

First Draft (Needs to be edited and revised)

Grandma and I had been on the most interesting inner planet of our solar system, Venus! We were trekking through a lower slope of one of Venus's highest mountains. We were wearing our silver Venus suits. Grandma turned to me and said, "I'd really love to get a picture of the famous lava flow before we go!" All of a sudden, my suit felt icy cold, I clamped my eyes shut, I saw a golden light, and I felt Grandma grab my hand. We opened our eyes and felt ourselves propelled into aA SMARTCOPTER?!!!! We turned to each other and said, "What? We've heard about these for years, and WE get to sit in one? What's going on?" Well, as soon as we realized we were sitting in leather upholstered seats, we felt the rocket engine push and we saw a great grey cloud coming for us. The temperature had dropped drastically and when I went to grab one of the gear shifts, I saw that there were bright yellow gloves on my hands and orange gloves on Grandma's hands. Hmm....I looked again and saw that they matched our suits. A computer screen in the smartcopter told us our location was Jupiter. How? What? Oh, no.....An outer planet....we're doomed. I woke up in a cozy bed with the sun shining through a window. Blinking my eyes, I automatically grabbed for my alarm clock, but midway through I saw giant numbers on the wall-A wall clock? Wow, I'd only heard of those....The time was eight o'clock. We had been on Jupiter for over a day. I remember hearing from my father, a visiting professor at the Venus College of Space Dust that almost every ten hours Jupiter rotates on its axis, but that a revolution around the sun takes almost 12 years. So, I realized that what I thought had been a whole day had only been ten hours, so, how long had I really been on Jupiter? And where is Grandma, I thought? My elbow hit something: "Hmmp," garbled Grandma. We were still in our Jupiter suits and in a cozy feather bed. "Are there birds on Jupiter?" I said.

Grandma, laughed in a tired voice, "honey, you always ask good questions. I am sure this feather bed was imported from Earth!"

"Good pointy, ol, Grandma!" I laughed back.

We decided to get out of bed. I stumbled on some kind of shag carpet and flew over to the window to look out. Okay, so we were at the main space station on Jupiter that overlooked the Great Red Spot, from thousands of miles away. I started to shiver, just thinking about it. I had heard many tales of explorers' misadventures from my dad, the professor-"were they really all true," I thought to myself.

My grandma pointed to the east and said, "Somewhere, out there, I believe, we'll be able to see the Galilean Moons this evening."

"I thought that Jupiter had over 60 moons, Gram," I wondered out loud.

You're right, dear, she affirmed, "but the largest, and the first to be discovered were the four Galilean Moons: (the names just rolled off her tongue) Ganymede, Callisto, Io, Europa."

"Gram, I wonder how long we'll be here? If it's a clear night, do you think we could get a little closer to the moons?" I was thinking about the turbo ride we'd had last night in our suddenly-appearing smartcopter!

After a hearty meal and a nap, and watching a few television shows wired from the U.S., Gram and I walked down a silver corridor to find out where everyone was in our wing of the space station. We hadn't heard a sound, so were uncertain whether any spaces around us were occupied. We turned a corner in the corridor, and someone walked by in a hurry, not even acknowledging us. A couple of seconds later, a tall man, I suppose, wearing an electric blue Jupiter suit, walked up to us and asked us who we were. Gram automatically explained that we were related to the visiting Professor of the Venus College of Space Dust, Herman Vanderhoff.

"Okay, alright, of course, we had some communication that we should be expecting a Venus smartcopter to fly into our orbit sometime in the next couple of Earth days!" he said with enthusiasm. So what happened, did you fly off-course? He queried.

"Oh no," explained Grandma, we were visiting Venus and hiking one of the lower slopes of the Great Mountains and we were thinking about visiting the lava flows, when there was a light and then we found our selves harnessed into a smartcopter heading for a great, gray cloud—which later turned out to be Jupiter!!

A time warp, you think? Said the man in the blue suit.

We can't really tell for sure, I said. We talked a few more minutes and then I piped up, "Can we take a ride to get closer to the Galilean Moons? We might as well learn and see as much as we can about Jupiter, since who knows when we'll get transported or teleported back to Venus, or perhaps, our final destination, back to Earth!"

"Your smartcopter is in the East garage. Grandma and I said thank you and walked down a bright gold corridor to our smartcopter. We strapped ourselves in and the computer screen showed us the trail to the moons.

With a snap of our fingers we found ourselves circling the moons, against a great black, midnight black sky. The computer screen explained that the first moon in front of us was Io, we saw flashes of gold, orange and red light, as we got closer to the Io we saw volcanoes—active ones. Ooh let's get away....

We clicked on the computer screen to turn the page –the next moon was Europa, hmm, like Europe!, I thought, a paragraph on the screen told us that scientists believe that there may be life due to a frozen ocean. What could be underneath, Grandma? I asked feeling a little scared.

Oh honey, the surface of Europa is an icy crust (ours on Earth is rock, because upon there was life. Actually, I am a little unsure, let's ask the man in the electric blue suit when we get back to the station.

“Okay,” I replied. I felt myself shiver, I wasn't sure if it was Jupiter's atmospheric temperature of -161.15 degrees Celsius, about 233 Fahrenheit, or the thought of some sort of extra terrestrial life on a moon of Jupiter!!! I didn't think I wanted to stay there to find out! I'd be happy to leave that up to the scientists who work and live at the space station. I snuggled down in my silver space suit, trying to find comfort and security away from my thoughts.

I looked up to see a shining orb, Ganymede, and then not too far away, Callisto..... I felt Grandma wrap a crinkly aluminum blanket around me and then I was out....

Grandma must have turned the smartcopter back to the space station, I kind of remember feeling the thrud of the engine underneath us as sleep overtook me....I suddenly felt a jolt, then stillness, and then as if a huge dinosaur hit our –copter, my eyes flew open and sleep was torn away from me. I looked at the computer screen and tried to look at the windshield but I just saw red dust.

G-g-grandma, wh-wh-what's going on!” the words flying out of me.

“Dear, hold on tight, Electric Blue Suit warned me about this, if I took too sharp of a turn, but I thought he was just teasing me”... “hold on with all of your might!!!!!!” she shouted above the din of a strange high-pitched rushing sound and the stomping of dinosaur feet and screaming banshees.

I tore off the aluminum blanket cocoon that was keeping me warm and reached for the hand grips, one on each side of my seat. I shut my eyes and tried to count to 100 to keep my mind off the sudden jolts, and, now, the sudden feeling of flying up and then plummeting down. What was making all of this turbulence? I remembered riding an airplane back on Earth during Christmas last year, between Chicago and Detroit, and the pilot warning the passengers of turbulence, and to not get out of our seats, or to even think about unbuckling our seat belts!! Whew, this was a million times worse. I felt like my bones were about to break and my body flying forwards toward the dashboard and then my Teflon seatbelt grabbing me back to the safety of my seat.

Grandma gestured with her head and shouted, "Look!" I saw on the computer screen the words, "**Warning, you are now too close to the Great Red Spot to turn back, teleporting is out of the question!**"

"Grandma, Grandma, I hollered, staring at her, "I am scared, it's a great big storm, isn't it? Is there any place we can land, and go for shelter?"

Grandma was still trying to steer the smartcopter and tried to veer away from whatever was causing the churning motion of the copter. "Dearest," she shouted over the jolts, screaming sounds, and the flying up and plummeting, "Hold onto your seat. No, there is nothing we can do but ride this out, there is no space station for thousands of kilometers-it wouldn't be able to stand these winds," she tried to explain.

"Wind? That's wind we are feeling? It feels like giant dinosaurs hitting us and bumping us around!" yelling back so that she could hear me. We were suddenly thrown for a loop and the sound of sand hitting our windows began. I saw red dirt, almost blood-red. Great, I thought, blood-red? That doesn't bode well for us. I started thinking about the many explorers from the Great Exploration Period and how only two out of 400 explorers had survived the Great Red Spot!!

Phrases from a Jupiter course suddenly came in to my weary, scared mind:

"Jupiter...BALL OF GAS....The atmosphere....methane, ammonia and water vapor.....a layer of liquid metallic hydrogen....core made of metal, rock, and ice..."

Then I felt this jolt that shoved me over to Grandma, and then, just as suddenly, forced me back into the hard leather seat.....more words came into my brain like a newspaper headline: AND NO SOLID SURFACE ON JUPITER FOR US TO LAND FOR SAFETY....NO PLACE TO HIDE...NO SECURE PLACE OUTSIDE OF OUR COPTER....WE ARE DOOMED!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

A yellow flashing sign suddenly appeared on the computer screen,

Warning, Warning:

Winds are now up to 435 Kilometers, any sudden movements will cause sudden combustion of the smartcopter. Do not grab the controls and attempt to turn the copter, sit still.

Grandma's face turned a plaster-white and her lips tightened in a grim line. I felt a wall between me and grandma and I knew not to say anything.....and then another loud rushing gust of wind, a dinosaur jolt. With my hands knuckle-white, I held fast to the handgrips. My heart was racing and my lungs felt a lot of pressure. I looked out the windshield on my side and saw what looked like a funnel cloud coming straight for the copter. Grandma exclaimed, I saw her mouth move but I couldn't hear the words. She shut her eyes and saw her breath vapor –the temperature was fast decreasing in the copter. The computer screen flashed engine down, engine, down.