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English 296  
Assign #2 - exercise 2  
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An old man looks up from the computer screen he had been buried in and takes off his glasses. He rubs his tired eyes and looks over at the mantle where his wife is dusting. She is humming to herself as her brush passes from object to object. The man stares at one: a clear blue sphere with an opening in the side. He sits back and reflects on another time.

They had just reached the area where the orb had directed them to. The boat swayed back and forth on the waves. It was evening, and Aros, the hot yellow sun was setting. The companion sun, Demos, in its never-ending chase after Aros, would be up within the next few hours. A man stood on the aft part of the boat gazing over the horizon. After several minutes, he sighed and took another look at the object he had been clutching since this adventure began. He held it up to the fading sunlight. It was a blue sphere. Translucent, for the most part. A part of it was cut away where its secondary component belonged. The man held on to it tightly, for it held the secret to his fame and financial security. He never loosened his grip for a second, not even when he heard footsteps coming his way.

"Well, Rick, we're anchored. No point in doing anything else today. C'mon. The 'net caught some fish that we could fry for supper," said the second man.

Rick heaved another heavy sign then turned around to face his companion. The second man was older by at least a decade. Hints of gray hair dotted his head. The two of them wore similar sea travel clothes. But what caught Rick's attention was the red pouch hung around the elder's neck. He knew what was in it: the missing cylinder. With both pieces together a man and his offspring could live the rest of their lives in comfort. After a long moment, Rick realized he had been staring and shook his head.

"Yeah... sure, Tib. I'll cook," was his reply. He started for below deck and his companion followed.

Rick didn't have a family. But he was young and ready to settle down. He had worked hard for several years to find this piece of the puzzle and was determined to get his fair share. Tib had also worked hard for his piece, and he had a family to provide for. He was not about to let someone else steal his piece. Tib found the cylinder almost 5 years ago in an underground shelter in some remote desert. Since then, he had been looking for the sphere only to learn just a few months ago that a young man by the name of Rick Garber had acquired it. The two men met, and Tib had offered Rick a hefty sum for the sphere. Rick refused and they they fought for several months over each one's valid claim to the two objects. Finally, an agreement was struck, whereby both men would make the journey to find the treasure. Tib never forgave Rick. Tib had searched for both objects for a good twenty-five years. In his mind, they were both his, and Rick had no claim to either object.

Tib was not a violent man, but a desperate one. He had been planning this since they set out from Centuri Alpha port three days ago. He followed Rick closely behind, and just when Rick leaned in to open the cabin door, Tib struck. Luckily Rick had been on his guard and managed to deflect the knife. Yet it still managed to lodge in Rick's upper arm, just above the elbow. He was more in shock than in pain, and swung all the way around to punch Tib in the jaw. Rick was larger than Tib and sufficiently built. The blow threw Tib across the deck. Blood started to run down the side of his chin.

"No! You have no right," Tib panted as he crawled to his feet, "I've waited years for this. All the time I invested... so many years... so many years wasted... It's mine!" Tib lunged for the sphere that made it out of Rick's hand and to the deck. Rick managed to stop Tib from reaching it by kicking Tib in the stomach. Tib hurled over in pain, and as he did so, the cylinder came out from the pouch. Rick let go of his wounded arm to grab the red cylinder. The blood on his hand made the glass rod slippery. Once Tib realized that he was no longer in possession of the cylinder, he forgot his pain and in a wild rage went after Rick again, this time grabbing for the cylinder. The two men struggled for control. During one moment, in the heat of combat Rick had Tib by the arm holding him over the side of the boat. One instant both men handled part of the cylinder; the next they were both watching it fall into the sea.

Overwhelmed by the sight of his life's passion falling away, Tib tried to jump in the water after it. Rick screamed in protest and tried to grab Tib to keep him on board, but his hands were wet with blood, sweat and sea mist. He couldn't keep hold and Tib plunged into the sea. Rick stared into the water for what must have been hours. He yelled out to Tib several times but never received a reply.

Demos was setting. Rick slumped down onto the deck. His clothes were stained with blood and sweat. A few feet in front of him, shining in the dim light of Demos, was the sphere. Rick picked up the sphere, clutched it tightly against his chest, and turned the boat back to port.