

## Writing a Short Story

by Carlos W. of Terry Parker High School in Jacksonville, Florida

## Aiming for the Stars

## BEGINNING

Engaging opener

Third person  
point of view

The starship *Froggie* sits poised for liftoff, as steam rises from the carefully molded engines. The crew makes the final preparations for their journey. Commander Froggie sits in waiting with Lieutenant First Class B. J. by his side as if it were his millionth launch. A voice comes over the intercom, continuing the final seconds of the countdown, “five, . . . four, . . . three, . . . two, . . . one.”

## MIDDLE

Dialogue

Main characters

“Froggie! Hey, Froggie! Are you there? Do I have to call a rescue team to get you?”

“Huh? What?” said Froggie, startled from his daydream. “Oh, what’s up B. J.?” he said after temporarily looking up from a pile of space dust. “I was just thinking.”

“About what?” B. J. asked. “Not that crazy spaceman dream of yours!”

External conflict

“It’s not crazy, and it’s not a dream,” said Froggie,

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## Setting

slightly annoyed. “It’s a real goal, as real as this ship,” he said, stomping one foot on the outside of the giant ship they were cleaning.

“C’mon Froggie. We were born to be custodians. I mean, it was programmed into your code before you were even born. You can’t be anything more, not in this lifetime. Maybe in the next one you’ll be born something better.”

“No, that’s not true! I refuse to live my entire life according to what everyone else says. It doesn’t matter what someone else programmed me to be; I decide how my life turns out,” said Froggie as he walked toward a ladder that was resting on the side of the gigantic cargo ship.

“Wait!” yelled B. J. as he ran over to Froggie. “I’m sorry I said that. You may be right, but even if you are, how exactly do you plan on achieving your dre . . . , I mean goal?”

“I don’t exactly know right now, but I do know that ‘Where there’s a will, there’s a way.’ At least that’s what my grandpa says.”

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B. J. nodded and leaned one arm on Froggie's shoulder as they continued toward the ladder. "Doesn't your grandpa also say that his socks are trying to eat his feet?" he asked. They both laughed as they descended to the docking platform.

"I have to use the modular waste facility, Froggie."

"The what?" questioned Froggie.

"The restroom."

"Oh, yeah, I knew that. Well, the restroom's right down the hall. Go ahead. I'll wait," said Froggie, pointing to the long, sterile-looking hallway.

Sensory details

B. J. took one step toward the hall, stopped, and turned as if he had just been slapped with an idea. "Why walk all the way down the hall when the cargo ship has a facility?" he said with a sly grin.

Rising action

"But the ship is going to take off any minute!"

"What's wrong? You're not scared are you, Froggie?"

"Are you crazy? Let's go."

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Froggie and B. J. got about halfway to the ship's restroom when they heard a voice on the intercom say, "Security lockdown initiated. All nonpersonnel key cards rejected."

"Oh no. We're locked on the ship!" B. J. exclaimed in a panic-stricken voice.

"Don't worry. It's not like they'll take off with us on board," Froggie reassured him.

Just as he finished his reassuring statement, a voice came over the intercom system. "All personnel prepare for lift-off sequence."

"Well, that's just fantastic," said B. J.

"Quit complaining. Let's just find the navigation room and get off the ship." After they walked for a little while, they both stumbled as the ship jerked forward. "The ship must be taking off," said Froggie. "Let's keep going."

Finally, they reached the navigation room, and since

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neither one of their key cards worked, they had to knock. As the door opened they saw a room filled with computer controls manned by seven people.

“What are you doing here?” questioned Kaptan in a gruff voice.

“We were locked on board the ship before liftoff.”

“Well, I guess you’re coming along for the ride,” said Kaptan as he turned back toward his control panel. “Wait a second; you’re those two janitor kids, aren’t you?”

“Yeah,” answered B. J. nervously.

“I’ll bet this is better than cleaning the ship, isn’t it?” said Kaptan.

“Sure is,” Froggie quickly answered.

The ship continued to its destination with Froggie and B. J. on board. After picking up their cargo, they all reentered the ship and began their journey home.

About halfway home, one of the crew members alerted

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Kaptan about an approaching asteroid field. "Projectile alert mode," Kaptan said, as the crew members rushed to their stations.

"Isn't this cool!" exclaimed Froggie.

"Sure. Amazing," said B. J., clutching a metal bar by the door.

The ship dived and dodged through the asteroids. While avoiding one gigantic asteroid, the ship accidentally hit a smaller asteroid, which gave the ship a great jolt.

"Sir, the ship has sustained light damage. Sir? Sir?" one of the crew members yelled to the unconscious captain. "He must have been knocked out. Now who'll pilot the ship?"

"Why don't one of you pilot it?" asked B. J.

"Because we weren't programmed to be captains or pilot ships," answered the crewman.

"Oh, great! You believe that, too," said Froggie. "I'll pilot the ship," he said, taking the captain's seat.

Conflict  
developed  
through dialogue

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“Are you a pilot?” asked the crewman.

“You could say that,” replied Froggie.

“Here’s your chance to reach your dream,” said B. J.

“We have another incoming asteroid, sir,” said another crewman.

“Do we have any weapons?” asked Froggie.

“Just the drill laser we use for mining,” responded the crewman.

“Well, get it turned on,” ordered Froggie as the large asteroid drew closer.

“Aye, sir!” said the crewman, scrambling to his station. After entering a few commands, he turned and said, “Drill laser on line, sir.”

Meanwhile, a large joystick moved into position in front of Froggie. “Cool,” he said, clutching the joystick.

“Froggie, do you know what you’re doing?” asked B. J.

“Sure. I play video games enough,” he answered as he

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fired at the asteroid.

“Direct hit! Asteroid destroyed, sir.”

“Good. Now let’s get out of here and head home,” said Froggie with a proud smile on his face.

END

After they returned, they took Kaptan to get medical attention. Froggie and B. J. went to Froggie’s house.

“Man! That was amazing. I’m definitely going to be a space pilot,” said Froggie ecstatically.

Climax

“We’re lucky we didn’t get in trouble or smashed into pieces,” B. J. said, just as the video communication screen activated. “Oh no. It’s the boss. We’re fired for sure.”

“Hello, boys. Report to my office immediately,” their boss said before the screen turned back off.

“Oh well. Let’s go,” sighed Froggie.

They made their way back to the station. As they entered the office, they were surprised to see the crew of the ship waiting. Captain Kaptan stood up to greet Froggie. “How are

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you doing, Ace?”

“I’m fine. Does that hurt?” Froggie asked, as he pointed to the bandage on Kaptan’s head.

“It’ll be all right. You know you saved my crew and my ship, not to mention me.”

“Well, it has always been my dream to fly a ship,” said Froggie modestly.

“Really? Well, I think I can help you. By the power endowed to me by the Section 3 Beta Flight Academy, I declare you Lieutenant Froggie. Congratulations.”

“Well, Froggie, you’ve proved that it doesn’t matter what you’re born; it’s what you become,” B. J. said proudly to his friend.

Resolution