

# *And In The End....*

Stephen

The world was screaming.

I opened my eyes, and would have shut my ears if I had been able . . . .

I was on a *ship*, I guessed, between the stars, and I was struck dumb by the sight.

“Johnson!” a voice shouted over the screaming.

“Sir!”

“We need more power from the engines!”

“They’re already at twenty percent overload!”

“Shields are down!”

“Johnson!”

“We can’t—We’ll destroy the ship!”

“Then open a rift!”

“Aye, sir!”

Before me, the stars ahead seemed to scramble out of our way, and the ship was flung into the blackness where they had been, but it was all for naught . . . .

“They’re still behind us!”

“Johnson!”

Johnson pushed forward the throttles, toggled off the alarms, sobbing,

“Lord, protect us from our enemies . . . and deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom—”

“Johnson!”

“Thirty-two percent overload!”

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want, he makes me lie down in green pastures—”

“Johnson!”

“Forty percent! He leads me beside quiet . . . waters, he restoreth my soul—”

“They’re still gaining!”

“We’re taking structural damage!”

“Johnson!”

“Fifty-five!”

“He leads me in paths of . . . righteousness . . . for—for his name’s sake . . . .” Johnson gasped.

“Johnson!”

“Sixty!”

“Make a rift! Random!”

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the . . . shadow of . . . death—”

The stars receded again, and we raced past them, into the gap—

Whispering, “I will fear no evil . . . .”

And—

Nothing. We were alone.

The engines exploded, and the craft tumbled crazily, spinning end over end—

“For you are with me . . . .”

I awoke. I was on a stretcher, in an ambulance.

I felt the bullets in my chest. Blood flowed freely. I could not live.

“Just hang on. Hang on for just a few more minutes,” someone said, far off . . . .

“And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever . . . .”

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