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Title: Empty Space

A jolt of energy shot through me and my spine went rigid. I sat up and lights blurred my vision. My heart was sent into overdrive and suddenly I was gulping air like I was drowning, . A dry throat screamed out, lending no help to an aching head. My heart was beating so loudly I could hear it in my ears. I reached a numb hand to my chest. My muffled brain thought achingly slow, but my fingertips felt odd, almost rough. The cold shock made my heavy breathing stick in my throat. The movement of my arm made the rest of my muscles ache to be mobile. I rolled my head, wincing slightly at the crack of the bones shifting in my neck.

As I straightened, my eyes adjusted and began to drink in my surroundings. There was a white, metal ceiling above me, a black cylinder the lone blemish on the pristine surface. A tiny red light on its side flashed periodically and I stared, mesmerized by the pattern.

But as my gaze wandered, something much more confusing came into focus. On the stark white background, there were 4 dents. They were lightly impressed into the metal and extended down about half a foot. It looked as if a human hand had dragged down the wall. Inside these small marks were little red flecks. I blinked to shake away the image. But as I reopened my eyes, the rest of the room became visible.

As they did, my breathing began to elevate again. All around me were identical scratches, each facing a different way and each deeper than the last.

And as my eyes traveled around the room, the small flecks of red grew to stains of dried blood, in the hue of rust. As my head turned farther still, the blood was increasing, seemingly painted on the wall with more vigor as well as amount.

In one scratch almost directly behind me, something was lodged in the pool of blood. I edged closer to the wall.

Half of a human fingernail was sunk into the metal that comprised the wall. Horrified yet unable to stop myself, I cautiously extended a hand.

It never reached it's destination.

My eyes widened as I glimpsed my trembling fingers and a retching gasp left my lips. My hands were soaked in blood, trickles running down from my lacerated fingers. The skin around my broken nails was torn and raw. Blood, both fresh and dried, was caked on the pads of my fingertips. Another cry, louder this time, came from my throat. I wouldn't, couldn't, face the impending truth. A shudder rocked me and my breath came back to its primal state. My head fell to my chest, lungs grabbing for air.

I was the one who had ripped at the room with my bare hands, warm flesh on cold metal. It was my fingernail. My blood ran down the walls. The white room felt more unfamiliar, unknown and unkind. A crazed feeling rose up inside me, like a horse that was unable to be tamed, and a scream ripped from me. I hit my fist against the ground, weak at first, then harder with each strike. The pain was numbed by fear. I screamed again, but the walls seemed to absorb the sound.

Through fear-ravaged eyes, I noticed something that wasn't there before. It was small and circular, and rimmed with gold, in the manner of a ship's porthole. Twitching, I struggled to stand, my remaining blood rushing to my legs. I managed to stumble to the strange object that adorned the wall. I gripped the gold lining with raw hands. My severed nerves protested in agony, muted by my need to understand. With a great effort, I lifted my heavy head and terrified eyes. Inside the porthole was a window, about an inch of crystal clear glass. What lay beyond was worse than I ever could have imagined.

I began to shake, tremors racking my body. What I saw didn't make me want to scream again, or even shatter the inch of glass separating me from hell. Instead, a single word crawled from my lips and died as soon as it came.

"Help."

Just outside the inch of glass stretched black, infinite, empty Space, blinking with the cold eyes of the cruel and never-ending galaxy.

