THE WORST DAY EVER!



Aliens! Spaceships!
Poo-scented
air fresheners!

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HODDER

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K'POW!

I opened the door of my spaceship, stepped out and landed with a THUD on the cold, hard ground of Planet K'POW. (I had forgotten to lower the steps of my ship. Not my finest moment, I'll admit!)

I placed my hand on the side of my head. Yep … the bald patch was still there. There's something you need to know about me: I take particular pride in my hair. It's wavy, well conditioned and smells of digestive biscuits. It's also electric blue, just like my body, which is fairly slim, pretty tall and otherwise unremarkable really. BUT my hair is perfect, you hear me? PERFECT!

Less so when there's a chunk missing, burnt off

during an unfortunate accident. Now it's patchy and smells like burnt cheesecake. I'll be honest, it's up there with the worst thing to ever happen to me. My poor, INCREDIBLE hair …

I pretended I was looking for something on the ground and that I had totally meant to fall out of my spaceship to search for it. Thankfully no one had seen my embarrassing tumble, so I got up, dusted myself off and took in my surroundings. I was in a spaceship park.

One, two … skip a few, seventy-two spaceships! Wowzers, this is a pretty popular hairdresser's! I thought. Good, a popular hairdresser's was surely a good hairdresser's, and I needed the number-one recommended salon in the Universe on Spaceadvisor.

I looked past the spaceships to the row of shops behind and there in the middle, right between an ice cream shop called Lick and a bar called Glug, I found what I was looking for.

'YESSS!' I exclaimed, punching the air. I had made it to The Chop. If anyone can fix my hair, it'd be the hairdressers in that salon. Getting my hair fixed wasn't

the only reason I was here, of course, but I'll be honest, fixing my locks was very much my first priority.

'Welcome to The Chop,' said a bright-red alien with a beaming smile, as I walked through the door. They took my coat and hung it on the coat rack in the corner. 'Please, take a seat,' they said, jiggling their jelly arm in the direction of the waiting area. It's probably worth mentioning that the native inhabitants of Planet K'POW were large, gelatinous blobs. Imagine a really large jelly on a plate, stick on a couple of jelly arms and big googly eyes, then remove the plate.

'Whoaaaaaaaaaaa, that's NOT my hair!' screamed an alien who was having their hair cut. If you have never been to an intergalactic hairdresser's, you should know that it's quite common to hear these words being screamed loudly. Aliens come in all shapes and sizes and what might look like hair to one alien could be the most prized possession of another.

The hairdresser had been chopping away at a green alien that looked like it was made of rock. On the side of its head there was mould that was, apparently, NOT

its hair, as the scream would suggest.

I stopped in my tracks for a moment when I saw the hairdresser. She was one of the most strikingly beautiful aliens I had ever seen, and for the first time in my life I had hair envy! OK, the second time, as my obsession with hair had begun the day my parents gave me a poster of the Queen of the Universe, Tanka Tanka Woo Woo. Her hair was like a never-ending purple waterfall that seemed to flow across her head. It was truly magnificent and impossible, but this hairdresser's hair was certainly a close second.

Besides her beauty she stood out in another way, as she was the only hairdresser who wasn't a gelatinous blob. Far from it; she was a perfect shade of violet, with six arms that glided through the air in perfect sync. Her eyes sparkled like diamonds and her tongue was a fiery red, but her hair … It was a brilliant gold that shone like twenty-four carrots.* It wrapped around her body like a helter-skelter, hovering just above the ground at the

* On Planet Iris, they spent decades searching for the brightest light in the Universe. After considerable testing, they realised that if you bound together twenty-four carrots, covered them in tin foil and shot them into the nearest sun, it would provide you with the brightest light of all, hence the phrase 'shone like twenty-four carrots'. It's worth pointing out that this has been disputed by many of the Universe's leading scientists, who say that the people of Iris simply got bored of all the testing, shot a bunch of carrots into the sun and said, 'That'll do.'

bottom. It was stunning.

She had an air of authority about her too, as after the scream of the green rock alien she simply shrugged her shoulders and chopped at the grass that was growing directly on top of its head as if nothing had happened.

'Thank you, Heather,' said the green rock, who seemed happy with this, so the grass must have been its hair.

Meanwhile, in the waiting area, I couldn't help but overhear two blobs. 'I tell you, Flobble, I have had the Worst. Day. EVER,' said a purple blob on my right.

'You think YOU had a bad day, Blurgh?' said the orange blob opposite. 'Let me tell you, mine was MUCH worse.'

Here's the thing. I have heard this conversation a thousand times before, and it always goes the same way.

'I fell over in a puddle,' said Flobble.

'I stood up on the bus and my jelly bum made a noise and everyone thought I'd farted, but I swear

I didn't!' said Blurgh. 'And I lost my wallet,' they continued.

'I lost my car,' replied Flobble.

'I lost my house,' said Blurgh. Now the game of one-upmanship had really begun. 'And I really DID fart on that bus!'

This was getting ridiculous. 'Amateurs!' I shouted. 'You don't know the first thing about having a bad day!' The room fell into a stunned silence. I wouldn't normally shout like this, but I was having a pretty kroogletastic* day myself.

'Excuse me?' said Flobble.

'What are you, some kind of expert on bad days?' said Blurgh. 'Although you do smell like burnt cheesecake, so I can understand that you're not exactly having the best day ever.'

'I quite like burnt cheesecake,' said Flobble, giving me a big sniff.

'Who died and made you king of bad days, huh?' added Blurgh, turning towards me.

'Well, I wouldn't say I was the KING,' I said, 'although

* Although 'kroogletastic' sounds incredibly positive, it actually has the opposite meaning: everything is awful. It comes from a planet where everyone always smiles and talks really enthusiastically about everything, even if they are having the worst day ever!

I am technically a prince and therefore one day will be a king, and I am an expert on bad days, so I guess in the future they could theoretically end up calling me the King of Bad Days, the same way they called the ruler of Planet Connecto the King of the Web, because he was the only one who was able to fix the Internet when the little light on the router went red. So I guess due to my experience of witnessing the worst days in the entire Universe I COULD end up being the King of Bad Days …'

The entire room was now looking at me as if I was mad. I'll be honest, it wasn't the first time so I ignored it as usual.

'I have a book full of stories of bad days,' I said. I reached into my bag, pulled out my hefty tome and plonked it on the table in front of me.

'Ouch!' said the table, which was unusual (for a table). It reared up, flinging the book back at me. In a panic, I batted it across the room and it hit Heather, sending each of her six arms flailing all over the place, and one pair of scissors flying through the air.

'Whoaaaaa, that's not my hair!!' screamed a new customer she was working on, as the top of their horn was chopped off. Heather regained her composure almost immediately and continued cutting the hair around the horn's stump as if nothing had happened.

The table said, 'What's wrong with you? I come in here to get a simple haircut, then you all start shouting



and someone drops a heavy book on me?! Let me tell you, this place will be getting a very bad review on Spaceadvisor.'

'I am SO sorry!' I said, immediately taking responsibility for the mishap. 'I thought you were a table,' I said to the table.

'I AM A TABLE! Have you never been to Planet Furnitureama?'

'I … uh … no,' I said apologetically.

'I've never been so insulted. Come along, Gerald,' said the table, gesturing towards the coat rack in the corner as she stormed out.

Gerald the coat rack shuffled over. 'Sorry about my wife. She really doesn't like being mistaken for a table. I mean, she IS a table, of course, but, well … she just doesn't like being treated like one.' He handed me my coat and followed his wife out of the door.

I suddenly remembered that the table wasn't the only casualty during the mishap. I rushed over and picked up the customer's horn from the floor and handed it to them.

'Don't worry, it grows back. Just give it two seconds.' And sure enough, after counting to two the horn was back, better than ever. The customer seemed happy enough, but as I looked up I caught the eye of Heather the hairdresser, whose diamond-eye stare seemed to be cutting right through me. She pulled me in close to her with two of her arms, the other four continuing to cut hair effortlessly.

'Listen here, this is a respectable and discreet salon where people come to get their hair sculpted in peace.' Her tone terrified me a little, but her use of the word 'sculpted' had me VERY excited about what she could do to my hair!

'I'm sorry …' I began to apologise, but she drew me in even closer.

'This is MY salon and I won't have any trouble. No more funny business. Got it?' she said sternly. I nodded, picked up my book and went back to my seat to await my haircut.

Heather continued to chop away at the horned alien's hair. A blur of hands and scissors later and they

were done. The shop sat in complete silence the entire time. It seems I wasn't the only one a little scared of Heather. The horned alien paid and left, and Heather approached the waiting area.

'So … you were about to tell us how you are the King of Bad Days?' she said, catching me off guard.

'Uh …' I mumbled. I hadn't realised she'd been listening, but clearly my story had piqued her interest. 'Ah yes, I was. BUT, in order to understand why one day I'll come to be known as the King of Bad Days, you must first understand where I come from.' I cleared my throat and stood up.

'Perhaps I should start by introducing myself.

'My name is Mylan Bletzleburger and I come from a little yellow and red planet called Empathia …'