

## The One with the Space Potato

**Maddy** Wanna try my potato salad?

**Billy** Nah, I'm good. Thanks though.

**Maddy** Come on. This is the best potato salad I've ever made. I used fresh chives from the garden and everything.

**Billy** Nah, I'm good. I've always thought potatoes were really boring to be honest.

**Tuberman** Come with me if you want to live.

**Billy** Um, who are you?

**Tuberman** There's no time. I'll explain on the way.

**Billy** Look Potato Head. We don't know you. We're just trying to have some lunch.

**Tuberman** There is no time. Let's go!

**Maddy** They're breaching the hull!

**Tuberman** Take the controls Billy.

**Billy** What? No way!

**Tuberman** Choose your destiny Billy.

**Billy** We're gonna die!

**Maddy** Who are you? You said you'd explain on the way, but we've done nothing but fight robots and we've nearly crashed so many times.

**Tuberman** I am the last of the quantum tubers. I was born on the Space Shuttle Columbia, in 1996. My kind began life as a crop of space potatoes, a simple experiment. But when we began to mutate, our astronaut fathers and mothers shot us into the cold vacuum of space. They were ashamed of us.

I've travelled the Universe, growing and learning. I've seen the edges of reality. I've experienced the future. I've seen things I can never un-see.

**Maddy** Okay, but why are we here?

- Tuberman** That, I cannot tell you. I'm driven by forces I do not yet understand. All I know is that you children must open your minds to new organic experiences. The future of your world depends on it. Try the potato salad Billy. Try the potato salad.
- Billy** I wanna go home.
- Tuberman** But you are home Billy. You are home.
- Billy** Hey, this potato salad is actually really good. Did you say you used fresh chives?
- Maddy** Mm-hmm.
- Dianne** Welcome to Mars. How cool is this?  
What do you notice about the soil here?
- Maddy** It's really sandy. Where you're farming, you need really rich soils.
- Dianne** Yeah. That's a really big issue here on Mars. You need that fantastic, organic matter in the soil and I don't have that here on Mars. So, what that means, is that we'd have to introduce it, into the soil, to be able to grow things. We have to grow it indoors though, 'cause it's so cold, -55; and there's also no oxygen as well outside, well not much, a tiny bit. So, you gotta grow it inside. But it can grow in pot plants potentially. As long as it has ...
- Maddy** Rich soils.
- Dianne** Rich soils.
- Maddy** What sort of food would you be able to grow in Martian soil?
- Dianne** Well, we've tested quite a few different sorts of veggies, a lot of greens. So, rocket and peas, radishes, tomatoes as well, the sort of stuff that you probably have every day in your salads. So, typical salad food seems to grow really, really well in a Martian soil that has organic matter through it.
- Maddy** Have you heard of the Space Shuttle Columbia in 1996?
- Dianne** Yes, I have.
- Maddy** Have you heard that there was a potato experiment that happened on that planet?
- Dianne** I know about the potato experiment. I'd love to know more though, tell me.
- Maddy** I just met this strange dude. He was very amazing and that's where he was born apparently. I gotta ask him more questions about it.
- Dianne** Okay, well, potatoes and Mars, I've heard that they're well connected, so tell me more.

**Maddy** Tuberman!

**C. Kulyu** That's a negative. Tuberman has peeled away. You're speaking with Commander Kulyu.