

Toxic Beer Part One

ONE

About a year ago, on the small lifeless moon that orbits the planet Earth, the people of Great Britain were being studied carefully by a race of extra-terrestrials from a distant galaxy.

Now you're probably wondering what these aliens were doing on our moon in the first place? The cheeky sods. You also probably have a thousand and one other questions, seeing that I had just revealed to you all that an intelligent life form from a distant galaxy had been watching us closely for quite some time.

Studying us with their beady eyes and waiting before they plotted their next move. Why did these aliens bother to journey halfway across the known universe and set themselves down on our moon, all without popping in to say hello?

All your questions will be answered, along with a few other nuggets of information you've not yet considered, such as the secrets of interstellar space travel or how to brew UFO fuel in two weeks in your mum's airing cupboard.

Let me start by explaining how they arrived.

If you have been paying attention, I've just revealed to you that a race of intergalactic extra-terrestrials are currently residing on our moon.

They had accidentally happened upon our planet after one of the crewmembers picked up a signal emanating from what they considered a dead, lifeless world while on their way home. The aliens were coming to the end of an extended booze cruise, having visited nearly every galaxy and planet you care to name and after a hundred years, or so, of boozing it up large, they were just starting to get a bit bored by it all; the fun was beginning to wear a bit thin, and arguments began to break out amongst them. In truth, most of them were starting to sober up and just wanted to go home.

Also niggling at the back of their minds was that several planets' authorities were after them. They were now wanted in several star systems. To avoid being caught, they had detoured through our solar system, which was primarily deemed lifeless according to the spaceship's computer.

Just as they were in the process of finally heading home, the ship's Chief Engineer deemed it necessary to ruin the fun by informing the Captain that the spaceship was desperately in need of some vital repairs.

If they intended to make their journey home in one piece, one essential component that needed attention was the ship's propulsion system. The Chief Engineer

pointed out that somehow the engines seemed to be producing more toxic waste than the engine room's bilge pumps could cope with. It was starting to seep out of the storage containers into the ships more vital systems. If these repairs were ignored or delayed, he wouldn't take responsibility for the devastating consequences that the leakage would cause.

The Chief Engineer then pointed out to the Captain that the last time the Captain had taken it upon himself to ignore the engineer's warnings, they had crash-landed on some horrible planet and how they had barely managed to escape the wrath of the Andorran ambassador after he had discovered his space yacht was missing. If it hadn't been for The chief engineer's quick thinking, which had saved their bacon, god knows where they would be now.

Probably clamped in irons and thrown in some nasty smelly jail and forgotten about or even worse fed to the ambassador's pets.

'Can't we just dump the waste like we have been doing in the past?' the Captain asked?' interrupting the Chief with a shushing sound actually, it was more of a horrible hissing sound, but The Chief took no notice.

'Now look here,' The Chief said. He was on a roll now and wasn't about to let the Captain interrupt him.

'I've just told you what will happen if we don't make any repairs soon. Since the purge pumps are designed

only to operate in a breathable atmosphere, if we open the waste containers in a vacuum and try to dump the waste, it will cause an irreversible implosion and blow the lot of us to kingdom come.'

'Have you quite finished?' the Captain interrupted again.

It was then that The Chief noticed that his boss seemed to have turned a funny colour and looked as if he was about to explode any second. The Chief Engineer took a step backwards, looking around to see if there was anywhere he could hide. However, it was too late and, at that moment, he realised he should have taken heed of all the warnings he had been giving by his colleagues. They constantly reminded him that it probably wasn't a good idea to keep pissing off the Captain. Every one of them knew he had the reputation of shoot first and ask questions later. It, therefore, shouldn't have come as much of a surprise to The Chief when the Captain shot him, instantly vaporising him right on the spot, leaving a sticky black pile of soot.

The Captain glared at the shocked crew.

He seemed to be making a habit of this lately and, as most of the thinning number of crewmembers would attest to. None of the crew realised that this erratic behaviour had something to do with the toxic waste the now demised Chief Engineer had been trying to explain to them before he was unexpectedly shot dead.

The Captain seemed to be prone to having very long bouts of erratic behaviour and black moods of late. For example, one poor sod had mistakenly informed the Captain that there was no more booze left, resulting in him being thrown out of the airlock into space; without a spacesuit.

However, once the Captain had been informed by his second in command that if he continued to shoot or maim any more of the crewmembers, there wouldn't be anyone who left who could fly the ship home safely. He reluctantly admitted that perhaps he may have been a bit heavy-handed and promised that he would be a bit more careful in the future.

Therefore, you can imagine how relieved the crew was when the Captain announced that he would be retiring to his quarters for an unspecified amount of time with orders not to be disturbed unless it was of fundamental importance. When the Captain announced that his second-in-command, Dick, would be taking over the ship's running in the Captain's absence, the crew were so relieved there were no complaints. They told themselves Dick was a good egg and wasn't quite as bad-tempered and unpredictable as his boss.

Things were starting to look up.
