

New Years Resolutions
by Lesley L. Smith

Sighing, I typed, 'I will lose weight this year' in my journal.

"Fred, could you not do that, por favor?" Roberto said in a snippy tone, as he threw his alarm clock at me.

I pushed my chair back from the computer and glared at him as he lay on his bunk. "What? Type?"

"Sigh." He made an exaggerated sighing sound. "Sigh, sigh, sigh!"

Catching the clock and putting it on the console, I took a quiet calming breath and said, "I'll try." I had to keep my temper to stay in the lunar program, and after four months cooped up with five other astronauts that was starting to get tricky. Roberto needed to keep his temper in check too but he didn't seem too worried about it.

Actually, that was another good New Years Resolution: I will not lose my temper. I pulled my chair back to the computer.

"Can you try to go to bed while you're at it? We go back on duty in," he looked at his watch, "six hours."

Mentally sighing, I said, "Okay, partner." I logged out and got into my bunk.

All too soon, the Commander was saying, "Come on, Fred, Roberto. It's our turn for some sack time. You guys are up. Tiffani can't leave the command console until she's relieved because Abdul and Kaneesha are out in the rover."

I sat up, rubbing goop from my eyes. Had it really been six hours? "Sorry, the alarm didn't go off."

Looking at the clock on the console, Roberto grimaced. "That's my fault, boss. I forgot to set it. I'll go relieve Tiffani now." Roberto got up and shuffled through the open door to the oversized tin-can we called the work habitat.

The Commander settled heavily onto Roberto's bunk--a good trick in our one-sixth gravity.

I shuffled over to the kitchenette. "Coffee, Roberto?"

"Si," he said from the command station.

Tiffani came into the rec hab and lay down on my cot. "I'm beat." She closed her eyes and started snoring immediately.

I rustled up some breakfast rations to go along with the bulbs of liquid stimulant. Awkwardly, I juggled them as I walked the twenty feet or so to Roberto. "Here. I got some breakfast, too."

He snorted. "Surprise, surprise. Fred got himself something to eat."

I struggled to keep a grip on my temper. Could it be I'd break one of resolutions within hours of making it? Maybe it didn't count if I didn't write it down.

"Don't have anything to say to that, huh?" Roberto said. "Figures."

"Yes, I do. There's no need to be rude."

"...no need to be rude..." he repeated in a sing-song voice.

"You're acting like a baby," I said.

The Commander appeared in the air-lock. "Shut the hell up and get your heads in the game. Kaneesha and Abdul need you to do your jobs." He slammed the airtight door.

Roberto snorted again. "Touchy, touchy."

I focused on my breakfast so I wouldn't throttle him. Freeze-dried egg and meat sandwich was surprisingly tasty if you could get over the consistency.

Our radar unit pinged and then pinged some more.

"Shit," Roberto said. "Meteors."

We should be fine underground, but Abdul and Kaneesha might not be so lucky.

"Base, come in. This is Kaneesha. It looks like a meteor strike." She paused. "That was a close one." Her voice was shaking.

Roberto said into the mic, "Take cover! Look for any rocks or overhangs." His breakfast fell off the console and drifted to the floor.

A strange squeaking noise came over the radio for a couple seconds.

"Kaneesha's been hit. Her suit.... She's gone." Abdul sounded like he was going to cry.

I grabbed the mic, "Abdul! Get a grip! You need to take cover! Look for cover!"

"Uh, right. We're only a couple hundred yards from Base. I'm gonna try to come in."

"No," I said. "You need to take cover immediately."

"I'm gunning it."

A loud rattling noise came over the link.

Then, we heard the strange squeaking noise again.

"Abdul!" Roberto yelled into the mic. "Come in! Abdul!"

We only heard silence.

Roberto pushed his chair back from the console. "We have to go tell the Commander."

He bounce-ran over to the door, opened it and entered the rec hab.

"Commander, wake up! We lost--"

And that was all I heard before the air-lock door slammed shut and the alarm klaxon blared.

"Warning, habitat breach. Warning, habitat breach."

I toggled off the alarms and quickly looked at the life support readings. Jesus Christ! There was no air in the rec hab! I rolled my chair over to look at the rec hab camera output.

"Jesus Christ!" There was a breach all right! There was a huge gaping hole in the ceiling and everything that hadn't been nailed down must have been sucked out. "Jesus Christ!" There was no sign of Roberto or Tiffani or the Commander.

I rolled back over to the radio and switched to the Houston freq. "Come in, Houston. This is Moonbase." I resisted the urge to say 'we have a problem'.

"Houston, here. We just noticed the video feed, Fred. We're very sorry."

Just noticed it! They were supposed to be watching it! Temper, temper.

"Uh, yeah. I'm sorry too. Uh..." What was I supposed to do now? My fingers and toes felt kind of tingly.

"Implement disaster protocol number one," the voice down on earth was saying.

Number one? Did they think this would happen? "Uh, I'm sorry. I don't recall--" Was it getting hard to breathe in here?

Another voice said, "Clearly we need a thicker layer of regolith--" before he was interrupted.

"You may be going into shock, Fred. Stay with us. First of all, are you in immediate danger?"

I glanced at the radar trace and shook my head.

"Fred? We need you to answer us."

"Uh, no. I think the meteors are gone."

"That's good, Fred. Do you have oxygen?"

I toggled to the O2 supply. "It looks fine."

"What about water?"

One of our water bottles leaned against the wall by the closed airlock.

"Yes."

"What about food?"

I shook my head. "No. It was all in the rec hab." My eyes shifted to Roberto's neglected breakfast, lying on the floor. "I have a little bit."

"Just a minute, Fred." The radio went silent.
I felt woozy and disconnected.
"Fred. Do you have your suit?"
"Uh. No. It was in the other hab."
Someone in the background said, "Against protocol--"
The first guy cut him off. "We're mounting an emergency mission. We hope to be there in a week--"
The background guy said, "Not enough time--"
The first guy interrupted him. "We'll be there in a week, or so. We'll get back to you with the specific timeline. We need you to hold out until then. Okay, Fred?"
I nodded.
"Fred?"
"Yes. Fine."
"We need you to stay on the radio, Fred, but lie down. I'm going to get one of docs to talk to you, okay?"
"Yeah." I carefully picked up Roberto's breakfast and put it on the console and then lay down on the floor.
As I lay there waiting, I tried to think of something, anything, positive. I was alive.
And it looked like I would be able to keep my New Years Resolutions this year.

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