"Danny. Danny. Danny!" came his brother, Gerald's, voice from next to him. "You gotta stay with me man. We have to land this thing."

Danny watched as the sky in front of him was rapidly changing colors from dark black and light black to violet and then to sky blue. Suddenly, flames burst into life on the front window of the shuttle. Danny's eyes widened as he watched them dancing and flickering in the thin atmosphere. He felt the heat on his eyes.

"Danny! Come on, man! Help me out!" Gerald shouted his brother back into the moment. Danny looked around. He finally found his brother sitting next to him in that space-seat.

"What do I do?" asked Danny, looking around the cabin for anything that he might have to yank or push.

"First, quit looking around. Look at me," answered Gerald. Danny turned and looked at him. When their eyes met, it seemed like time had slowed down. It seemed to be going slow enough that Danny could fire a bullet and be able to watch the bullet move slowly through the time. It was amazing. He wondered if anyone else had ever felt this.

"Danny, you have to concentrate. You have to push this picture out of your mind. You have to," said Gerald. He reached over and took Danny's hand. Danny didn't understand.

"What do you mean? Why me?" said Danny, not understanding.

There was a sudden bursting of orange from the window. Danny was startled and looked over at it. More flames were on the windshield, and some were creeping into the space craft, singeing and burning the instrument panel, blackening portions of the window. Danny saw now that there were clouds. They were still high above the earth, but things were coming more into focus. He saw ocean everywhere.

"It has to be you, Danny. You are the one. Only you can save us now. When you die in The Matrix you die in the other place," answered Gerald, pleading with his eyes, yearning for Danny to quit asking questions and to do what he asked of him.

"What do you mean, I'm the one?" Danny didn't understand still, yet,

again.

"You were always better at light sabers, remember? And when we'd do catch-bullet drills, you'd always catch the bullet, and I'd always get my hand blown off, remember?" pleaded Gerald.

Danny laughed. "And your hand would always grow back the next day," he smiled at his brother.

"Yeah!" Gerald laughed, too. He felt his point was getting across. "You have a unique ability to control The Matrix, Danny. It's an ability that no one's had in several years. Neo, from the movies, is the last one, but he reincarnates himself every generation."

"Wait," said Danny. "That doesn't make any sense. You said the movies were wrong."

"Well, they are. Kinda. I mean, there was a Neo, and he did do the cool things in The Matrix. The movies are right. They got it right on," said Gerald.

"Except that there's only ten of you," answered Danny, playing mental pong with his brother.

"Eight. And that's besides the point. The movie takes place years before what you saw," attempted Gerald, quickly sneaking glances at the front window, waiting for bad things to happen.

"But in there you said that it was the same time, didn't you?" questioned Danny.

"Well… yeah. I did. Um, but the movies are, like, four years old at least," tried Gerald, making more obvious glances at the smoking and smoldering front window.

"How old was Neo when all that happened? Seventy years old? Eighty?" continued Danny.

"Oh, yeah. Twenty-ish. Around twenty-five. About as old as Keanu was when acting as him," said Gerald, feeling a bit of confidence enter his voice.

"But, then that makes me much older than Neo,"continued Danny, yet again. This time, his eyebrow went up.

"Oh yeah. You got tons of years on him, bro." Gerald held up his fist for his brother to pump, trying to end conversation quickly.

"Yeah. I was not gloating. I was pointing out that if I'm years older than Neo, then how can I be a reincarnation of him? I was born before him," spiked Danny. He definitely had Gerald there. He saw Gerald go through the mental gymnastics of deciding what that sentence meant, logically.

"Oh. Right," said Gerald, his face falling. It was obvious that his much-smarter brother had found a loophole in his fail-safe logic and meticulously thought-out story.

The plane continued to shake and plummet.

"Oh?" questioned Danny. "You'd better start telling me the truth, and hopefully before we die."

Danny was in control of the situation again. Though, as he peered out over the ocean below them, slowly getting larger, he couldn't help but think that this petty argument had been just that.

"Here's the deal, Danny. I think you're the next Neo, but no one believes me. And I knew that if I could convince you, then you would do something Neo-ish, and then I'd have proof. So, when our shuttle failed, I felt that this was the perfect opportunity. I guess I was wrong," Gerald said, turning back from Danny to facing the smoking and burning window in front of him. Danny saw a tear roll down Gerald's cheek.

Danny felt pity for his brother. He wanted to help him out. He wondered what he could do. "What can I do?" he asked. Gerald turned, and then he saw the earnest look in Danny's eyes. Then he turned to Danny, and smiled.

"I'm glad you asked. You won't regret this, Danny. I believe in you," said Gerald, encouragingly.

"Just tell me what-" Danny began. But as his words began, they cut out. There was a sudden metallic tearing sound. Terry felt the entire shuttle shift dangerously and violently. He looked behind him and saw jagged tears in the metal fabric of the tail. Air was pulling in, and Danny felt himself being pushed against his seat back. Papers and debris were being blown toward the

back of the plane, escaping through ever-widening holes in the hull of the shuttle's tail. Then there was a wrenching again, and the tail tore from the back of the space shuttle.

With a new opening behind them, the wind was rushing from the holes in the front of the plane and pulling everything along with it. Danny looked out through the blackened wind shield and saw sky, then blue ocean, then sky, then blue ocean. They were cart-wheeling. No matter how hard he looked, he couldn't find the plane's tail.

"What should I do?!" yelled Danny over the roaring and tearing wind. Gerald looked over at his brother. He looked green, like he was, or had been, sick.

"Just concentrate on stopping the plane. Just picture it-" But Gerald couldn't finish. Danny heard a cracking sound. It sounded a little hollow, but it was loud. The sound was coming from in front of them. Danny watched in horror as the wind-fighting front glass panel was cracking a long, crooked line that was nearly dividing it in half. Then it did. The glass shattered and rained on Danny and Gerald, searching out a path for the tail. Danny covered his face just in time, and the worst he got of it was some cuts on his hands.

"Oh my Space God!" screamed his brother, Gerald. Danny looked over and Gerald hadn't covered his face in time. There were thousands of pieces of broken glass sticking into and out of his face and hands. The shards were mostly small, and blood was pulling forward down his face, heading toward the gaping hole in front of them. Danny watched Gerald trying to remove the pieces of glass, only to cut himself on the hands trying to grip the tiny glass fragments. "Danny! Help us!"

Danny tried to shut out the sounds of his screaming, bleeding brother, the loud howling of the wind, the sick feeling in his stomach as the halved vessel continued to spin like a ferris wheel. He concentrated on something tiny. He, bit by bit, erased all the louder sounds in his head. He tried to find the tiniest, most removed sound, and bring it front and center. If he could concentrate that much, then he could shut that last tiny sound out and save them.

First to go was his brother. The sound slowly and carefully was muted, since Danny believes that crashing into the ocean would only exacerbate his

facial horror. Next he erased the spinning. When he took out the feeling of spinning, he realized it just felt like he was hanging from a tree, sitting in a tree pointed at the ground. He pictured it as a hammock, him lying face down, trying to sleep in the waning evening sun. Then he picked apart the sound, quelling the roar to a harsh breeze. Then the harsh breeze became the faintest stir of lazy summer drafts. When all these sounds went away, he heard the tiny sound he sought: a beep. At least, it sounded like a beep. But then it happened again, and it didn't sound like a beep. It was still pitched highly, but it had more of a rhythm to it. There were two notes this time. Then it did the single tone again, like the first time. It was harsh, grating. Then he heard a sound that went with it. It sounded like intermittent tiny winds.

"A seagull," said Danny, figuring it out. He opened his eyes, and he saw the ocean below them, then it disappeared and he saw the sky, and then he saw the ocean again. As the ocean swung into view, he saw an island. "Gerald! You have to brace! We're going to hit-"

But before Danny could get the words out, the shabby shell of the shuttle smashed into the water, and everything went dark and wet.