

Celebration

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by [spacedogfromspace](#)

Summary

The crew celebrates the anniversary of their ship's naming— and her namesake.

The party in Observatory 3 was in full swing. People were chatting and laughing, and drank a sparkly red punch that was a hit among the party goers. It was an annual party, one to celebrate the anniversary of their ship's naming and the launch of her maiden voyage.

There was the sound of metal tapping repeatedly on crystal, and the room hushed, everyone turning their attention to the Jemison's captain, who was on the little stage usually occupied by musicians, storytellers, or other entertainers that took their turns in Observatory 3. Having gotten everyone's attention, Ijeoma stopped tapping her glass and spoke loud so the people in the back could hear.

"Good evening, everyone," she said. "I hope you are all enjoying the party. I know I certainly am. Galan has outdone himself once again." There was a smattering of applause for the proprietor of Observatory 3, and Galan gave a little bow, trying to appear modest-- though it was easy to see how pleased he was about the compliment.

"This is a party to celebrate our ship," Ijeoma continued. "But we should also take a moment to recognize and celebrate her namesake, Mae Jemison. A Black woman who lived during the turbulent twentieth and twenty-first centuries, she broke barriers in a time when racial discrimination and gender prejudice were rampant in Earth cultures. A Black woman born in Alabama, of all places, managed to earn degrees in chemical engineering, African and African-American studies, and medicine. She worked as a doctor, both in the peace corp and as a general practitioner. And then she became an astronaut. She was the first African American woman to go to space," Ijeoma said, speaking so proudly it was as if Mae Jemison was her own ancestor. Perhaps, in a spiritual way, she was.

"One small step for a Black woman was one large precedent of humankind. Jemison said once, that, 'If you have a goal that is very, very far out, and you approach it in little steps, you start to get there faster.' She may have been talking about the future of space travel then, but her words very much apply to humanity's struggle to erase the lines that divide us. And, we did. Jemison took one of those little steps, and by stars, we started to get there faster. Now look at us." She lifted her glass. "To our ship, and to Mae Jemison."

The crowd cheered, raising their glasses high.

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