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A Newly Emerging Genre: *X* Fiction in English Literature

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Abstract: *X* fiction, a recently recognized form of literature in the English language, is a blend of social media and traditional storytelling. It is brief but powerful, using a 280-character limit to create impactful stories that appeal to its audience. These tiny tales often utilize symbols, ironies, or texts from other works to represent multifaceted ideas in current information-overloaded societies. The easy accessibility for many people significantly influences the popularity of *X* fiction, which is enabled through social media platforms, allowing different voices to participate in shaping modern literature history. Moreover, this genre also fosters live interaction between storytellers and their readers, creating a sense of engagement and involvement through immediate responses during communal discussions on various narratives shared online at different times. This article discusses the features of *X* fiction by examining texts by David Mitchell and Jay Bushman, emphasizing this emerging genre's interactive nature, which keeps the audience engaged. By looking at exemplary works coupled with reader-author dynamics, this article aims to illustrate how much more can be done within these limits and how to broaden what constitutes literary work across media forms, mainly through *X*.

Keywords: English fiction, technology, social media, digital narratives, digital fiction, *X* fiction, contemporary literature, literary theory

The free social networking site *X* is pivotal in promoting *X* fiction, a unique form of literature that has emerged in English. *X* combines the features of a blog and an instant messenger app, enabling registered members to post, share, like, or reply to short messages. This platform, founded by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass Biz Stone, and Evan Williams in 2006, has more than four hundred thirty-six million global users. The search bar can be used to look up people's names or topics, and the platform has created a symbol to show verified accounts to reduce fake profiles. Unlike LinkedIn or Facebook, users do not have to wait for approval before following others on *X*. The post can be searched but it is possible to add hashtags, making the post searchable under that keyword. *X* Deck allows users to manage multiple accounts and schedule future tweets, among other functions. On *X*, this includes responding, commenting, liking, and sending links and messages via direct messaging, which promotes interaction

between people here. Anyone can send private messages; hence, followership is unnecessary before one starts a conversation with another person on this site (Hetler, "What is Twitter", n.p.).

Studies on the subject have begun in the field of literature and various studies have been produced. One of these was conducted by Al-Sharaqi and Abbasi. In their study, Al-Sharaqi and Abbasi mention that the advent of *X* fiction has wholly changed how authors produce and share stories, as it allows readers to be actively involved in the development process of their works (16-7). Al-Sharaqi and Abbasi argue that the task of writing the shortest story, which is said to begin with Ernest Hemingway's "[f]or Sale: baby shoes, never worn"[1], has evolved, and now *X* fiction is a treasure for any writer (16). This interactive art performance on literature lets writers play around with structure and present it to the readers directly for them to retweet or comment. Readers are kept in suspense by the unpredictability of *X*, which has made them wait for tweet installments. Nevertheless, *X* fiction is complicated beneath its innocent facade, as some tales seem simple but contain mythologies in their small words. As an example, some words, sentences, or even *X* hashtags can have deeper, more universal cultural or mythological meanings. For example, a tweet about a "white whale" can immediately bring to mind Moby Dick songs, implying passion or fate without saying so directly. Or, saying something as simple as "the storm is coming" can have apocalyptic or existential meanings, based on the situation.

Good *X* stories are like impressionistic paintings where you get one critical moment and then carry home something memorable. To make everything fit into 140 characters and achieve an arc of a successful story, much of the content must be left out because the reader is expected to fill in those spaces. Any *X* story should not deviate from the topic, using brevity in artistry so that it does not become longwinded, thereby losing focus or moving away into other areas unconnected with its main plot. Though a few critics such as David Biespiel and James Wood argue in their interviews that technology—in this context *X* fiction—may be responsible for the deterioration of literature in the 21st century, this genre resuscitates the literary presence of today (n.p.). Traditional definitions do not consider *X* fiction a complete piece because all five essential elements of a narrative – setting, character(s), plot, conflict, and resolution – cannot be contained in such limited space. Accordingly, scene-setting or preamble is irrelevant to flash fiction since it turns into non-narratives without plots due to the character limit set at 280 characters. This popularity stems from tweets being brief enough to "resonate with the one byte and go culture of the modern age" and offering an easy alternative to polish an edited fifteen-page story, which many writers would prefer (Sharaqi and Abbasi 17). *X* is too immediate for many users to ignore, and some are pushed by the notion that what they write there could be developed into larger, more ambitious works than the printed word allows. Technology has changed how people write and distribute their work, and *X* fiction has different goals. It can help market well-known authors or contribute to a writer's success who is not recognized by launching them into the limelight using the *X* platform. Writers who publish individually mark their stories with appropriate hashtags. For this reason, there has been an increase in the diversity of readership and interactive storytelling through *X*, resulting in a boom in *X* fiction. The conventional standards of storytelling have now made way for X fiction, where a masterpiece may consist of 45 words written in 15 minutes and then sent via hashtag on *X* (Al-Sharaqi and Abbasi 17).

Statistics show that people in the UK use social media for an average of one hour and fourty-nine minutes daily on all their devices (Guttmann n.p.). The rise of new technologies and social media is often blamed for young people losing interest in reading for fun instead of necessity (Guo 375). According to a recent report from Arts Council England, sales of literary fiction have dropped sharply in the last fifteen years (2). The report reveals that the rise of smartphones is to blame for this phenomena. The report is also pessimistic, indicating that "literary fiction is often 'difficult' and expensive: it isn't free and it requires more concentration than Facebook or Candy Crush" (21). Traditional writers who write long, detailed books might think that the rise of very short forms of storytelling like "*X* fiction" (most likely *X* fiction or microfiction) makes their work less valuable. Building worlds, developing characters, and putting complex plots together takes a lot of work when writing long-form fiction. As short stories become more popular, they may seem to "cheat" these rules by appealing to people with shorter attention spans. People who like long, detailed stories might think that the move toward shorter, snappier stories gives up depth for speed. As unfair as it might seem, current trends should not keep these readers from having the

[1] In his "The Short Story Just Got Shorter: Hemingway, Narrative, and the Six-Word Urban Legend", Frederick A. Wright explains in detail how Hemingway's "six-word text" has turned into a popular myth within the short story genre (327).

rich literary experiences they value. Some might think that the change is not fair to the traditional literary standards, which values complexity and thematic depth. Some critics might say that microfiction makes these long-held ideals less important.

Starting as early as 2009, authors such as Neil Gaiman began using *X* to write short stories that could fit in a single 140-character (now 280-character) tweet (Flood n.p.). Like flash fiction, a short story of up to 100 words, *X* fiction tests how well a writer can fit a whole story or feeling into a word count that seems impossible. In the same way that a short tweet can sum up a person's day, mood, or an important event, *X* fiction tells a whole made-up story. In the past few years, between 2012 and 2015, *The Guardian* has put together several short-story collections and invited many writers to participate. Of course, you do not have to be a famous author to join the challenge of *X* fiction. For example, an *X* author called Nanoism[2] posts weekly stories within the 140-character limit, even though *X* changed this to 280 characters. If you want to write your own *X* stories, you can send them to Nanoism along with a short bio of yourself as an author. You can send it in if the style, theme, or subject does not exceed the limit. As it is apparent, *X* writers did not develop the idea of tiny stories. People continue to experiment with six-word novels and one-liners, a form of storytelling that includes both timeless classics and modern adaptations through platforms like Twitter. The aforementioned famous six-word story, "[f]or sale: baby shoes, never worn" attributed to Hemingway, remains an iconic example (Fershleiser and Smith vi). Lea refers to Gaiman as one of the prominent authors who frequently uses *X* even though Gaiman criticizes himself for being too dependent on social media and announced that he was going to take a six-month break from his online community of fans and friends (n.p.). Neil Gaiman shared an exciting tweet on his *X* account (@neilhimself) with his 1.2 million followers: "Sam was brushing her hair when the girl in the mirror put down the hairbrush, smiled and said, '[w]e don't love you anymore" (in Flood n.p.). Extreme care must go into writing a story that is so short but still has such an effect. There should not be much conversation or too many details about treetops and eye colors. Each word is essential to the story's overall structure, and characters cannot be spared extra adjectives. One of the most beneficial applications of *X* is to promote long-form nonfiction by disseminating a summary that links to the full text (Frere-Jones n.p.).

X fiction is a remarkable improvement in language learning that deals with original self-contained stories *X* users publish. According to Carla Raguseo, "[t]he 140-character space limitation has" led to "two approaches": Crafting stories exactly 140 characters long or using the "constraint" creatively to inspire storytelling ("Twitter Fiction"). *X* stories do not have titles, hence emphasizing their fragmentary presentation. They appear in reverse chronological order on the author's profile, thereby making the length driven by the creative process. This method has practical implications for composing free-form poetry and haikus. Current technologies such as *X* exploit "weightless materialization" and "viral" communication of novel literary forms where readers' voices mingle with writers' voices amidst participatory-surfed digital literary circuits (Raguseo, "Twitter Fiction"). User-generated content has been made possible through Web2 architecture, which permits people to share content online as they adopt different social, cultural, or literary forms. *X* fiction is not part of a coherent scholarly literary movement; instead, it develops randomly from individual and collective experiments on the internet. In terms of genres, for instance, it can be considered diverse, encompassing different forms from "short stories and thrillers to haiku-style poems", among others such as the aforementioned example. Moreover, this phenomenon seems to have extended "beyond its original web application to other electronic publications", such as X and electronic books, which are some examples of those publications (Raguseo, "Twitter Fiction"). *X* fiction, previously known as "Twitter fiction", includes 280-character stories, as well as things like fan fiction, a retelling of the classics and legends, *X* novels, and collaborative works (Rosen and Ihara n.p.). James Mark Miller, Sean Hill, and Arjun Basu, for instance, have all written 280-character stories, while some X accounts are developed for film characters or TV series a writer might have seen. The latter can be retold through character tweeting and interacting or in tweet form, which is often modern language using slang. An *X* novel can go on for hundreds of tweets to tell a story over several days. Often, the author of these types of novels is unknown to those reading them, thus lending them more credibility. This name may often be an alias or a figure from within the plot. "Small Places" by Nick Belardes and

[2] "*Nanoism* (edited by Ben White / @benwhitemd) is/was an online venue for Twitter-fiction" which "ran from 2009-2013" (White n.p.).

The Twitstery Trilogy series by Robert K. Blechman are vivid examples of *X* novels which are also called Xature or Twitterature (Rizer n.p.).

David Mitchell, the author of the acclaimed novel *Cloud Atlas* (2004), is using *X* to tell a new story titled "The Right Sort". The 140-character short story about a boy taking his mother's Valium pills is released as several tweets over seven days. Mitchell created a new account on *X* (@david_mitchell) to tell the story, which he describes as "a diabolical treble-strapped textual straitjacket" (Flood n.p.). A boy who likes Valium because it allows him to compress the world into bite-sized staccato pulses narrates this story in the present tense. That way, according to Mitchell in his interview with Jill Krasny, one can tell if its use by him was necessary or not (n.p.). The next novel by David Mitchell is set in 1984 and belongs to the same universe as *The Bone Clocks*. Writing fiction for *X* is described as a "diabolical treble-strapped textual straitjacket" because of its limitations such as 140 characters and "visually sequential" tweets altering how the text is read (Flood n.p.). Mitchell argues that narrative tweets have an inherent balance and "propellent", being self-contained entities that could spin plates of "character development", "mood", "plot", or "idea" around them (in Flood n.p.). Every morning at seven and evening at five, for one week, twenty posts containing parts of this book are revealed (Flood n.p.). "The Right Sort" is about Nathan, a young British teen who goes to a party at the strange townhouse of Lady Briggs with his mother. Nathan takes one of his mother's Valium to calm down. At first, the story is about a teenager's angst as he thinks about being a stranger and how he and his mother feel out of place at the house of an aristocrat. However, things get scary and supernatural when time speeds up, and fears come true. Mitchell has always combined genre fiction with literary fiction to create new methods of writing. In this case, Mitchell uses the rules of a horror story. When you read, you do not feel disconnected and split up; instead, you feel connected in a way that surprises you, and you get lost in the story and the scroll. Reading tweets one after the other does not change the effect much, even though *X* is always live and changing. When reading any digital text, zooming in, making the text bigger, and scrolling all the time make the experience lively and personal, putting the screen close to your face and your eyes close to the words. Mitchell's story is like looking out of a small window on a fast-moving train through a countryside with many tunnels and dark and light bands (Mitchell, "The Right Sort" n.p.). *X* can be viewed as a handy tool for fiction writers, but it must be used in the work. *X* can be used for different stories, as shown in "Black Box" by Jennifer Egan and *Collaborative Stories* by Neil Gaiman (Sardar 33). Another author, Teju Cole, used retweets to create a short story entitled "Hafiz" which was composed of unrelated tweets posted by various different X users at various times (Rizer n.p.). Cole managed to retweet these posts "in a specific order" that "created a narrative" (Rizer n.p.). Narrative can manifest through actions on social media platforms, such as sharing posts to amplify a message, liking content to show approval, blocking users to create boundaries, or unfollowing to signify disengagement or disinterest. Characters can use different *X* names or subtly live in a single account. Stories of lost love, loneliness, and sadness can be found in the archive of work written for the *X* Fiction Festival (Crouch n.p.). These stories are examples of this type of writing. It is possible that *X* is not the best place for deep fiction, but another kind of fiction uses *X*'s everyday features and real-time moves. This kind of fantasy is made up on the spot and it is full of strange side stories, "breaking news", "animal videos", and "sad", "unfaved tweets" (Crouch n.p.). It has the first true-story narrator who writes in a way that seems like an honest "nonfiction opinion" at the time (Crouch n.p.). "One day at a time", someone might be "tweeting", "retweeting", and "subtweeting" the "Great American Novel" (Crouch n.p.).

David Mitchell's *Slade House* opens with a gripping and mysterious scene: A sign reading "SLADE ALLEY" on the wall of a building that forms part of the alley's narrow entrance. This striking opening immediately sets a tone of suspense and intrigue, combining the eerie name with the old-fashioned aesthetic of the sign. The alley's placement between two houses creates a sense of confinement, hinting at hidden secrets or unusual occurrences waiting to be uncovered within this mysterious location (*Slade House* n.p.). The dialogue between the narrator and his mother introduces a layered family dynamic. When the narrator remarks, "I thought lying was wrong", his mother's response, "It's called creating the right impression," reflects a pragmatic, if morally ambiguous, perspective on social interactions (*Slade House* n.p.). This interplay highlights the tension between innocence and experience, suggesting that the mother is attempting to teach her son how to navigate the complexities of social niceties. The exchange subtly establishes themes of truth and perception that recur throughout the story. As they proceed, the narrator's mother adds a comment about the family's financial difficulties, referencing the narrator's absent father and his unpaid financial obligations. This remark provides

insight into their economic struggles and hints at familial tensions, which contribute to the deeper characterization of the family and the challenges they face. The mention of a passing lorry situates the story within an urban setting, grounding the narrative in a recognizable reality for readers (*Slade House* n.p.). The description of Westwood Road reinforces the sense of an ordinary middle-class neighborhood, with its red-brick houses and mundane details like dustbins and small driveways. This mundane setting starkly contrasts with the mysterious atmosphere surrounding Slade Alley. The juxtaposition of the familiar and the uncanny underscores the narrative's tension, foreshadowing the unsettling events that will unfold.

Further interactions and observations deepen the mystery and psychological tension. When the narrator overhears crude remarks from a peer, the moment captures a sense of discomfort and social unease, reflecting the awkward dynamics of adolescence. As the story progresses, other characters, like Jonah, introduce further layers of complexity. Jonah's pointed question about recurring nightmares, coupled with his observation of the narrator's "hunted look", not only hints at deeper psychological themes but also suggests that Jonah possesses an unsettling level of insight into the narrator's inner world. This dynamic contributes to the growing sense of unease, reinforced by evocative descriptions such as the swaying foxgloves that seem to move without any visible cause.

The narrator's physical scars become another focal point, symbolizing past trauma that they are reluctant to share. This reluctance is evident when the narrator instinctively conceals their scars upon Jonah's inquiry. The scars represent both a literal and metaphorical burden, hinting at events that have shaped the narrator's identity and highlighting the theme of vulnerability. To situate Mitchell's work within the broader context of contemporary literature, it is helpful to explore the evolution of storytelling in digital spaces and its influence on traditional narrative forms. Purcell discusses the integration of new media and traditional literature in what he terms "Diamedia Literary Practice" which illustrates how digital platforms influence narrative techniques and reader engagement (119). Similarly, Raguseo explores microfiction's rise in social media, offering insights into the structural and thematic innovations that align with Mitchell's use of concise, vivid imagery and layered character interactions ("Twitter Fiction"). These perspectives enhance our understanding of *Slade House* as both a work of literary fiction and a reflection of contemporary narrative trends.

The narrative tension reaches a peak when the narrator expresses paranoia about Jonah's potential actions, imagining scenarios where Jonah is lying in wait to ambush him. This moment captures the narrator's growing sense of isolation and unease. The relief the narrator feels when their fears remain undiscovered reflects a complex mix of fear, shame, and the need for privacy, emphasizing the psychological weight of their experiences: "Could Jonah have seen? I hope not. Probably not. Probably…" (Mitchell 2015). However, now they start questioning whether Jonah saw what happened during this period. These new doubts only increase his fearfulness, as he no longer trusts his environment.

These tweets show us just how traumatised someone can be psychologically after experiencing hallucinations. It also reveals some parts of oneself that we would rather keep hidden from others, including ourselves, leaving room for self-analysis or discovery. The way David Mitchell tells it causes comedy mixed with great images of conscience while keeping us engaged until the end. He talks about reality versus imagination very well so that readers are left curious about whether he is mad or not yet worried too much because everything seems like truth either way until they question their minds again.

The novel's story on *X* is unique because it can only be 140 characters long (now 280 characters). Mitchell has become skilled at creating short but powerful tweets to overcome this obstacle. Often, these tweets suggest the existence of other stories that are left to the imagination of readers. Mitchell breaks things down into fragments in his works, presenting them as snippets or moments instead of following a linear narrative structure. Nevertheless, this method resembles his strategy in novels like *Cloud Atlas* and *Ghostwritten*, where various narratives unfold through different periods and perspectives. Also similar to these longer pieces by David Mitchell, many subjects are touched upon in his *X* fiction, such as identity, memory perception, or even how we are all interconnected in this life. What makes Mitchell's use of *X* for storytelling an exciting approach is its willingness to experiment with form and structure. It blends traditional narrative techniques with those from the digital age by utilizing social media's instant nature and universality, which enables it to reach out to a broader fan base than ever before while also engaging them in a different manner. Still, though brief in size, each tweet packs much detail about people's personalities or places where events occur, among others, thus painting colorful pictures within limited spaces. The interactive capacity offered by platforms such as *X* allows authors like David Mitchell to interact directly with

their audience and create communities around their works through replies, retweets, and likes. Real-time conversations fostered by this kind of engagement deepen reader connection beyond what is possible under conventional publishing formats. Another significance of Mitchell's *X* fiction lies in its nature, which is part of a broader trend towards exploring new literary territories using digital devices. It challenges established ideas concerning how stories should be told or shared- revealing possibilities for adaptation within our current stage of technological development where everything seems possible except sticking rigidly into some old-school notions about what constitutes proper storytelling procedure.

Another prominent *X* fiction writer is Jay Bushman, who released his short story "The Good Captain", based on *Benito Cereno* by Herman Melville. Although some of Melville's readers believe that *Benito Cereno* can be considered "one of his greatest works", others believe it is exaggerated (Phillips 188). Some critics called it a slavery uprising (Van Wyck 423-5). Works such as Nicholas Belardes's "Small Places" and Jay Bushman's "The Good Captain" are considered to be the first X novels to be tweeted (Ceyhan Akça 71). The novella begins with a story that may appear as a straightforward account of American heroism but is tragic and morally intricate. Both readers during Melville's time and contemporary audiences of its movie adaptation, might have felt like both stories are only adventurous tales that applaud the triumph and goodness of the American power; however, this is directed towards people who watch or read attentively by asking them to think critically on whether justice is served by American power (Danoff 50-1).

Herman Melville's novella examines the complexity of good and evil within individuals and how these traits intertwine when determining moral character (Danoff 51). The story resonates deeply with Americans because it continues to provoke discussion and analysis among critics, underscoring its lasting relevance. While Babo ultimately faces execution for his actions, the successful mutiny he orchestrates brings attention to the horrors of slavery as an institution. At the same time, the narrative challenges us to consider Captain Delano's perspective—a seemingly benevolent Northern Yankee whose "naïveté" and complicity reveal a darker, willfully ignorant side (Danoff 51). In contrast, Captain Benito Cereno, portrayed as frail and unwell, commands a slave ship carrying valuable human cargo. Melville's use of Delano's perspective implicates readers in accepting slavery as a normalized reality. We may sympathize with Cereno because of his captivity, but this sympathy does not absolve him of his moral failings. The novella ultimately explores how ignorance can render individuals complicit in evil. It demonstrates that while ignorance itself is not an endorsement of wrongdoing, it can lead to dangerous consequences when confronting the evils of slavery. Delano's inability to fully comprehend the mutiny's significance reflects this theme. His attempt to ransom or negotiate with Cereno underscores his misunderstanding of the deeper moral implications of the events. This misstep, rather than offering clarity, highlights his failure to grasp the structural evil of slavery, making his account a crucial yet flawed lens through which the story's facts unfold.

Benito Cereno brings to light critical intellectual and social realities that Delano's retelling cannot fully reveal, as he is inherently part of the structures and biases they expose. Melville alters certain details, such as the historical name of the ship *San Dominick* and the precise date of the events, to provide deeper narrative context and heighten the thematic significance of the story. These changes, along with Melville's literary devices, illuminate the social failures and challenges stemming from the varied American perspectives of the time. Melville's skepticism about prevailing societal attitudes was well-founded, and *Benito Cereno* reflects this by instilling a similar skepticism in its readers. In this story, Delano symbolizes a broader American mindset—one shaped by racial blindness and moral complacency. Insightful readers who grasp this connection can see how Melville critiques and exposes these societal flaws. This achievement demonstrates Melville's success in confronting the racial and intellectual prejudices of nineteenth century America through *Benito Cereno* (Kaiser 15).

X "does not necessarily" signal "the end for the novel in its print-published form – at least not yet and certainly not on its own" (Cole in Purcell 36). Because of this, neither *X* nor the story has reached the end of their development and their dialogue continues to evolve. Novelists, drawn to unfinished processes, will persist in seeking opportunities, addressing challenges, and navigating the dynamic tension between X and the novel. This interplay is evident in the works of authors such as Cole, Egan, Mitchell, and Lin, who experiment with these forms in their writing. Purcell's concept of "Diamedia Literary Practice" offers a framework for understanding this evolving relationship between traditional literature and emerging digital platforms like *X*. It refers to a practice

that blends multiple media, such as print and digital, to explore new modes of storytelling and interaction. This approach examines how the boundaries of literature shift when narratives are shaped by social media's brevity, immediacy, and connectivity. As Purcell argues, "Diamedia Literary Practice" provides a meaningful lens for studying literature and media studies today and into the future, as it captures the ways in which these forms influence and reshape one another (37).

Jay Bushman explains that since he started using *X* in 2007, social media has been a significant part of his storytelling approach ("The Lizzie Bennet Diaries" n.p.). Bushman's "The Good Captain" is considered to be among the first examples written on *X* (Belardes n.p.). Bushman quickly realizes that "social tools felt more effective when used to express strong character voices", particularly in "dramatic" stories rather than traditionally written "prose fiction" ("The Lizzie Bennet Diaries" n.p.). He acknowledges the importance of distancing from social media as extensively as possible before telling stories and notes that issues with replayability make it increasingly challenging to reach an audience, and platforms are evolving in less supportive ways of such creative projects (n.p.). He expresses his frustration that *X*, his initial favorite social media platform, has become nearly unusable since it began focusing on celebrity broadcasting (n.p.). He also laments difficulties in discovering new projects and videos on *YouTube*, attributing this to the platform's prioritization of top artists (n.p.). He observes a shift in social media, noting that individuals are increasingly valued over content, which heightens the pressure to post regularly in order to "build a brand" continually (n.p.). He emphasizes his preference for crafting complete stories rather than constantly generating material or focusing on brand-building—an approach that is in conflict with the current structure and demands of social media platforms (n.p.)

> Our mining on Dioretsa has been productive, so I tell her to load some of our ice in case they need it.[3]
> Waverly doesn't like the idea. I tell her she can come with, to make sure there are no bogeymen on board. She details five more to join us.[4]
> I order Waverly to prep a rovership. We'll go over and see what's happening. Maybe we can help pilot her to a safe orbit.[5]
> This is clearly a ship in trouble.[6]
> As if reading my mind, the ship changes its course. But now it's going to overshoot Dioretsa completely.[7]

Readers are drawn into a futuristic setting in the opening lines where operations have been happening in the mines on the planet Dioretsa. When productive mining is mentioned, it builds up a background of industry and economic considerations in space. In their interactions, Waverly and the narrator (probably the protagonist) show each other facets of their characters right from the beginning. Her mention of "bogeymen" and lackadaisicalness towards loading ice adds color to her character and hints at future confrontations or fears. From routine mining operations, it quickly proceeds to an abrupt crisis on another ship. Deciding to prepare a rovership and look into what was happening with the troubled vessel creates an atmosphere of action and suspense. The narrator depicts urgency and responsibility, signaling that he/she is morally or ethically motivated. The ship's change of course, which might take the ship beyond Dioretsa, signifies ambiguity and imminent danger. This raises questions about what was wrong with the ship and who would be affected, among others. The nature of its problem may be inferred, but nothing is narrated for now. Bushman's style in this introduction is brief but effective in establishing the setting, introducing characters, and early conflict. The narrative momentum is enhanced through direct commands and statements that give rise to urgency and authority. It deftly combines sci-fi elements with the interplay between people facing a disaster that foretells possible themes for exploration afterward:

> -That the generous Captain Lockham remained on the ship all day, until he left after having guided them into safe orbit;

[3] Each line here refers to a different tweet consecutively posted by Bushman to create his story on *X*. The links are provided for each one in footnotes. https://x.com/goodcaptain/status/689039385275289600.
[4] https://x.com/goodcaptain/status/689038125637722112.
[5] https://x.com/goodcaptain/status/689036866025336832.
[6] https://x.com/goodcaptain/status/689035606521999362.
[7] https://x.com/goodcaptain/status/689034347014418432.

> -[Further recounting of the fictitious story Deponent gave to Captain Lockham, as well as Captain Lockham's offers of assistance;]
> -That of those who survived, may more perished from the radiation poisoning;
> -That coming through the Kuiper Belt they sustained heavy damage, killing many of the crew, passengers and artificials[8]

The story clearly highlights the events about Captain Lockham and the troubled ship. This further highlights the character as caring and does not abandon his vessel until it reaches a safe orbit. This adds another dimension to his personality, showing his commitment to helping others in trouble. The fictional story of the Deponent's account of the captain intrigues and complicates the text. It insinuates that there may be hidden layers within these events, perhaps even motives or other intentions that could affect the direction of such an occurrence. Captain Lockham's offers further play into themes such as compassion and rescue during emergencies. In addition, the reference to radiation poisoning, together with the heavy damage suffered upon passing through the Kuiper Belt, underlines the high levels of danger experienced by the characters, thus stressing their risk-taking capacities. On top of all, information about radiation poisoning, together with many deaths after covering distances across the Kuiper Belt, heightens anxiety levels among readers. These parts increase tension and risk, creating more conflict between characters to move forward in the storyline and involve the audience deeper into the process. Using X's format by Bushman facilitates efficient narration while exercising brevity in storytelling. Every tweet is brief enough for the reader to piece together what is happening occasionally while maintaining immediacy within this unfolding narrative. This quote demonstrates competent storytelling techniques such as character development, plot progression, and thematic exploration. It engages readers through its mix of science fiction elements, interpersonal dynamics, and moral dilemmas that promise more depth as the book progresses.

> Dziga: "In one moment, I lost all my officers, most of the crew and passengers. About half the artificials were destroyed.[9]
> Dziga: "Coming through the Kuiper Belt, we collided with a comet. It caused a reactor to explode and the hull to be breached.[10]
> Dziga: "Some were his personal property, but most were to be delivered to the in-system markets.[11]
> Dziga: "One of these passengers, my good friend Vassily Antonovich Kaminov, had a cargo of about 300 artificials.[12]

The last part of the story reveals how big the disaster experienced by Dziga and their ship was—including but not limited to a comet that hit them, leading to a reactor explosion and killing all officers, crew members, passengers, and even artificials, which suggests devastation and calamity. This final revelation shows the high stakes in the narrative and how emotional it could be. Dziga's close friend, Vassily Antonovich Kaminov, has also been identified. The significance of the 300 artificials that Kaminov carries signals the magnitude of what he was involved in and the long-term effects on personal lives.

Bushman's tweets preserve an ending for every significant event in the story, summarizing the catastrophic event and its aftermath. This provides clear evidence that readers are given ample time to reflect on what happens after the events conclude, as well as on those involved, particularly Dziga and their colleagues. Themes of survival, loss, and fortitude are central to the story. The collision of a comet triggering a reactor detonation functions metaphorically to illustrate the sudden difficulties one must endure with resilience. Additionally, the use of artificial cargo emphasizes the intersection of technology, morality, and the human cost (or instrumental cost) associated with space expeditions.

X is shown here through concluding passages as though it were closing out the main parts of the stories with series or tweets summarizing terrible situations followed by an aftermath description involving chaotic activities that occur later after everything has come down. This denouement enables one to contemplate the action

[8] https://x.com/goodcaptain/status/688850424477171713.
[9] https://x.com/goodcaptain/status/687950549673730048.
[10] https://x.com/goodcaptain/status/687949290010992640.
[11] https://x.com/goodcaptain/status/687948030172094465.
[12] https://x.com/goodcaptain/status/687946770492559360.

outcomes and emotional journeying that characters undergo while dealing with people like Dziga and other crew members who took part in it all. Throughout his story, Bushman investigates survival struggles, including death tolls, recovery exercises, etc. Furthermore, the life lesson of when faced with unanticipated challenges at times, one has to become more resilient for life to go on is symbolized by the explosion of a comet with its attending reactor. The list underscores technology, ethics, and the human (or artificial) cost of space flight and exploration by including artificials as cargo. He uses *X* as an effective medium for delivering a concise yet poignant science fiction narrative. While each tweet contributes to fragmented storytelling, this happens in one section but is still cohesive, thereby involving suspenseful revelations from characters' lives, which are needed for reader engagement. The short story, using *X* accounts towards the end, demonstrates that writing can be turned into tweets that say a lot with a few words. It deals with disaster, personal loss, and dilemmas that could quickly occur when exploring other planets in the future.

X fiction is a unique type of writing that combines traditional stories with social media. This takes advantage of *X*'s new 280-character limit to write powerful fictions that engage with its readers. It opposes the rules and demands intelligent, artistic word choices. *X* fiction writers in societies full of too much information often use symbols, puns, or texts from other works to display intricate notions. One big reason why *X* fiction is popular is that it can be found easily on social media sites. It allows different voices to shape the history of modern writing. *X* fiction is interactive; as such, people can respond immediately to community discussions about various stories shared online, keeping people interested. Writers now write stories differently due to this type of fiction, which also makes readers more involved in all aspects of the text. A good *X* story is like an impressionist painting; it is aptly brief so as not to become verbose or lose its grip on the central theme. Twitter fiction is becoming increasingly popular due to its brevity, which aligns with today's fast-paced, "bite-sized" culture. It offers a quick and accessible way for individuals to engage with storytelling without committing to lengthy narratives. By convention, however, *X* fiction is often seen as incomplete because its limited format makes it difficult to include all five essential elements of a traditional story. Nevertheless, the rise of *X* fiction has diversified literature, fostering more interactive and experimental storytelling.

Over the past fifteen years, literary fiction sales have fallen along with leisure reading due to new tools and social media (Milliot n.p.). Even still, many of readers read for pleasure at least once a week, demonstrating the necessity for literature to evolve and stay relevant. *X* fiction has challenged authors to tell intriguing stories or to transmit significant concepts in extreme brevity since 2009, making it a fascinating challenge and an inventive addition to modern writing. Many genres of literature have emerged from this format, making site reading and storytelling more diverse and engaging. As new gadgets and social media have made people read less for pleasure, *X* fiction may help solve this problem. Challenging authors to simplify complicated concepts, *X* fiction stimulates experimentation and innovation, making literature more accessible and entertaining for all.

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