

A SUBSTITUTE EARTH

Chris had no idea where in the multiverse he was. His map was bust and he had been meandering at four hundred thousand miles per hour for the past three hundred and fifty light years. He needed a place to land – and he needed it fast. A red flashing light flickered on and, as it grew bigger on the dashboard, Chris knew he was in for a rough ride...

He had been called to NASA Headquarters on the fifteenth of June to a secret meeting with the Head of Science, Donald Trump and a NASA representative.

"Welcome," said the Head of Science.

Chris looked around the stylish room. He could see a window at the far end covering the whole wall. In the middle of the room, there was a round coffee table with a file marked:

CONFIDENTIAL. Around the coffee table, there were three navy blue sofas, one facing towards the door, and away from the window, and the others, on the other sides of the coffee table, facing each other.

"Why am I here?" asked Chris.

The NASA man raised a finger but Trump gave him the glare and the man went silent.

"You are here because of global warming."

It was the Head of Science who had spoken. Ok, now Chris was confused.

"You are the best pilot on Earth – it has to be you," explained Trump.

"We need to find a substitute Earth," said the NASA man.

Trump sighed and then began to say, "Perhaps I should explain it fully. Now Chris, we need you to go where no man has gone before. We need to find a substitute Earth to go to when global warming gets worse. It has to be at least two hundred light years away. Chris - we need you."

Chris looked at all three men in turn and then said, "I'll do it."

So, here he was, burning one hundred thousand litres of fuel per second. Chris was dodging the massive space rocks as if they were cones in a football warm-up. It was just too easy. Seconds later, he emerged on the other side. Now, he was

back on course. He drove the rocket in a straight line before taking a left towards a gas planet. Suddenly, it struck him. NASA hadn't been in contact with him for a while. Then he realised – his communication was bust. He couldn't call for help if he needed it, but then again, he wouldn't need them. He had this under control.

Up ahead, Chris could just make out three little circles. One was orange, one was green and the other a slight shade of blue. As he got closer, he realised they were galaxies. With all the thoughts flittering through his mind, Chris barely had space to make his decision. So, he did the one thing his mind first told him to.

Did he choose the orange, green or blue galaxy?