

NAUGHTY

Part 1



Dayo Abdul

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First Edition: 2015

ISBN: 978-1-329-48037-7

Content ID: 17123128

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Author's Note: All characters are fictional, and any similarity to people living or dead is purely coincidental.

Table of Content

Title Page

Copyright Page

Table of Content

Chapter One

Chapter Two

Chapter One

Grange Hill is a small town with a population of about a thousand people. The town has a beautiful landscape with lots

of trees

and

animals.

In spring

and

summer,

the rabbits



and squirrels come out to play. Summer at Grange Hill is always warm and inviting, especially in the mornings. Birds perch on trees and sing, kids try to stay in bed for as long as their moms will let them, which is usually not for long. Moms rush to get their kids ready for school, while dads sometimes run around in search of their missing left shoe, wristwatch, shaving cream, red tie, cologne or whatever item their sons had thought was really cool and should be tried out. Then comes the rush to drop the kids at school and get to work on time; in the car, horns blaring, moms, dads, zoom off with kids in the backseat

playing, chatting, singing or desperately trying to finish their homework.

On the other hand, kids who go to school by bus have to run out of their homes to catch the school bus. On some days, their moms, with heads poking out through the window, scream after them to better stay on the side walk and not move close to the road or

they will be grounded for life.

The most fortunate of all are



the kids who live close to school. They roller-skate to school, ride on their bikes to school, or simply walk leisurely, all the time taking in the fresh breeze from the trees, listening to the birds greet each other, and one noisy squirrel share hunting tricks with another noisy squirrel.

Sitting proudly at the center of the town is County Hill Elementary school. The public school is almost as old as the town itself and still stands strong.

Practically everyone who grew up in Grange Hill went there and had lots of



good things to say about the the school. However this particular summer, something peculiar happened.

On a fateful Monday morning, Mrs Buckleberry, the fourth grade teacher sat on a low desk as the students filed into the classroom, greeted her pleasantly and sat down like little angels. When the bell rang, she stood up to start her class. It was the first period and they were having science. ‘Good morning class, how was your weekend?’ she asked cheerfully.

‘Fine Mrs Buckleberry’ they replied

‘What fun things did you do?’

‘My hen hatched eight chicks on Friday. On Sunday, two of my grandpa’s cows gave birth to a calf each.

My grandma's cows make so much milk nowadays we don't have anywhere to store them' said Amy.

'Oh that's nice, Amy' said Mrs Buckleberry

'I love it' she added, 'I get to drink as much milk as I want'. She is a chubby ten year old girl with brown hair who lives with her grandparents at the farm.

'I finally fixed my mom's blender! I have been working on it all week and my mom is very pleased' said Ian, the class' geek. He smoothed his tousled hair with a wide grin on his freckled face, and eyes shining brightly through his large glasses.

'That's so boring' said Bobby. 'I went fishing with my brother, we caught a very big fish and brought it home for mom and dad to see. Tabby the cat came along to have a look and I chased him off with a shot from my toy gun. He was so scared, you should have seen his face!' Bobby laughed. He likes to play pranks. 'I don't like cats' said Matt, 'they make me sneeze. I helped my parents decorate our new home'.

'I prefer puppies' Judy said. 'I went with my aunt to the store on Saturday and bought a pink ribbon with matching socks for Prosy, my little dog. She's so cute'. Judy readjusted her frills, which matched her earrings perfectly. She hopes to be a supermodel some day.

‘I played basketball with the other kids on my street’
said Kevin

‘I went to the salon to make my hair. Isn’t it lovely?’
Alice said as she showed off her new curls. She got
smiles from everyone. One after the other, everybody
said something about the weekend.

‘I see you all had an exciting weekend. Class, things
are about to get more *excitinnng*’said Mrs Buckleberry.

The
children sat
up and
listened to
every
word.



‘Next
Friday, we

are going on a field trip to the John Glenn Research
Center, GRC, at Lewis Field in Brook Park. The
facility is owned by NASA and this is where new
machines to be used for space flight are designed and
developed.’

‘Wooww!’ they all said

‘Two weeks ago the school wrote, asking for
permission to come over for a science field trip and

this morning we got a reply. We have been scheduled for Friday the 16th, at 9:30am. Isn't that great?'

The entire class erupted with shouts and claps. This was going to be the best field trip, ever.

'God, I can't believe I'll be going to GRC, I've always wanted to be an astronaut!' Steve shouted with his thin, squeaky voice. Kids were jumping, talking, laughing, smiling, Mrs Buckleberry tried calming them down.

'Now that's all right class . . . Be quiet now, everyone . . . Let's get back to work . . .' But nobody wanted to work anymore, they were talking about how much fun they were going to have until Mrs Buckleberry made an announcement.

'Mr Flintwood and I will be going with you on the trip'.

The class went quiet.

'*Mr Flintwood?*' Bobby shouted

'Oh ! . . no' cried Matt

'We are in for a long trip' Alice whined.

Mr Flintwood is the fourth grade maths teacher. A tall man with red hair, he is always seen in starched shirt, pressed pants and shiny shoes. He hardly smiles, and believes strongly in discipline and good conduct. Whenever he is around, the pupils are

always at their best behavior, and usually don't remember to smile.

'Why is Mr Flintwood going with us?' Ian asked
'The school picked him, and instructed us to ensure you behave yourselves at the facility. Now I know you all are good boys and girls, but we don't want any one having funny ideas when we get to the research center. You must be orderly, polite and make sure you do not drop candy wrappers on the floor. GRC is not too far from our town so we will take the school bus. Is that understood?'

'Yes Mrs Buckleberry' they replied.

The days moved swiftly as the pupils counted down to the 16th. On Friday, they dressed neatly to school and could not hold down their excitement, even in the presence of Mr Flintwood.

'Now kids remember, GRC has permitted us to come. It is a privilege that must not be taken for granted. You must not yell, you must be quiet and if you have questions, raise your hand, and make sure you do not stick bubble gums anywhere, or else, you'll wish you didn't go on this trip. Have I made myself clear?' asked Mr Flintwood.

‘Yes sir’.

They went
in a neat
file into
the school
bus and
sat down.

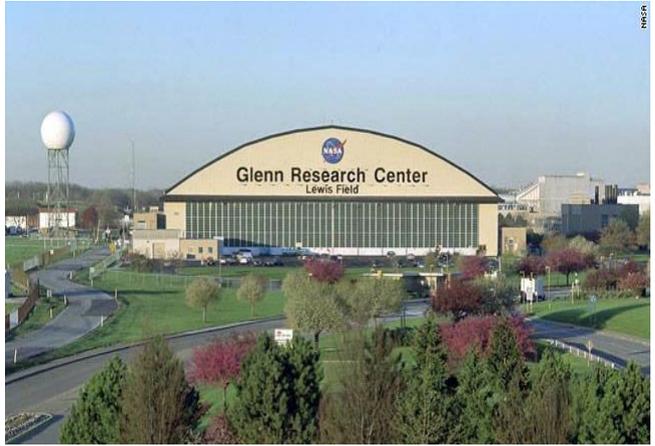


Mr Clarke,

the school driver started the engine, and in no time
they were enroute to Brook Park. Then they found
their way to John Glenn Research Center at Lewis
Field.

Chapter Two

‘There are so many amazing inventions in this large facility, it will take a whole day to see each one’ said Mrs Buckleberry



‘Nonetheless, we will have a good time’ Mr Flintwood replied.

The pretty receptionist at the ground floor confirmed their appointment, and asked them to wait a while, then she called their guide for the day on the intercom. In no time at all, a young hispanic with thick hair came downstairs. He introduced himself as Mr Hute and after a warm exchange of pleasantries, he gave an hour lecture on the various activities carried out at the center, the goals of NASA and how far they had gone in space exploration. Then he took his audience out to the open field, walked towards a huge platform, and climbed the stairs to show the first item on the list: a spaceship mounted on rockets.

‘This everyone, is our newest invention—Wanderer N5’ said Mr Hute with pride.

‘A truly magnificent spaceship, designed and fully tested by our best engineers. It is an epitome of perfection’.

‘What does it do?’ Ian asked
‘Ha..Ha..Ha!’
laughed Mr Hute, ‘you are looking at a spaceship on steroids my boy. This beauty here



can travel at 4.0×10^8 m/s – that is faster than the speed of light. It can extract oxygen from any atmosphere it finds itself, and add it to its oxygen store. The air pressure is artificially regulated. Its temperature regulator is superb, the inner temperature always stays at 77°F even if the temperature of its surroundings is -460°F . It can be remotely controlled from Earth even as far as 50 light years away’.

‘Amazing’ Ian wondered out loud

‘What does that mean?’ Matt asked, wrinkling his nose.

‘It simply means this ship can take you to Pluto and back on the same day, and it can be controlled from Earth. You do not need to wear a space suit as long as you remain inside it, you will remain warm even though the temperature in Pluto is below freezing point, and you will be able to breathe without an oxygen tank despite the lack of oxygen in Pluto’. Mr Hute replied

‘How does it manage to travel faster than the speed of light?’ asked Mr Flintwood

‘It depends on multiple rockets to get the job done. The mother rocket propels it to a certain speed, the first daughter rocket picks up from there and pushes it a bit faster, then the sister rocket comes on and takes it to a higher speed. So the next rocket is always propelled by the previous. In all, the mother rocket and five sister rockets work in tandem to push this ship beyond the speed of light’. Mr Hute explained

‘Awesome . . . Woonw . . . Brilliant . . . Incredible . . . This is great . . . Unbelievable’ the small audience murmured.

‘Thank you’ said Mr Hute. ‘Now let’s move to the next invention, the amazing Fibigator X2’.

They all turned and followed him back to the main building, except Steve and Ian who could not drag themselves away from Wanderer N5. They both stood, staring at it and wondering what it will be like to travel in it.

‘Boys, boys now come along’ Mrs Buckleberry chided

‘Just a minute please’ Ian replied

‘Alright, don’t be long’. She left them to stare.

‘Ian, won’t it be nice to explore space in this ship?’

Steve asked moving closer to touch one of the rockets.

‘I sure would love to see how it works, I might even take a peek at it’s engine’ Ian replied

‘I hope to be an astronaut someday, and fly one of these’ Steve announced, pointing at the ship.

‘I want to be able to make something as brilliant as this’ Ian confided in return with his arms folded in deep thought.

‘Can we just take a look inside for five minutes?’

Steve asked

‘No, we will be punished’ Ian replied

‘No one will know about it, we’ll be in and out in five minutes’ Steve said excitedly

‘Well, I don’t know about that’

But Steve was already walking towards the door of the spacecraft, which incidentally was not locked. Ian could not resist the temptation to go with him.

The two boys sneaked swiftly to the spacecraft and were about to climb inside when Amy and Judy came looking for them.

‘Steve. . . Ian. . .’ they shouted at the hallway and jogged towards the large platform. The girls were surprised to see the boys climbing the stairs of the ship.

‘What do you think you are doing?’ Amy asked as she went up the platform.

‘Mr Flintwood will punish you’ Judy whispered loudly ‘Hey, come with us, let’s take a look inside’ Steve replied, as he stood halfway up the stairs of the spaceship.

‘Mrs Buckleberry sent us to get you’ said Amy
Despite the girls’ protests, the boys went inside and were amazed at the wonderful interior.

‘You girls need to check this out, these seats are a work of art’ said Ian from inside the spacecraft.



‘Wow! look at

this gadget Ian’ Steve exclaimed

‘Look at what?’ asked Judy standing outside the ship

‘Oh my God! this is so amazing’ Ian exclaimed

‘How does it look like?’ Judy whispered, still standing outside

‘I wonder what it does’ Ian pondered

‘I am going inside’ Judy said

‘No . . . don’t’ Amy replied

‘I need to see for myself’

‘You might get hurt Judy’

‘Silly, that can never happen. Let’s explore, afterall it’s a field trip’

Judy grabbed her hand and dragged her along, Amy didn’t want her friend thinking she was a chicken so she complied—and explore, they did. Shortly after, Bobby also came looking for Steve and Ian.

‘Steve. . . Ian. . . Where are you? He shouted

‘In here Bobby’ Ian replied ‘we are having the time of our lives’

‘What are you guys doing in there?’ Bobby asked from a safe distance.

‘Stop standing around and join in the fun. . . Oh boy, this is cool’ Steve said as he sat on a chair next to the dashboard, and stared at the buttons trying to understand the symbols written on them.

‘Don’t touch the buttons’ Amy warned

‘I like the texture of these seats . . . so comfy’ Judy said poking a seat all over.

Bobby stood next to the ship and stated as a matter of fact: ‘You guys are going to be in deep trouble if someone finds you in there’.

‘We’re just looking around, doesn’t hurt anyone.

What are you doing here anyway?’ Judy retorted

‘I sneaked back to see what Ian and Steve were doing’

They heard footsteps coming up the platform and there was nowhere to hide up there.

‘Quick Bobby, come inside and let’s close the door’

Steve said

Bobby ran in without thinking and closed the door behind him.

Mr Flintwood walked towards the ship, looked around and didn’t see anyone.

‘Bobby?’ I thought I heard his voice’ he said to himself. He turned to go look elsewhere when he heard little sounds coming from within the spaceship. Then he noticed the lights in the spaceship were on.

Bobby had accidentally pressed a button next to the door while rushing to close it and now all the lights inside the spaceship were on, and they didn’t know which button he pressed. This led to an argument, everyone was scared.

‘Hey! we need to calm down, please’ Ian pleaded in a whisper

‘Bobby, for God’s sake try to remember what you pressed. Is it the green, orange, blue or the white button?’ Judy whispered fretfully.

‘I – I – I am not sure’ Bobby said for the sixth time ‘Alright since the four buttons are arranged close to each other, let’s see which is most likely’ said Steve with a low shaky voice.

‘I remember Bobby’s right hand was this high when he shut the door’ Amy said indicating the height with her hand, ‘and that means his hand touched either the orange or the white button. The orange button is closer to the door, so I’d say he pressed the orange button’

‘Let’s press the orange button and lie low till the coast becomes clear, then we can all get out of here’ Judy squeaked.

Ian did just that, but the lights didn’t go off, a recorded female voice said:

‘Welcome aboard, please fasten your seat belts and relax as we get ready for take off’

‘What?!’ they cried out.

Mr Flintwood heard that, immediately he knew something was up. Walking briskly towards the ship he said:

‘Hello, is anyone in there?’

Amy was scared out of her wits, she turned to the others and said: ‘I have to get out of this thing, I don’t care if I get caught. I can’t stay here anymore’.

She tried to open the door but to her dismay it was stuck and wouldn’t budge. It was obvious to Mr Flintwood that someone was trying to open the door from inside.

‘Steve, Ian, is that you?’

‘No, its me Amy. We are all stuck in here’.

‘Jesus! I knew this was a bad idea from the start’ Judy moaned

‘How many of you are in there?’

‘Five. Ian, Steve, Bobby, Judy and I’

‘Why did you go in there? How did you lock yourselves in?’ Mr Flintwood asked
‘Bobby did’ she replied
‘You all have a lot of explaining to do’ he said
‘This is the *trouble* I wanted to avoid ’ Bobby groaned
Steve and Ian had nothing to say.

Mr Flintwood tried to open the door but it was shut.
‘Stay put while I get help for you. I’ll be right back’ he said hurrying away. His left foot hit something hard and it hurt, while bending to look at it, his right hand hit a lever on a slab, the lever went down. The next thing he heard was a loud recorded female voice saying: ‘Initializing take off in twenty minutes’ and the countdown began.

Mr Flintwood could not believe his ears, he ran for all he’s worth towards the main building to call for help but saw lots of people running out of the building to see what on earth was going on. From afar, people were screaming out questions and he didn’t have answers.

‘What in the blazes is going on?’ a short thin man barked

‘I have five pupils stuck in that ship’ shouted Mr Flintwood

‘How did the ship start?’ a plump lady asked
‘I have no idea’ came the reply
‘How can the ship be stopped?’ Mrs Buckleberry
frantically asked a middle-aged man next to her.
‘It can’t be stopped, but its course can be changed.
It can be made to land on Mars instead of the next
planetary system—Alpha Centauri, which will take
three and half years to reach at this speed’.

Already, a group of engineers were running to the
control room to negotiate a change in course.
Mr Flintwood ran after them with Mrs Buckleberry
right behind him.

‘Oh. . . My. . . God’ was all Mr Hute could say as he
stood with the others and watched the ship prepare
for take off. They had all fled to escape the intense
heat that will emerge once the rockets start.

‘This field trip is fast becoming a nightmare’ Kuan-
yin noted, a chinese girl in tight pigtails. She stood
with the other pupils and watched the teachers run
like scared rabbits.

Thanks so much for reading!!

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