

The Ghostship Mathematica

Episode One

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1. A tavern on a planet known only as The Port. It's full of the most exotic aliens you can imagine. Most of them drunk. (NB: No humans.)

Our hero is called Marble Jones. He's humanoid but not human and about eleven years old. Panel One opens with Marble being slapped hard in the face by his brute of a father, sending a bowl of porridge flying across one of the tavern's customers. (They are too drunk to notice or care.)

CAPTION

So many pass through here every day that the planet has become known simply as The Port.

CAPTION

But even here life has a tendency to play out in depressingly familiar ways.

MARBLE'S FATHER

Get to the kitchen and make me some real oatsoup, boy! This tastes like minced cattleballs!

2. Young Marble Jones, moments later - now sporting a black eye - sneaks behind some of the tavern's high-backed wooden seats. He's looking for a good spot where he can listen to the stories told by space sailors.

CAPTION

Every night young Marble Jones hides in his father's tavern and listens.

CAPTION

Listens to the tales the sailors passing through tell each other.

3. Close-up on Marble. Light from through the chair slats frame the young alien's face - he's fascinated by this glimpse of another life!

CAPTION

Marble loves hearing about the pirates that apparently plague this solar system - though he's never laid eyes upon one.

CAPTION

But his favourite stories are those about the legend of the long-lost Ghostship Mathematica -

4. Drunken sailors - one covered in porridge - slopping ale over a table as they talk. We can just make out Marble from his hiding place.

CAPTION

Some say it was the very last ship to be sailed by humans. But few sailors believe that humans ever existed.

SAILOR

See, the Ghostship can fold space - cover light years in no time. S'the only way you could be sure to find Earth -

SAILOR TWO

Earth's a bloody myth, you idiot!

5. From Marble's POV: A one-legged robot pirate (The Captain) appears in the tavern. The Captain has tattoos on his arms - the mark of a The Marauders.

CAPTION

The moment The Captain walked in, Marble instantly knew he was looking at a real-life...

MARBLE JONES

(whispered)
Pirate!

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1. The Captain looks around as he speaks to Marble's Father - who has just spat in a tankard and is now 'polishing' it.

THE CAPTAIN

M'lookin' fer Zerg Rush. He around?

MARBLE'S FATHER

Over there - the one with one eye
an' no teeth.

2. Zerg Rush does indeed have no teeth and only eye. He should have three but two seem to have been carelessly lost - probably fighting in places like this.

THE CAPTAIN

You Zerg Rush?

ZERG RUSH

Who's asking? Actually - it don't matter. Those ink markings... You sail with the Marauders?

THE CAPTAIN

Not for many a year. I been on my own since-

ZERG RUSH

Then we ain't doin' business!

3. A brawl erupts and tables, chairs and tankards fly through the air.

THE CAPTAIN

I came a long way for that map.

ZERG RUSH

Well you ain't getting' it...
Stinkin' pirate!

4. Marble's hiding place is discovered when a table smashes his shelter to pieces.

MARBLE'S FATHER

Marble! Get out of there, you little dungslug!

MARBLE'S FATHER

Yer supposed to be upstairs cooking me dinner!

5. Marble's Father kicks Marble toward a door leading upstairs. The Captain, still mid-brawl spots this but says nothing.

MARBLE'S FATHER

I see you in 'ere again and you won't see daylight till the wet season begins!

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1. Instead, Marble, rucksack on his shoulder, waits outside the tavern to follow The Captain to his pirate ship! He watches silently as the robot pirate stumbles out - and into a giant ship-park, populated spaceships in all manner of states of disrepair. (The Captain is slightly the worse for wear after his recent fight.)

CAPTION

All Marble knows is that he's had enough of his current life story...

2. As the Captain boards his ship via a ramp (pistons cough puffs of steam as they strain to take his weight) Marble hides in the shadow.

CAPTION

So he decides to write himself a new one.

3. Marble emerges from The Captain's hold.

He's disappointed to discover that the 'deadly pirate ship' he was expecting is manned by just the old one-legged Captain and a robotic Blacksmith.

THE CAPTAIN

Well... What we got here, then? A stowaway?

MARBLE JONES

It's... just the two of you?

4. The Captain's ship is quite small on the inside. Kind of cosy!

The Blacksmith is also a robot - but bulky and round, with mighty arms. And a collection of mallets hanging behind him.

THE BLACKSMITH

Aye! A Captain and a Blacksmith... What else do you need to sail the stars, boy?

THE BLACKSMITH

Now... 'Spose you'll be needing food. What with you not bein' made o' metal like us!

5. Marble - shocked.

MARBLE JONES

You mean you were expecting me?
And you're not gonna make me go
back?

THE CAPTAIN

I saw the look in your eye back
there, boy. An' that's good
enough for me.

6. The Blacksmith shrugs while eyeing the Captain's
battered hide.

MARBLE JONES

But I'm only eleven summers old!

THE CAPTAIN

Age means nuthin' to a robot,
kid.

THE BLACKSMITH

Well, nearly nuthin'...

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1. Blacksmith (hammer in hand) serves a plate of food to
the boy.

THE BLACKSMITH

Here - this'll keep you chewing
while we cruise for a good solar
wind.

MARBLE JONES

But where are we going? You
didn't get the map you were
looking for!

2. The Captain pulls a canvas map from beneath his jacket.

THE CAPTAIN

Ha! Stupid drunk thought he 'ad a
choice in givin' me the map. I
filched it while he was tryin' to
hit me with them fat fists of
his!

3. They look at the star map - laid out on parchment, but
with 3D hologram elements above 'landmarks'.

THE CAPTAIN

Here we go, boy. Set yer peepers
on this...

(MORE)

THE CAPTAIN(cont'd)

That there's the final resting
place of The Ghostship
Mathematica!

MARBLE JONES

But if that sailor had a map to
The Mathematica, why didn't he
use it?

4. The Blacksmith hammers the dents out of the Captain's
hide.

SFX

clang dang

THE CAPTAIN

The same reason an antmonkey
can't fire a lasergun when he
finds one beneath his tree. He
dun't know what it was!

THE BLACKSMITH

Brains. The capn's got em!

5. Exterior - The Captain's ship, sailing through the
stars.

CAPTION

After months of sailing with The
Captain and his Blacksmith,
Marble Jones was on his way to
being a man.

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1. After months of sailing they find the legendary
Ghostship Mathematica - and Marble is delighted! Marble
looks a little older - taller, stockier. (It's been perhaps
a year or more of travelling.)

CAPTION

And find the Ghostship, they did.

2. He climbs aboard with The Captain and immediately starts
filling his satchel with gold.

THE CAPTAIN

You going to carry that heavy,
boring gold all the way home,
lad?

MARBLE JONES

If we're not here for the gold
then what?

3. The Captain is in awe of the old ship. There are cobwebs everywhere, but it is beautiful and ornate.

THE CAPTAIN

You know why they call it The Ghostship Mathematica?

MARBLE JONES

Cos all its crew are dead?

THE CAPTAIN

Ha - no. The Mathematica was the last great achievement of the human race - a revolutionary scientific process. Immortality they reckoned.

4. The Blacksmith looks around - seeing what might need to be mended to get the ship moving again. The Captain lets gold coins drop through his robotic fingers.

THE CAPTAIN

The Mathematica was what they called it - a way of storing their minds at the point of death. Perfectly. Each one saved down as a unique mathematical equation.

THE CAPTAIN

No, young Marble Jones - this gold ain't what we're after. The Ghostship is the treasure!

5. The captain pats a long array of memory banks.

THE CAPTAIN

The minds of a million dead humans aboard the only ship in the universe capable of finding the planet they called home!

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