

2015 MCC Creative Writing Contest

Fiction Category

Honorable Mention: Excerpt from “*The Kastron Virus: The Swarm*,” by Matthew Meier

A group of five silver-armored beings rocketed through the sky, en route to their main base. At the head of the group, was Jason Betz. Jason was one of few soldiers who had fought to retake Earth from the Teazonian Empire, and had been fortunate to survive. Being one of the few

from Teazonians.”

“We were away from the base for weeks!” Chase snapped, “Of course I’m gonna complain when-”

Trent grinned and nodded.

“Good.” Ron said as he handed his son the sharp object, “Now, go over and poke him with this. Be careful, got it?”

Andy visibly cringed and slapped his forehead as Trent walked over to the sleeping alien.

“I can’t believe you are a parent.” Andy muttered, “You do know Toxic could eat him in half a mouthful, right?”

“I told him to be careful.” Ron reminded Andy, causing him to cringe again. “Besides, you can talk to dead people, right?”

“Yes, b-but...do you have any idea what Jason would do if-”

“Freeze me in a block of ice so thick, I’d never thaw out.” Ron said in a mocking tone, “I’ve heard it all before, now be quiet, he’s there.”

Andy looked in front of him. Sure enough, Trent was right next to Toxic’s sleeping body, looking back at Ron and Andy. Andy shook his head, trying to coax the boy out of his actions, but Ron nodded and gave his son a thumbs up, prompting the toddler to lightly jab Toxic with the stick. Nothing happened.

“I can’t watch.” Andy said as he turned away, “Bloods gonna fly everywhere.”

“Not so loud, you’ll wake him up.” Ron sniggered, “And if you can’t watch, I’ll tell you in vivid detail what happens.”

“Please, don’t.”

Trent, seeing that the alien did not react, jabbed him again, only much harder. Toxic’s eyes snapped open, and he hissed angrily as he got to his feet, and looked down at Trent, who was looking up at the alien, grinning from ear to ear. Standing at his full height, Toxic several feet larger than Ron, and capable of swallowing an adult human whole.

“Ronald!” Toxic snapped venomously, “Get your brat out of here before he becomes my next meal!”

Trent laughed, obviously not intimidated by the alien, and convinced that Toxic was joking with him. Ron and Andy, however, knew better. Toxic was a member of a barbaric alien race known as Reddas. Reddas were known for being cannibalistic, flesh-eating aliens who were feared across the universe for their war-like nature. To make matters worse, Toxic had been exposed to the Kastron Virus centuries before they had, giving him acidic saliva...Not at all a being a five year old should be playing with. The two quickly broke cover, and rushed up to the young boy, prompting Toxic to hiss angrily at Ron

“Trent!” Ron said, pretending to scold his son, “What did I tell you about Toxic?”

Trent grinned, “To poke him wi-”

Ron placed his hand over his son’s mouth, preventing him from speaking.

“No,” Ron snickered as Toxic stared menacingly at him. “I told you not to listen to Andy, and leave Toxic alone.”

“Dude, what the hell!?”

“Wow, look at the time!” Ron said as he looked at an imaginary watch on his wrist, “Sarah and Jason should be back soon. We should go greet them.”

The two watched as Ron and Trent walked away. Toxic spat at a chunk of rock, and watched as his acidic saliva dissolved it. Andy heard the Redda’s stomach rumble, causing him to back away nervously.

“I can’t stand either of them.” Toxic hissed. “That little snack irritates me more than his father. They’re both a disgrace to your species.”

“At least we aren’t related to him.” Andy sighed, “Poor Jason has that to deal with.”

*

*

*

Jason's team touched down just outside the Hero's Base. Chase and Seth rushed inside eager to tell their friends about their adventures. Only Sarah, Jason, and Brett remained. Brett looked at his surroundings. The base was located in the forests of Montana. The majority of the base was underground, but portions of it were located above ground. The base was made out of a special Teazonian metal, which kept the base insulated from the cold winters. Brett remembered the first time he arrived at the base. It looked so calm, and peaceful, that he wanted to do nothing more than to just sit outside, and look the majestic scenery. Then he got to know some of his teammates. Some of them, like Ron and Seth, he could handle, but there were others he inside who he knew he could not tolerate.

"Welcome back!" Ron said as he approached the group, with his son in his arms. Upon seeing his mother, Trent triggered his own power of telekinesis, picking himself up, and guiding himself up to his mother. Sarah smiled and caught her son as Ron threw his arm around his wife.

"So," Sarah said as she looked up at Ron, "did you keep busy while I was gone?"

"I managed." Ron said as he lightly punched Jason's shoulder, "My bro-in-law wasn't here to screw around with, right Trent?"

"I poked Toxic with a stick!" Trent said with a laugh.

Brett slapped his forehead as Jason looked at Ron in disbelief. Sarah merely laughed.

"You let your four year old son poke an easily angered, acid-spitting Redda with a stick?" Jason asked. "Are you crazy?"

"Oh relax Jason." Ron said calmly, "Andy was with me the whole time."

"Andy is slowly going crazy." Brett said, "Last I checked, he was arguing with some dead guy named Adam, and only God knows who that is."

"Hearing that makes me think you aren't cut out to be a parent." Jason muttered.

"I act like a child, and never take anything seriously." Ron said as Jason pushed past him, and made his way into the base, "Of course I'm not cut out to be a parent, but he's my son, so I'm trying to make an effort! Hey, are you even listening to me!?"

Sarah, Trent, and Brett watched as Ron followed Jason into the base. Brett sighed and started after them.

"Well...at least he's honest."

JUDGE'S COMMENTS

Another well-written piece that suffers from being an excerpt. The focus is on Ron and his stupidity. As a reader, I don't care enough about him to connect with him. Why am I reading about him?

*Catherine Frerichs is retired after many years of teaching writing, literature, and other humanities courses at Glen Oaks Community College, Albion College, and, most recently, Grand Valley State University. She is the author of *Desires of the Heart: A Daughter Remembers Her Missionary Parents* (Cold River Studio, 2010), in which she uses her parents' letters, journals, and other research to write about her parents' 40 years of working in Papua New Guinea and the costs to their children. Currently, she is working on a book that explores her relationship*

with her three Sudanese children whom she foster-parented for seven years and who have remained her children.