

SIR SIRIUS, CLOWN ERRANT

By Justin Alejandro Gonzales

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance):

Commander Haden Wenswing, an astronaut

Sir Sirius, the Clown Errant

Crewmate

Time:

It's been a long time.

Setting:

Inside the black hole. In space.

Prompts:

Line: "You're ruining six different timelines all at once!"

Genre: Space

Character: Clown Knight

Note:

Sir Sirius and Crewmate should be played by the same actor.

(At rise, WENSWING floats through space, motionless. He is in the void of a black hole. SIRIUS enters riding a horse and holding a lance, totally unaffected by zero gravity. He looks at WENSWING curiously, then dismounts. SIRIUS walks closer to him in that clownish way, and his shoes make a goofy *wimp womp* sound with each step. He gets an idea and giggles to himself. SIRIUS gives WENSWING the old tap-on-the-shoulder trick with his lance. WENSWING wakes up suddenly and looks around, but SIRIUS skedaddles out of the way and hides behind his horse, unseen.)

WENSWING

Ah . . . what . . . ?

(WENSWING checks his instruments.)

WENSWING

How . . . I'm . . . ?

(WENSWING activates his radio.)

WENSWING

Clavileño, this is Wenswing. Do you read, over? This is Wenswing. Is there anybody still on Clavileño that can read me, over?

(WENSWING is silent for a moment, taking in his surroundings. He makes a log while SIRIUS watches.)

WENSWING

Start log. This is Haden Wenswing, Commander of the Sally-4 mission aboard the MSS Clavileño. The date is . . .

(WENSWING checks his instruments.)

WENSWING

. . . uncertain. I've been floating in free space for an indeterminate amount of time following the catastrophic failure of the Clavileño's spacewalk and airlock systems. Contact with other personnel has not been reestablished. By my estimation, my life support should have failed some time ago. I'm not sure . . . how I'm alive. There are no visible stars, making orientation impossible. I don't anticipate any changes, so this will be my final message. Commander Wenswing, signing off.

(WENSWING continues to float, dejected. SIRIUS tiptoes towards WENSWING with quiet *wimp womps*, then *bonks* him on the head, causing him to fall to the "ground," apparently no longer in zero gravity. He looks at SIRIUS.)

SIRIUS

Hey Commander, why are astronauts always sleepy?

(WENSWING is dumbstruck.)

SIRIUS

Because it's always nighttime! *Honk, honk!*

(WENSWING scuttles away and manages to get to his feet. He takes a combat stance.)

SIRIUS

Aha! A joust! The quickest way to the truth! Forsooth!

(SIRIUS circles around on his horse to get into position for the joust. WENSWING tries to run away, but finds that trying to run to the end of the stage is impossible; he always circles back in.)

SIRIUS

Did you know that not even light can escape a black hole? Whose bright idea was that? *Honk, honk!*

WENSWING

Black hole?

SIRIUS

Now, we shall see: canst thou bear thee the might of a warrior's lance? Steel thyself, knave, or be run a-skewer! Hah!

(SIRIUS charges forth but pretends to trip on a rock, causing him to tumble and fall with spectacular comic exaggeration. He sits on the ground and rubs his wounds.)

SIRIUS

Talk about a crash landing. *Womp, womp, whaaa~.*

(WENSWING tries to make a log . . .)

WENSWING

Start log. I . . .

(. . . but he gives up.)

WENSWING

Who are you?

SIRIUS

Me?

(SIRIUS shades his eyes and looks around, as if for someone else. He does this until WENSWING picks up his cue.)

WENSWING

Yes, you! Who else?

SIRIUS

Who else? Let's see, there's this astronaut that I just met who's very good at jousting . . . oh, and there's also my most loyal and vivacious steed. His name is Runny Glue. Say hi to Commander. *Neigh! Neigh!* Isn't that nice? See how he runs!

(SIRIUS gallops around, *gallooming* and leaping. He suddenly stops.)

SIRIUS

And that's about all his tricks. Sorry Glue, you've dried. *Honk, honk!*

(SIRIUS throws Runny Glue offstage.)

WENSWING

Where is this? How am I alive?

SIRIUS

Thanks for asking. I am the Knight of the Dark Passage, swell as a gravity well, singular as a singularity. I am I, Sir Sirius, Clown Errant! That's Sirius like the star. Get it?

WENSWING

And you live here?

SIRIUS

Yeah.

WENSWING

Is this really a black hole?

SIRIUS

Looks black to me.

WENSWING

That's impossible. We weren't anywhere near a black hole.

SIRIUS

Yeah . . . you know, maybe you aren't alive after all. Drifting that far for that long . . . Hey Commander, what did the zombie say when he reached the event horizon?

(Some suspense)

WENSWING

What?

SIRIUS

“Braaaains!” *Honk, honk!* What else? Oh, here comes Runny Glue again!

(SIRIUS retrieves Runny Glue from where he threw him and mounts.)

SIRIUS

Neigh, neigh! It must be time for me to go. He only gets this way when trouble is afoot. And trust me, that’s far worse than when it’s ahead. Tremble, evil, for Sir Sirius dost rides once more! Away!

(SIRIUS rides offstage and takes a long-winded route through the house to the other side of the stage. As this happens, WENSWING speaks.)

WENSWING

Huh? He escaped! Which means it’s possible. I don’t know how, but it’s possible! He must control gravity somehow. But with what? Maybe if . . . no. But what other option is there? Ok. Here goes nothing. Away!

(WENSWING extends his arm like a lance and charges towards offstage, but is turned around again, running into SIRIUS who has looped back around by now. WENSWING is knocked down.)

WENSWING

Gah! Where did you come from? I thought you left. Did Runny Glue give you a false alarm?

SIRIUS

Runny glue? Where?

(SIRIUS examines himself.)

WENSWING

Your horse?

SIRIUS

Uh . . . ah! Ha-ha-ha! That’s a good one! Here, I’ll let you honk it this time!

(SIRIUS presents his nose to WENSWING, who reluctantly *honks* it.)

SIRIUS

Hee-hee-hee! Ho . . . no, my horse is called Elmer Stud. You must have met a me from a different timeline. Sounds like a real kidder!

WENSWING

You’ve got that in common. Changing timelines, that’s nonsense!

SIRIUS

I agree. You can't see it, you can't hear it, you can't smell it or touch it or taste it. Completely nonsensical! But that's just the way it is. Time gets weird when space gets weird.

WENSWING

I guess I can agree with that . . . Ok, I'll play along. You can mess with timelines? Take me to the one where the Clavileño doesn't malfunction, and I don't end up in this black hole!

SIRIUS

Oh, sure, let me just call the timeline fairy and get that for you. *Ring, ring!* "Hello, timeline fairy? What's that? You don't exist? Oops, my mistake!" Don't be ridiculous, Commander. As a man of science you should know that if you try to force your way into a timeline, bad things happen. One second you're fine, and then the next moment boom – you're ruining six timelines all at once!

WENSWING

Then how is it done?

SIRIUS

Idunno.

(WENSWING gets up in SIRIUS' grill.)

WENSWING

What do you mean you don't know? You just did it 10 seconds ago!

SIRIUS

Hold this, please.

(SIRIUS hands his lance to WENSWING.)

SIRIUS

It's like this: You're on your computer, *clickity clackity click*, and it freezes up, *whirr*, so you decide to wait it out, but it's taking so long, *tick tock tick tock*, so you step away and decide not to care about it anymore, and that's when it decides to load, *ding!*

WENSWING

So you don't control it? Hmm . . . don't care . . .

SIRIUS

And the thing will do its thing. Probably. But what do I know; I'm half knight, half clown: I'm a noun! And not even the pro kind.

WENSWING

Right. Don't think about it, don't care . . .

(WENSWING sits and focuses.)

SIRIUS

"There's no place like home, there's no place like home."

WENSWING

Shut up!

SIRIUS

You don't not care enough. I can tell.

WENSWING

How am I supposed to not care? They're my crew, my closest friends. Getting back to them, making things right, that's all I care about!

SIRIUS

Then you'll be sticking around for a long time. Hey Commander, here's one: what do you call a rocket with no fuel? A "roll-it!" *Honk, honk!*

(SIRIUS exits on Elmer Stud. WENSWING sits for a long time, gradually relaxing until he seems content with where he is. It feels like ages. When it seems that he really doesn't care anymore, a CREWMATE enters.)

CREWMATE

Commander Wenswing. We're ready for this morning's spacewalk. We need you at the controls.

WENSWING

I'll be down in a moment.

(CREWMATE exits. WENSWING ponders in silence for a bit, stands, and then exits.)

END OF PLAY