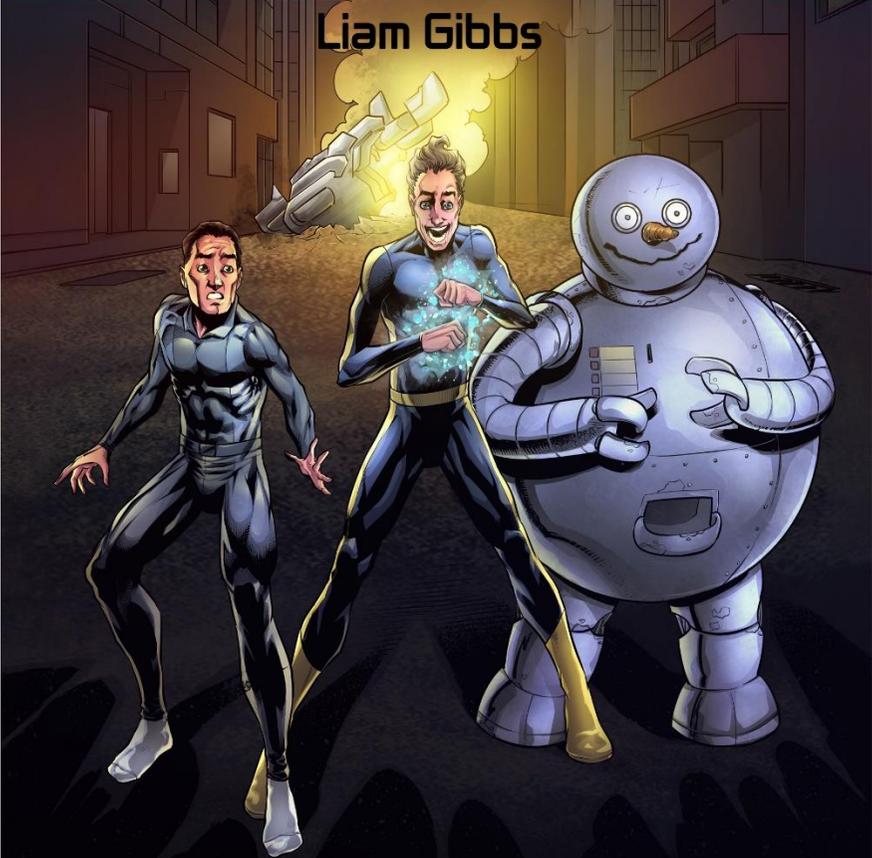


#2
OCT. 29, 9109

IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY

Issue 2: Home Sweet Home Invasion

Liam Gibbs



Power Plant and Franchise, trapped behind enemy lines! Can Power Plant break enough stuff before the Bad Guy hunting party kills them?

In a Galaxy Far, Far AwRy
Issue 2: Home Sweet Home Invasion

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THE STORY SO FAR...

Issue 1: *Serial Fiction Sideshow*, available at <http://tiny.cc/iagffa1>, on inagalaxyfarfarawRy.com, and in the hearts of one and all

Issue 2: *Home Sweet Home Invasion*, available at <http://tiny.cc/iagffa2>, on inagalaxyfarfarawRy.com, and also in the hearts of one and all

Issue 3: *Technophobia*, available at <http://tiny.cc/iagffa3>, on inagalaxyfarfarawRy.com, an—you're starting to see a pattern here, aren't you?

Issue 4: *Armageddon Trigger Finger*, available at <http://tiny.cc/iagffa4>, on inagalaxyfarfarawRy.com, and... hey...your heart. And everyone else's.

OTHER DISSERTATIONS BY THE AUTHOR CONCERNING THE SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITION OF SOCIETY

Not So Superpowered, available at <http://tiny.cc/nssuperpowered>

Three Flash Fictions, available upon request from the author
Emergency broadcast warnings from your local television network. The annoying ones that whine really loud. Ha.

CHAPTER ONE

APPROPRIATION THROUGH SUPERCOOLCITY

October 29, 9109. 10:13 p.m. (Galactic Standard Time).

The space station was big. But was it big enough? Ah, that wouldn't matter once Master Asinine installed the radioactive thundermammal moat. Heh. A moat surrounding a space station. He'd have to give himself November's Employee of the Month award for concocting that idea. Funny how that would make him employee of the month sixteen times in a row.

Master Asinine had found this moon-sized space station abandoned, and he had decided he had to have it. From here, the Bad Guys would launch their assault on the Good Guys, crush them, and wrest control of this galaxy. How unstoppable this station would become, how destructive its flatulence. Was *flatulence* the right word? Didn't matter. Asinine found this station more than flatulent for his purposes.

The station had been vacated by Virillian scientists who had used it to study cancerous growths on asparagus or some such scientific money pit. The Bad Guys' head scientist, Brick, claimed it was the last of seventeen space stations used to terraform the planet Vesta into a habitable planet—a venture later deserted—but Brick was always long winded, so Asinine

usually ignored him.

The station now sat lifelessly in space. It could escape Vesta's orbit and become a free-floating ball of Bad Guy destruction. But repositioning this monster was complicated: deorbiting was impossible without initiating separation procedures with Vesta so that Vesta's planetary mainframe could compensate for the lack of counterbalanced gravity. That would alert authorities of the station's unauthorized use before Asinine unveiled his Rampage-o-Tron. But Brick would handle that mundane detail. Brick specialized in mundanity. He also specialized in freaking Master Asinine out with seventeen-syllable words.

Master Asinine shuffled away from a few generics, the anonymous Bad Guy underlines all dressed in red, and made a panoramic scan and nodded approvingly at the bare room illuminated in sunlight that dazzled through the grime-smearred windows. Some of the Bad Guys stood around him in a semicircle, watching. Smelling faintly of the unwashed metal of the walls, the room had potential if not more layers of dust than a copy of Groovemaster's *Master of Grooves* album. This room could be so much: a briefing room, a sparring room, a monster truck arena.

Ooh. Trucks crossed with monsters. Duly noted.

The irresistible coolness of the space station caused Asinine's crooked smile to grow so wide it would leave stretch marks. He sensed promise here, which supercharged his blood with sweet adrenaline. Or that might have been his fifth coffee.

“I like this place. I like it a lot. Let’s take it. Lieutenant, this calls for a celebration. Pizza lunch for everybody.”

The crowd of thirty murmured a hubbub of approval, and Lieutenant IQ 23 perked with life. “Good idea, sir. I’ll see what toppings the generics want.” Beside him, Braindead shuffled his weight.

Brick cleared his throat, which sounded like the rumbling of a thousand supercomputers determining what million-letter words to use for an otherwise simple statement. His every movement, his every sound in this room echoed hollowly.

Master Asinine rolled his eyes. “Brick, if you hadn’t single-handedly installed solar panels on my even bigger solar panels, I would have fired you eons ago. What blither do you want to blather on about this time?”

He turned to the long-winded know-it-all and was presented with the scientist’s seven-foot brownstone frame. Brick was a body of boxy bricks. A boxy upper torso connected boxy shoulders. Boxy arms had boxy hands that extended from boxy wrists and ended in boxy fingers. Boxy legs met boxy knees supported on boxy feet. A boxy head with a boxy face controlled the boxy bulk that moved like a boxy box.

“Mr. Asinine,” Brick said. He was as annoying as a jackhammer thundering between Asinine’s ears. “May I aspire to verbalize a contention with the assertion on your conjecture concerning this orbital dwelling? We cannot merely appropriate this edifice for our assemblage in such a technique and comportment.”

Master Asinine gagged with the urge to puke his cookie cake and vanilla custard all over Brick's feet. His stomach muscles churned bile, his brain shifting from neutral to impossible gears to vainly discern words from the turkey gobble Brick tried passing off as English. Asinine wished Brick would use vocabulary that had actually been invented.

Whatever Brick HAD ninnered, Asinine was going to assume it had something to do with snuffing out his fun. "Let me counter your conjecture of the appropriate assemblortment technique...contertion"—a deep breath—"whatever else you said. We found this space station. We're here. No one else is. Listen, I was talking with this old buddy of mine who says this guy he plays pinochle with has a sister who lives across from that guy who was in the *Tremors* remake with Kevin Bacon's clone, who used to work at a surveying station. Anyway, this surveying clone says nobody's used this place in years. So I call squatter's rights."

"You're calling squatter's rights on a crocking space station?" Schizophrenic's left head spat a single chuckle that echoed against the naked walls. A toothpick shifted around Lefty's lips. He snorted. "That's freaking rich."

"Shouldn't we be sitting to call squatter's rights?" Righty asked. "This can be my room. That wall is where I'll hang my poster of a wall." Schizophrenic's right hand pointed at a support beam. "Where's your room going to be?" he asked Lefty.

"Mr. Asinine," Brick said, "squatter's rights is what the

common populace brands an urban myth.” Naysaying. Always naysaying everything. Brick had become Asinine’s most useless voice of reason. The day Asinine had found this killjoy at that mad scientists’ convention had been a dark one. The madder the scientist, the more insistently that scientist would try to prove his confusing intellect.

Master Asinine stomped a foot on the steel floor. “What are you talking about? Squatter’s rights is as real as Sasquatches. It’s how I got my first house. It’s also how I got into my first argument defending the existence of squatter’s rights. Besides, this place has more offensive capabilities than I know how to operate: outer-mounted fusion cannons, laser arrays, a shark pit, a snake pit, a ball pit, a lazy Susan. Appetite, don’t eat that. It’s full of calories.”

Appetite, the Bad Guy pet gargoyle, didn’t flinch from the countertop it was using as a meal.

Brick stepped toward Asinine, his each stride a rocky slam with limbs clambering together. “Though this location’s pursuits are forsaken, the denizens who retain its proprietorship may aspire to wrangle against you concerning the integrity of squatter’s rights.”

Master Asinine tossed a hand at the impossibility of such an event. “What, you think they’ll take this place back? Bah. If they wrangle our integrity up, we’ll just call squatter’s rights on them.”

“I fervidly offer counsel in disagreement to this methodology of electing our headquarters.”

Master Asinine's face grew a scowl. His lower lip twitched, twitched again. His mouth shaped the beginnings of many inadequate, unspoken words. He spun around at IQ 23. "Lieutenant, what the hooah is that jabberwocky jabbering about?"

"He doesn't think taking this station is a good idea, sir."

"It's the perfect idea!" Master Asinine spun at Brick. "It's the most perfectest idea I've *had* since my idea of colonizing our water supply with Sea-Monkeys. You can't beat this place. It has squash courts."

Brick raised his hands, fingers spread. He shrugged his Mount Rushmore shoulders. "Will any technique of oration deter you from this proposal?"

Asinine crossed his arms. "No, you can't have the rest of my gravy hoagie. For no one steals the hoagie of royalty. Some have called me mad. Some have called me dangerous. Some have called me Thelma, which is weird since that's not even a boy's name. But be forewarned: those same people will soon call me ruler of the galaxy. I will be King Thelma!"

"What a freaking brain-bomb," Lefty grumbled.

"But I promise you this. Now that we have this station, nothing will stand in our way. Those Good Guys are as good as toast." Asinine clutched the air, his back arched and his fingers lifted in a malicious grasp for the stars. "As sure as my name is Thelma, we will obliterate Legion and the Good Guys! And now I could go for a good slice of toast."

Lieutenant IQ 23 raised a finger: hold on. The gabber

nestled inside his ear had extended a mouthpiece and earpiece around his head. “Sir, I just got a buzz from your automated mailbox. Your Masters of the Universe toy set has arrived.”

Asinine’s head jerked to IQ 23. “How many times must I tell you? They’re not toys. They’re miniature people simulations!”

To be continued...

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Communicate via smoke signals by lighting trash on fire,
grabbing an old blanket, and putting on a show your
neighbors will never forget.

So asking where...

When Power Plant and Franchise's starship crash-lands on the Bad Guys' new home turf, a simple mission goes from routine observe-and-report duty to straight-up survival. And their pilot, a robot with a vocal processor built from car alarms, doesn't make hiding any easier whenever it decides to speak its mind at 120 decibels.

...to find the restroom...

Can Power Plant and Franchise outwit Master Asinine's hunting party long enough for Legion and Burnout to mount a rescue operation? Or will the hunting party execute them before Power Plant runs out of stuff to break? Did Power Plant even brush his teeth before he left the house?

...is out of the question?

It's a race between life and death...with a robot who has no inside voice!
Okay, I seem to remember Power Plant brushing his teeth this morning, so that's one problem solved.

"I'm still not sure I understand what you're doing, but you're welcome to come over for dinner."

— AUTHOR'S MOTHER

"We're having pot roast. That's your favorite."

— STILL THE AUTHOR'S MOTHER

"The first issue was a rip-roaring romp!"

— RANDOM FAN WH—WAIT. I HAVE A FAN??

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