?” James responded.

“Well, I don’t know what happened or how you did it, but uh...” Victor said, “I think as much we’ve witnessed some

classic crazy *out-of-this-world* stuff lately, you on the other hand have a lot of explaining to do at the panel, my man!”

“Panel?” He said, “How long have I been here?”

“From the day you were found to now, say seven days?”

James gently laid his head back on the pillow. The thought of Maurine Johnson flashed his mind. Her beautiful smile surfaced, accompanied by echoes of her scream.

James covered his face with his two hands and suspired sadly.

“Hello, James!” Said a woman who walked in, “Hmm! Finally awake I see!”

“Awake?” James responded, he took his hands off of his face.

“Yes, James!” The woman said, “I’m doctor Tania, and I’ve got to say you’re some kind of a miracle; Ever since they brought you here we’ve ran some test and thorough diagnoses on you over and over again, and found out you have sustained no injury or whatsoever. We were all puzzled to discover that you were only...sleeping, like a baby!”

“Babies don’t sleep quiet like that!” Victor said.

“You’re damn right,” said the doctor. “I’ve never seen anyone enjoy their sleep like this big baby. So I’m going to ask you a few questions just to be sure.” She held up a pen and a folder, “First, do you...”

“I know where I am,” James said, “I’ve been here before; DT Hospital, central part of the city. And I remember everything; my name is James Shinoman. My home address is 110481BH Seer Crescent, Sojourner.” He paused, “I left for a mission along with a group of astronauts on the...”

“I think it’s established you’re...okay!” Victor interjected, “Right doctor?”

“Oh well, yeah!” She answered, “My job here’s done! You’re good to go!”

“Like, I can go now, if I want to?” He said, softly.

“Yes, sir!” Replied the doctor.

James gently removed the sensors taped to his chest and arm. He got up and slowly stood on his feet. He sighed then sat back on the edge of the bed. His mind wandered away. He turned and looked at the doctor and the man who introduced himself as agent Victor.

“I think I’ve recognised your face!” James said, “I saw you before we left for the mission!”

“Welcome back, James!” Victor responded. He pulled out a device and ran his finger as though typing a message.

“Did they leave me any shoes?” He asked.

“Flip-flops!” The doctor said, “Under the bed!” she helped pulled some slippers from underneath the bed.

James gently slipped his feet into the soft Flip-flops and stood up, he carefully walked out of the room, leaving agent Victor and the doctor.

As he walked out of the hospital, James decided to take a walk and not bother looking for a cab; he noticed how the city had totally changed; there were lots of burnt vehicles on the streets and so many buildings devoured by fire, planes and satellites that crashed from the sky. Just a few buildings still on fire. But it seemed the people had begun to pick up the pieces of their lives back together.

“No more taxis, James!” Said a familiar voice in a car behind him.

He turned and saw the agent, Victor.

“Let me give you a lift!” He added, “The world isn’t what you left behind before your mission, James!”

James stopped, he looked around him and couldn’t imagine what happened while he was up in space, and after a long thought, he hopped into the agent’s car.

“A lot has changed, man.” Victor said as they drove through the city.

“What happened?” James asked.

“Well,” Victor said, “The day the earth shook, the entire world was thrown into a pandemonium; planes falling from the skies, explosions, entire stadia swallowed by earth. Lots of people died across the globe, about a quarter of the world’s population. And the entire children? Well, the entire children around the world have disappeared, man. Just like that!”

James sighed.

“Just like that!” Victor added. “Are you hungry, man?”

“Kind of!” He said.

“Nice, I’m starving too.” Victor said, “We’ll stop by at Nuke’s and grab a bite.”

“I don’t feel like eating anything, for now!” James said.

“Okay, we’ll stop by and I’ll grab a bite for myself, then we move!” Victor said, “You cool with that?”

James nodded.

“Some crazy thing, man!” Victor said, “I’ve been assigned to report to the agency once you’re up, which I’ve already did. And this is for you.” He handed a brown envelope to James, “I believe you recognised the seal!”

James nodded as he opened the envelope. It was a letter from the agency, asking James to report as soon as he received the message. James was summoned to give an account of what occurred on the station and how he ended up being the only survivor. He had no idea what to tell them but he was ready to face them.

“So, I guess you’re not really taking me home then!” James said.

“Nope!” Victor said, “I’m taking you to work!” He sighed, “The good thing is, almost half of the world’s population have lost their job, and it appears you’re still considered an asset! So that’s good news!”

Agent Victor drove through the city, they stopped by at a fast food joint that appeared dilapidated. Victor bought some bugger and beverages, then took James back to the agency.

On reaching the facility, there were presence of construction workers around the premises trying to renovate the installation. Victor led James to a conference room.

A man in his mid-fifties sat in the middle of the six men that appeared to be the judges. James was asked to sit at the centre of the room.

Agent Victor walked out of the room.

“Please, sit!” Said one of the judges.

James walked across the room which had six seats occupied by six men with a long table laid before them, and one chair in the middle of the room kept not far from the table. He sat on the chair.

“You don’t mind me addressing you as...Mister? Right?” Said the man that appeared older among the men.

“No, sir!” James replied.

“Good!” The man responded, “Mister uh...James Shimon?” He readjusted his reading glasses.

“James Shinoman!” James said.

“James Shinoman, yeah!” The man murmured, “Oh, yes! Mister James Shinoman...have you read the letter sent to you by the agency?”

“Yes, sir!” He answered.

“You can address me as, Clarkson, son!” Said the man, “If you so wish!”

“Alright, sir!” James said.

“Good! Good!” Clarkson said, “Because we have a law in this country, and the agency you work for operates solely under that law. I believe you also took an oath when you got signed up for this mission. So it’ll be of best interest to you to know that any act by you and or anyone in your position that is deemed as a threat to this nation, will be dealt with consequently. In other words, sharing any information about your mission and or what occurred up there to anyone other than this committee will be labelled as treason! And you shall be handed to the authority for further action. Do you understand?”

James nodded his head in agreement.

“For the record, could you please state your response audibly?” Clarkson said.

“Yes, I understand that any act by myself and or anyone in my position that is deemed as a threat to this nation will be dealt with, consequently!”

“Good! Good!” Clarkson added, “Have you shared any information with any national or foreign agent concerning the incident that occurred which left the entire crew of the BX9 shuttle dead or missing?”

“No, sir!” He answered.

Some of the men in the room cleared their throats, some grumbled.

“How did you survive the incident, Mr. James Shinoman?” Clarkson said.

“Seriously?” Said one of the men sitting next to Clarkson, “You’re asking a religious guy how he’d survived such a gruesome incident, a Christian for that matter. Come on, Clarkson, we all know the answer. What else would he tell you?” He snorted, “God...or best yet, Jesus saved me!”

The rest of the judges laughed.

James only smiled.

###

Appreciation:

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Richard Shekari.

About the Author:

Richard Shekari is a writer, singer, rapper and a poet from Abuja, Nigeria. A Humanitarian with the National Emergency Management Agency, Nigeria. He is an alumnus of the Federal University of Technology (ATBU) Architecture department Bauchi State, Nigeria.

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