

I LOVE LUCY



The “I Love Lucy” theme song drifted brassily through the alien rocket ship which had been orbiting Earth since the nineteen-fifties.

No one noticed.

No one except the lanky blue alien who watched, for the zillionth time, with a smile which broke open his face like a piñata, the grainy black and white heart scrawl across the screen of a boxy, rabbit eared television.

Lucy was his singular joy in life, and he had been watching it nearly constantly since it first aired. Not all aliens loved “I Love Lucy” as Xan did. In fact, none of them did. None of them had seen it and, as such, had no opinion.

The picture wobbled, and Lucy was caught in a freak snowstorm accompanied by a sound one could only describe as “fuzzy.” A literal shadow fell across the TV; a figurative shadow fell across Xan’s face. The viewscreen behind him was no longer illuminated by the cheery yellow sun he’d come to appreciate.

He vaulted over the back of the couch and leapt up the orange shag stairs to the control loft three at a time.

Outside, so close he could see the neon orange of the *Audacity's* hull reflected in it, an enormous ship dubbed the *Peacemaker* blocked his signal. The loss of Lucy was the least of his worries.

“By the thumbs of O’Zeno, she zuxing found me.”

She was not, in fact, looking for him, but he didn’t know this.

He pressed the Button Which Typically Made The Ship Go several thousand more times than necessary. The ship did not go.

The *Peacemaker* was having issues of its own. The flash of an explosion whited out the viewscreen and when it cleared there was a huge gash in the side of the spaceship. An AMC Gremlin shot out of the *Peacemaker* and disappeared into a nearby wormhole. Debris from the explosion pinged against the hull of the *Audacity*, and Xan tried not to think about all the new nicks the orange hull would have.

Something had fallen out of the Gremlin and snagged on a jagged tooth of metal that had once been part of the *Peacemaker's* hull. Someone, actually. And this was where Xan’s day took a turn, because now he felt obligated to help.

He flailed at the control panel, pressing every button he could find, hoping at least one of them was a tractor beam. As luck would have it, one of them was.