

# Come Cruise With Us,!

r. ahseIn 10/2016

## EPISODE One: *Awake, The Journey Begins*

The whiteness thinned.

Slowly shades of color filled the void I was in. A whispering sound frightened me. It was my own breathing. Where ever I had been, I was beginning to return.

A slow motion movie of awareness crept into me. I felt my body rocking slowly from side to side. My sense of smell sharpened and an odd fresh salty vegetable flavoring filled my mouth. My hearing became more acute, I sensed water rushing by.

An explosion of wakefulness jarred my senses. I was back. I could see, I could hear, I was alive... And, I was lying on something, somewhere in the middle of some ocean.

I stood up even though it took some effort. Every joint and muscle in my body felt as if they were covered in sticky glue. Besides the slow rolling movement of what I reckoned as a deck, I could hear a deep thrumming of an engine far away.

After managing to stand, It took a few minutes before I was steady enough that I could try a few steps. Slowly at first, I managed to walk around the large flat area on which I had found myself.

The space where I stood, was the size of a small city lot. A dozen lounge chairs stood empty, waiting for occupants. A large white painted circle was at the center of the deck. A railing ran around the back that I assumed was to keep anyone from falling overboard.. A smooth white wall stood toward the front. It had only one green door, I was alone

I stood there for a long time watching the path of water foaming away from me. If I was on a boat, it was very big boat. Looking up and ahead toward the front, I could see five tall standing structures, each with several horizontal shafts holding large expanses of what appeared to be cloth. In the fog of my mind an image came to me of a wind powered vessel called a "sailboat". I must be on an unbelievably massive sailboat. So large that except for those tall staffs, I couldn't see much beyond the deck I was on.

I managed a few steps, gradually loosing the cramped and stiff feeling my body had. I was even able to balance against that slow rolling movement of the deck. Where was I? What was I doing there? Panic flooded over me. A desperate feeling jangled my nerves. I had to leave this deck as soon as possible. Somewhere there had to be answers to questions that were raging in my head.

I walked to the doorway. A small brass sign attached, read " Lower Deck and Guest Passageway"

I turned the salt crusted handle, opened the door and stepped through.

Inside, was a small compartment lit by a fluttering fluorescent light. The room's dirty walls and the light tinted the interior a sickly green. There were two doors, each with its own brass plaque. One proclaimed "Passenger Access" the other "Lower Deck, Passengers Prohibited ". I tried the Passenger door It was locked. When I tried the "Lower Deck" hatch, it swung open.

A long stairway descended into a darkening space so large I couldn't see beyond the stairs in front of me. Grasping the railing, I stood on the first metal tread then slowly began the climb down...

I heard a steady rumbling and some metallic knocking sounds, somewhere in the darkness in front of me. After a few minutes, I realized that I wasn't in total darkness. There was a faint glow from some light source and my eyes slowly become aware of shapes ahead. A long walkway ran on before me. Since there was no other way to go, I cautiously moved forward on the metallic path. Those mechanical sounds grew louder and louder with each step ahead. There was no way to determine the time I'd taken, or the distance I'd travelled, but after what had seemed like many minutes, another doorway was in front of me. There was no plaque on this door, just a coating of rust and grease, it's handle looking as if it hadn't moved in years. I slowly twisted the knob.

Blinding light streamed out as the door cracked open. The noise was overwhelming. The air was as cold as a refrigerator. A cacophony of squeals, groans and clangs assaulted my ears. In the center of this gigantic mechanical room stood 4 monstrously big engines. Somewhere in my still reeling brain, I remembered,... I knew what they were. They were gargantuan diesel engines and they were driving equally large electrical generators. This cavernous compartment must be the power center for the vessel on which I'd found himself.

Why would they need so much power, I wondered. It was a sailboat, after all. There must be some device or devices that required large amounts of current, a lot of power.

Among the whirring machines, scores of strange small devices scurried about. Some had long "arms" that pushed buttons on various lighted panels. Other devices had cords with what looked like probes. They would zip over to some panel and engage the "probe". Some of the machines moving around, having no observable duties, but they dashed around in oddly shaped patterns occasionally bumping into the other machines. It all would have been comical, if I hadn't been so confused about what I was doing here and where I was going.

I moved along the metal walkway for a short distance before I saw steps going down into the maelstrom below. Perhaps if I looked at these odd little mechanical "animals" closer, I might discover what I was doing here. As I descended, the machines close to the steps scattered away. Bumping into one and other like some silly carnival game. Each time I tried to get close to one or more of them, they clattered away. Finally, I managed to trick them into bunching up in one corner of the room. I moved closer.

Each device had some sort of antenna attached to it. I figured that that meant they all must be drones of some kind. Each doing it's programmed, mindless job. They would

be of little help to me in my search until I found where and what or who, controlled them.

I was about to walk away and let them return to their drone work, when I notice each of them carried a small shiny tag. I stopped to get a closer look. Each gadget had a kind of serial number printed on the tag. The long armed machine label read " Echo-513- ". Each of the other armed machines also had the Echo designator followed by its different numbers. Next I checked the tag on the "Probe" machines. All of their serials began with "Foxtrot" and then numbers. the smaller scurrying types were tagged with "Golf" and numbered. It was apparent that each model of machine was identified by its Phonetic and a number sequence of that model.

As I stood there, the machines all began to return to their appointed tasks. "Echo" and "Foxtrot" machines were easy to figure out, but it took me some time to discover what the "Golf" machines did. I watch one individual alone before I found out what it did. It would scurry over to a trap door hidden from direct view, disappear for a few seconds , reappear, then dash over and bump into one of the other varieties of gadgets. I discovered that Golf machines had tucked away inside them, newly charged batteries. The Bumping into the other machines was an exchange of batteries. the Golf machines were "Feeding " power to the others to keep them working.

I climbed back up the steel ladder and onto the path above. I had to continue my journey forward. As I walked along, I occasionally glanced down watching the drones at their work. "Echos " were adjusting controls, "Foxtrots" measuring results and finally "Golfs" kept the others supplied with energy.

I had been measuring my steps along the expanded metal ramp for a very long time. Finally, the path ended at a stairway leading up. It took me one deck higher in the ship. At the top of the stairway another door was cut into a white wall. Bulkhead!..."Bulkhead" leaped into my mind. I remembered a wall on a boat is called a Bulkhead . a little burst of remembering added another word to my world. A\ brass sign was affixed to the doorway. Its polished engraving said " Services and Supplies".

I reached for the hatch handle even though a feeling of dread washed over me. What lay beyond that portal was more of the mystery of. Why me ? Something inside of me was growing stronger with each step forward. Driving me to continue my journey through this vessel. I needed to know why I had been placed here, what is my purpose? That question was drawing me deeper and deeper into the interior of the vessel.

I had to have some answers about the unknown world in which I'd found myself.