

# The Black Hole

All the lights on the console dulled and the ship became deathly silent. Feeling alone, The Captain- dressed head to toe in his aging uniform- remembered how much he missed his dragon. As the ship drifted towards the black hole, an ear-splitting bang reverberated off every wall of the ship. The last time The Captain had heard a noise like that had been back on his home planet of Pinov. That was a day he would never forget...

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It had been a week since the first sightings of aliens on Pinov. Some believed it was all a hoax – a joke at the world’s expense. Some believed it to be true; these were the people who went into a blind panic: markets were raided by people desperately stocking up on supplies; cellars and outhouses were built for people to hide in; doors and windows were barricaded with wood and metal; and beasts and dragons were bought as pets for protection. The Captain, on the other hand, sat back and watched the chaos around him with a surprising air of calmness and flippancy until, of course, that fateful day. The bang was loud and sudden. It created shudders with a strength The Captain had never felt before. In the early hours of the morning, The Captain leapt from his bed and peered out of the window to see a plume of smoke rising up from the ground and kissing the sky. Huge, mechanical structures (being operated by what could only be aliens) were striding through the city vaporising every living thing in their path. The alien invasion had started and The Captain knew what he had done to stop it: nothing.

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Now on the ship, as the black hole built up strength and size, The Captain was starting to prepare his vessel for the passage. He switched off the engine, he secured all necessary equipment and he attached his helmet and protective gear. Years had passed since the aging man had departed from the space station on Pinov but,



before this, he had known for some time that this day was approaching. As he finished his preparations and sat down in The Captain's chair, he recalled the day he left...

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He stood in his black uniform- his loyal dragon by his side- impatiently waiting to be given the green light to board. His mother warned him of the dangers and then (as any mother would) begged him not to go. She knew her attempts to persuade her son were futile because she had raised him to be strong but stubborn. Knowing he possessed the only ship that could withstand the force of the black hole, The Captain didn't believe he had a choice. "With this ship comes massive responsibility," he had been told when he acquired the imposing, impressive vessel. He always believed that the ship had chosen him and he was The Captain who would take it on its journey. Finally, the green light was given; he boarded his new home and set off on his quest to save the Pinovian race.

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As he stared at the dark, swirling hole, it gradually edged closer to him. Outside the ship, debris swirled around like a tornado and battered against the walls of the vessel like a thousand hammers. Thoughts raced through his brain and he wondered what would be on the other side. Would he survive the fury of the hole? He had to complete this vital mission or his race would never find a new, safe planet to live on. At that moment, his vessel began to shake like it was in the centre of an earthquake. Pieces of his ship began to crumble like paper around him and he watched what had once been an indestructible vessel fall apart. As he closed his eyes and braced himself for what was to come, a memory of his dragon fixed in his mind...

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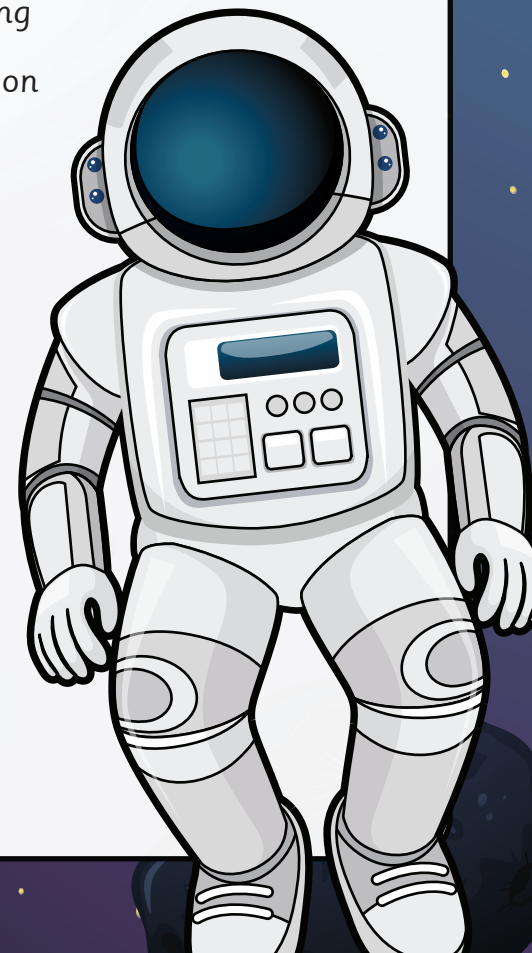
Saying goodbye to his dragon had been the hardest thing he had had to do. The loyal beast had been by his side for years and had become his family. The worry he felt about leaving him started at the bottom of his stomach, and slowly grew with every passing day. Because he had known he was leaving for so long, he had watered the worry like a weed and it had become stronger. When the day finally came to say goodbye, the worry felt like it was strangling The Captain's organs. When he peered out of the window of the ship and stared into his dragon's confused and saddening eyes, The Captain's heart felt like it had been punctured a million times over by tiny pins.

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Now, hurtling towards the black hole, the light was blinding and the force pressing down on him was crushing his body and soul. At that moment, the last few parts of the ship pulled away from him (leaving him completely exposed). Feeling desperate, he turned and watched his home drift into the distance as the hole sucked him further in- transporting him to the next universe. Without warning, an almighty roar flew passed his ears and the force that had been pressing down on his body was easing. He could feel a gentle breeze on his skin.

"Am I in heaven?" he asked as he opened his eyes.

He was floating through space being held up by his dragon! The Captain watched as his loyal beast carried him through to the other side of the black hole and into the unknown. They were together again; together they would find their new home.



## QUESTIONS

1. Look at paragraph one. What does the word 'reverberated' tell the reader about the sound?

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2. List 3 things that happened after the first sighting of aliens on Pinov.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Find and copy two words which suggest The Captain was relaxed about the alien sighting.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Find and copy 2 pieces of evidence that suggest The Captain should have done more to prevent the invasion.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Complete the table below.

Statement	True	False
The captain has been on the ship for a long time.		
The Captain couldn't be convinced to stay on Pinov.		
His dragon was precious to him.		



6. Tick two things that made The Captain think he might have been in heaven.

- the force that had been pressing down on his body was easing.
- an almighty roar flew passed his ears
- the hole sucked him further in
- He could feel a gentle breeze on his skin

7. Using numbers 1–5 sequence the events in the story. Sequence these in the order they occurred in The Captain’s life. The first one has been done for you.

- The first sighting of an alien on Pinov.  1
- His mother warned him of the dangers and begged him not to go.
- He was hurtling towards the black hole.
- Huge, mechanical structures were vaporising everything on Pinov.
- He was floating through space being held up by his dragon!

8. What would be a good alternative title for the story? Tick one.

- Plant Pinov
- The Dragon
- An Alien Invasion
- The Captain’s Mission

9. Summarise the story in 50 words or less, selecting the most important information from the text.

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## QUESTIONS

1. Look at paragraph one. What does the word 'reverberated' tell the reader about the sound?

*The sound repeated as an echo.*

2. List 3 things that happened after the first sighting of aliens on Pinov.

*3 of the following:*

- markets were raided by people*
- cellars and outhouses were built*
- doors and windows were barricaded*
- beasts and dragons were bought*

3. Find and copy two words which suggest The Captain was relaxed about the alien sighting.

- 1. calmness*
- 2. flippancy*

4. Find and copy 2 pieces of evidence that suggest The Captain should have done more to prevent the invasion.

- 1. The Captain, on the other hand, sat back and watched the chaos around with a surprising air of calmness and flippancy...*
- 2. The Captain knew what he had done to stop it: nothing.*

5. Complete the table below.

Statement	True	False
The captain has been on the ship for a long time.	✓	
The Captain couldn't be convinced to stay on Pinov.	✓	
His dragon was precious to him.	✓	

6. Tick two things that made The Captain think he might have been in heaven.

- the force that had been pressing down on his body was easing.
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7. Using numbers 1–5 sequence the events in the story. Sequence these in the order they occurred in The Captain's life. The first one has been done for you.

- The first sighting of an alien on Pinov.  1
- His mother warned him of the dangers and begged him not to go.  3
- He was hurtling towards the black hole.  4
- Huge, mechanical structures were vaporising everything on Pinov.  2
- He was floating through space being held up by his dragon!  5

8. What would be a good alternative title for the story? Tick one.

- Plant Pinov
- The Dragon
- An Alien Invasion
- The Captain's Mission

9. Summarise the story in 50 words or less, selecting the most important information from the text.

The Captain's planet is invaded by aliens and he must leave his dragon to find an alternative planet for his race to live on. The Captain finds himself in trouble but his loyal dragon rescues him and together they search for their new home (or similar answer).