

# **Hallucinations at Hiraschandu**

## ***Past Lives Can Not Save You***

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**- DRAFT -**

### **Chapter 3: Shift 1420, Revulsion 10.11, Click 45**

Back on the ship Philip turned on the autopilot and ordered it to leave Waystation. The ship silently retracted the landing pads, turned one hundred and eighty degrees and increased its velocity. The light from the hangar faded into distance and then abruptly vanished as they eventually turned themselves off. Or maybe they just were not strong enough to be visible from outside the station? Philip did not really care. He was roaming through the cabinets to see if there was anything else then music that he could amuse himself with, during the ride back to Hiraschandu.

It was really the return ride he enjoyed the most; when the assignment had been taken care of and there was not really anything else to do but to relax and enjoy the privilege of privacy.

It did not seem as though he would having such a good time now though, since the cabinets offered nothing of interest.

*Alone in empty space and nothing to do, he thought.*

For some reason the chat he had had with his passenger had struck a chord within him. The civilians rarely, if ever, talked about their lives back home. Most of them preferred not to be reminded of a different kind of life. A life the had left behind on a far distant habitat or planet. Most of them had signed up for the project because they did not have such good lives in the first place. The

few of them that had actually had happy lives, did not see any point in thinking about this since they were not allowed to go back. Good memories were tucked them away properly, stored for later use.

Suddenly it struck Philip that he still had a shot at finding something interesting in the living compartments. Those areas of the ships were rarely used since the journey to the Waystation only took a tenth of a revolution, or 1500 clicks at the most. Probably they had been built just in case the vessel should be used for something other than a day trip.

*A sure waste of reaction fuel*, Philip thought to himself as he ventured to the back of the cabin.

The door to living compartment did not open as easily as Philip had anticipated. He had to press his shoulder against the door and put some force into it, before the door swung open.

Fouled air escaped the compartment. The floor was slippery of blood, trailing from the body lying face down. The walls had blood stains on them as well. Alarmed by the sight, Philip stumbled backwards back into the pilot cabin. For a moment he froze, gasping for air perplexed by the sight. Then he forced himself to turn his eyes away from the scene. His gaze fell on his bare feet. There was some blood on his toes.

Philip stretched out his arm and opened up the disposal bin. He got hold of the handkerchief Rick returned to him earlier and used it to wipe his toes clean. The cloth was dry and easily absorbed the blood. Some of the blood had already coagulated and he had to wipe those parts more carefully. In the process he got some blood on his hands. He took care of that as well.

When he was done cleaning himself, he braised himself mentally and returned to the compartment with the dead. Philip had never actually seen a corpse before. It was true that he had sent many chorinthians to death through the airlock on Waystation,

but this was different. To begin with this was real and to make things worse, this was a civilian. He could tell by the unshaven head. All chorintians shaved their head and the person on lying on the floor had dark brown hair.

Strands of hair had entangled themselves and appeared to be glued together by clotted blood. From the looks of it, Philip draw the conclusions that the cause of death was probably due to a blow to the head. Most likely the unfortunate had tripped, felled and had hit the head on the sharp ledge of one of cabinets mounted on the wall. Philip cursed the ancient technology that had been used when building the vessel.

‘This could never have happened in inner-space’, he said out loud, with anger in his voice, although there was not one else there to hear him cursing. ‘This ancient material without so much of a protest just killed. Not the slightest effort to absorb the fall!’

Philip bent over the body and pulled the hair to the side using the handkerchief. It was Gordon.

Philip returned to the safety and familiarity of the pilot cabin and sunk down on the chair. It adjusted itself to his posture and he fell back to the soft comfort of the chair. Then it truly hit him. Today he had seen a dead. The dead was his superior and he had been Philip's friend.

Since communications with Hiraschandu were prohibited, even in worst case scenario, Philip had to sit this one out by himself. Had the ship had the proper gear, not even radio waves would have been allowed to be transmitted.

He knew exactly what to do when he arrived at Hiraschandu. First he had to contact the medics and then report to the management. The doctors could be of little help to Gordon now, but that was what he was supposed to do anyway.

Philip felt uncomfortable and moved in his chair. The image of Gordon lying on the floor was burned on his retina. The body

lying face down with arms stretched along the sides.

Thinking about it, he then suddenly realised that something about the image struck him as odd. If Gordon would have tripped and fallen and hit his head on the way down, would he not had have time to stretch out his arms to catch his fall, before the impact? Then how could be that Gordon's arms were lying close to his body? Would they not rather have been extended in front of him?