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Sunday, November 18, 2012

Skew Lines by Nancy McGuire

Nancy McGuire's quick story centres around an unusual communication problem

"Phhhht," said Jimmy as he pushed his toy truck across the kitchen floor. "Phhhht," he repeated, little drops of saliva spraying his face. He grinned and said, "Phhhht" again, this time giving it a distinctive flatulent inflection.

Mom sighed and brushed a strand of hair away from her forehead. "Oh, Jimmy. I'm so tired of hearing that sound. Can't your truck make

some other noise?" she pleaded, as she arranged lunch meat and cheese slices on a serving platter. Jimmy and his little red truck had been inseparable ever since his father had given it to him for his 25th birthday. It took so little to make Jimmy happy, but every year it got a little harder to take care of this six-foot-four-inch, 200-pound child whose mind would

"She turned to look at Jimmy, who was now floating like a soap bubble above the kitchen floor."

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never grow up.

"Phhhht," answered something that definitely was not Jimmy.

"Jimmy?" said Mom. There was the noise again, but something about it was different. "You've been making that noise all morning and I'm sick and... tired... of..." She turned to look at Jimmy, who was now floating like a soap bubble above the kitchen floor. Jimmy laughed and clapped his hands as he floated out the back door. A trickle of drool ran down his chin.

The occupants of the pod-shaped vessel that was flattening the backyard grass and flower garden opened the air lock and transported the large bipedal being into the science bay's controlled environment chamber. They had carefully duplicated the ambient atmospheric and thermal conditions for this location on the planet, to avoid damaging the indigenous life form they were bringing aboard. They had been communicating with this being for approximately 43 planetary rotational cycles, and although it seemed to have mastered the phonetics of their language, they had not been able to decipher the syntax.

"Phhhht," volunteered the chief anthropologist, speaking in the rapid binary bitstream that was his native tongue. The bipedal being clutched a red object that appeared to be a small model of this planet's primitive excuse for surface vehicles. "Phhhht," said the bipedal being, moving the red miniature vehicle across the surface of the chamber. The chief anthropologist had hoped that by observing the being directly, he might find some clue that would help him decipher this planet's bitstream language. However, the bipedal being seemed to be ignoring the chief anthropologist and directing his communications to the red vehicle, which was not responding in any way that the chief anthropologist could detect.

The chief anthropologist sighed, brushed a stray tentacle away from his third eye, and settled in for what was probably going to be a very long session.

★★★★☆ 1 Rating ☆☆☆☆☆ No rating



Labels: [funny stories](#), [futuristic stories](#), [Nancy McGuire](#), [very short stories](#) Posted by [Charlie Fish](#) at 8:00 AM

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benjamin gwilliam November 18, 2012 8:12 AM

funny.

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Jerry Crews November 18, 2012 12:40 PM

Very clever and a great idea!

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