

KILLER BLACK HOLE

Billions of years ago, the brightest star at the center of its universe dies, and for a few moments, it outshines every other object in existence. Unable to sustain its mass, the star implodes, and a supermassive black hole takes its place. Seconds later, a hole is punched in the space/time continuum and for the first time ever, a connection with another universe is established.

As it grows in size and strength it begins to rotate on its axis. As its velocity increases, the compressed and curved space at its center begins to produce a mesmerizing, low-frequency sound that resembles a B-Flat, though if measured, it would register more than 50 octaves below middle C. This B-Flat is more than a million-billion times deeper than the limits of human physiology. It will take another thirteen billion years for humanity to even detect it since when the sound is first produced the universe that spawns human life doesn't even exist. It is, without doubt the deepest, most profound sound wave ever sent by an object in the universe.

The sound ripples outward, unchecked while the black hole spins faster and faster, until the entire structure flattens and the benign connection it once shared with the other universe quickly changes.

It is now a universe killer.

The dominant species on the other side of the black hole had known about the connection to their universe and took no action, since when the connection first appeared it wasn't seen as a threat. But now, billions of years later, they are unable to resist the power of this hateful intruder and all of them are pulled into the tunnel

between the two universes against their will. In fact, every part of their universe is pulled into the supermassive black hole. The thing which destroys them produces a low-frequency thumping that confuses and angers. That they are removed against their will angers them as well. Each experiences a different transition from a life of comfort and ease, into this new environment of noise, violence and movement. Most are ripped into billions of molecular-sized pieces and scattered amongst the other detritus that spins around the black hole. Some live though, and one of note, a very strong one with a powerful will, tamps down its anger. Instinctively, it senses this new existence will be filled with pain, sacrifice, and hardship.

To survive, it pushes the limits of its existence and somehow makes it to the other side though most of its entire species, captured by this unknown phenomenon, are now gone. They perish without a sound, killed in the gravity well of the singularity. It knows that others have been injured and slung outward in all directions as the killer spins. It is bolstered by the hope that some will survive and hopefully thrive in this foreign and hostile place. The thumping takes a new shape when electromagnetic pulses, generated by the hot, magnetized gas that engulf the black hole, act to alter the frequency this is emanated. The higher pitch helps to tamp down this interloper's anger, so it relaxes. As the black hole spins, quantum fluctuations cause the singularity to sling precursors of galactic formation in all directions across the empty reaches of what was once dead space. The galactic interloper, still safely enclosed in its home, is also slung away from the central mass, its trajectory is one that eventually joins an especially large universe precursor on its journey. As this precursor spins, millions of light-years beyond

the reaches of the singularity's gravitational waves, it begins to establish itself as the cradle of humanity.

While the Milky Way is created, hunger awakens the interloper. It exits its home and seeks sustenance. It takes what nourishment it can from the meager sustenance in this new, ever-expanding universe. Nowhere near satisfied, but no longer on the brink of extinction either, it returns to its home and rests, a passive tourist in the winds of interstellar space. Grateful for the opportunity to survive it is angry that its species is all but extinguished. It knows it is not the last of its kind, many still live, but it has no way to know where, or when any other members of its species are in space-time. The interloper looks forward to the possibility that it will find other survivors in the future... if there is to be one.

The fact that the interloper has survived the most dangerous part of this new journey is not lost on it. It knows that what happens next may well define its existence, so it begins to take the steps necessary to alter its molecular structures. With regret, it prepares to go without the requirements for sustained growth indefinitely. Instinctively, it knows its home universe is gone, and with that knowledge, it prepares to simply exist for as long as it takes the current circumstances to change. Though it knows how to, it has very little experience initiating stasis. Now, stasis is a necessity, so it takes the time to do it properly and goes to sleep, still hungry, but hopeful.

For millions of years it exists, with dreams of love and life, then, it is shaken awake by noise and movement. It has happened upon another universal tourist, a rather large comet. The stream of rocks, debris, and dirty ice particles that comprise the tail of the comet, which will one day become known as Swift-Tuttle, is a battleground. Behind

the irregular clumps of material that form its 16-mile-wide nucleus, pieces of the comet and other debris, captured during its 133-year orbit through a Milky Way that is now resplendent with life, are constantly ejected in a stream of cosmic dust more than seventy-million miles long. Observed since mankind first harnessed fire, ancient humanity believed the comet and its associated fire from the sky portended terrible natural phenomena, or worse, were harbingers of death sent by the gods.

Awake now and then, the interloper is completely happy for the ride, and with no real definition or concept of the passage of time, it goes back to sleep, still hungry, but content to have survived for so long on so very little.

Since first captured by the human solar system, the comet's trajectory undergoes constant alterations as a result of the gravitational forces associated with the larger planets. This constant movement has subtly affected the trajectories of several large pieces of debris as they trail after the comet. Finally, they collide, and the result of these collisions is that several large pieces, the interloper's rock included, are kicked out of the comet's dust stream. The interloper, one of the largest and heaviest pieces of cosmic material found in the comet's tail, is soon scooped up by the gravity of the two nearest heavenly bodies. The large white orb, whose pockmarked face clearly shows evidence of millions of years' worth of impacts, narrowly avoids yet another strike as the gravity of its larger neighbor pulls the interloper in and then slingshots it away.

As interloper's course takes it around the white orb it senses that several of its species are there, buried deeply in the dust that covers the surface. Most are in stasis, but some are not, and they seek assistance. However, the interloper hasn't the means to help, and it is unable to render aide. It has existed for billions of years with the belief

that it was the only true survivor of its species, and now, it knows the joy of reunion, albeit a brief and wholly unsatisfactory one. But it knows it is not alone. There are more and now it has hope that its species shall not die. With forward momentum, the interloper's home easily breaks free of the orb's weak gravity, and it says goodbye. Against the tapestry of a starlit sky, it is just another rock on an interstellar journey. However, this new trajectory will not take it back into deep space.

There is a large, blueish planet in its way.