

“Roger, check this out,” Phil said, glancing up from the unfamiliar images.

Before rolling towards Phil, Roger guzzled the last of his coffee and brushed the pastry crumbs off his tie.

“Another asteroid?”

“Don’t think so.” Phil gestured at the monitor. “I suspect it’s a new planet.”

Roger laughed, belly jiggling with the noise until he started hacking. Cough quieted, he rolled his shoulders. “I bet it’s a smudge on your screen.” He leaned forward and scrutinized the image, comparing it with their current map before jerking upright, eyes wide.

“In a cosmic void?”

“Guess it’s our lucky day, Rog.”



I don’t know in which order these stories will end up being published, but I can tell you that as I write them I’m onto my 7th story, and received the sci-fi genre again. Of all the unfortunate chances! Or so went my first reaction while fellow writers watching the chaos unfold attempted not to laugh too much at my annoyance. I moved on to other things, ruminating on the idea, considering I had twenty-four hours to write the story in. Then the phrase, “Roger, come check this out.” Came to mind.

I’ve absolutely no idea why. It’s one of those odd phenomena my kids call *shower thoughts*. I’m not sure when they coined the phrase, but we used to get nightly updates on the bizarre and interesting things they thought about while showering. For a time I wondered if it was

because I wrote spelling words in dry erase marker on their shower stall glass. Never mind it took me a couple of weeks to realize I'd failed to write the words in reverse so they could actually read them correctly. They became rather mystified by the unfamiliar words presented, and equally more confused when I insisted certain spelling words were in plain view on their shower wall.

They aren't alone in this oddity. It never fails that the perfect next line comes to mind when I'm in the shower and have no paper at hand. Thus, I'm often found muttering the same sentence under my breath when I reappear and scramble to find my phone or notebook to jot things in. This first line came while I was sitting at the computer attempting to outline a new novel. Attempting being the operative word as I volleyed name ideas around, and then found myself overcome with hysterics.

Why you ask? I'd jotted the names of characters down, and often the first name that comes to mind is the name I use. So, one such character ended up with the name Scott. The problem is, as I'm working on all this, the holidays are fast approaching. I've maxed out my library card with holds, most of which are Christmas reads. I've already downloaded a Christmas playlist to write to, and yesterday, the kids asked if I wanted the Christmas tree from our storage unit.

What does that have to do with Scott? Have you ever watched the Santa Claus movies? The ones where the main characters' name is Scott Calvin? We have, and for whatever reason, my kids used to scream Scott Calvin and then start cackling. In all the years this happened, I've never understood the hilarity. I still don't, but when I saw Scott on my paper, I burst into hysterical laughter, imagining my kids reading the story and then slamming it down, shouting, "Really, Mom? Scott? Of all names!"

Please note if your name is Scott, I think it's a lovely name, and should I snicker, it has little to do with the name and everything to do with reliving long ago memories of two little boys finding great glee in shouting Scott Calvin at the most inconvenient and random moments possible.

The Reluctant Author

