

La³

“What is the name of that blasted planet?”

K’eth smiled; Jeus was in one off his moods. The older he got the more soured his disposition became.

The two were waiting outside the council chamber of the Hansar, the de-facto rulers of the Galaxy, for one of their regular meetings to discuss matters of importance. K’eth was one of the new breed, his ideas were popular among the young but viewed with suspicion by members of the old guard, who still carried a lot of sway in the council.

Privately, K’eth conceded that the Hansar were in crisis, the council’s power to control was fading on its own planet, fortunately, the more violent of its vassals had not noticed this yet. If they did, problems could ensue for the entire Galaxy.

The Hansar were not a conquering, oppressive race. They much preferred to leave the running of things to the individual civilisations that made up the bulk of the inhabitants of this grouping of stars, using their technological superiority to maintain order with unspoken threats.

“Which planet would that be, great teacher?” he politely inquired, although he knew full well the one which Jeus referred to.

“The one that blasts the indiscriminate radio waves at us. It was bad enough when they started but at least it was weak and we could ignore it. Just lately it’s become more than a background buzz, everyone on the rock seems to have a device that emits radio waves and they all bombard our senses. And now they have started throwing things out, we caught another last week, called Voyager or something, if memory serves me. What it must be like living down there these days does not bear consideration.”

K’eth smiled, all societies advanced in their own way, he thought, and the job of the Hansar was merely to guide and, in the fullness of time to assimilate them.

Cran, another senior and one who’s best days were also behind him, joined the pair, “forgive me, I heard Jeus and cannot help but agree, the noise from this place assaults my peace at every turn, and others have mentioned it to me, what should we do, are they ready for us to reveal ourselves?”

K’eth sighed, the old question, when to reveal. As one of the oldest, indeed there were those who reckoned the Hansar were the oldest civilisation in this galaxy, the council had made itself responsible for every developing species. One by one the seeds that had been sown by the ancients of legend across the vastness of space had come to fruition. Some had not made it, natural disasters, accidents and sheer bloody-mindedness had solved the problems of many first contacts.

The Hansar held the advanced entities in a loose federation; their rule was strict but benign and kept all at peace and acting for the common good. It was one of the great achievements, a peaceful Galaxy was a wonder with all the competing egos, but then the ancients had been clever in their design and had thought of most eventualities.

There were those who viewed the Hansar as the rightful heirs of the ancients, yet others who saw them as interlopers, merely the fortunate who had been first.

Whatever the rights and wrongs, the Hansar were scrupulous in their dealings with all the newly aware civilisations and took their assumed role seriously. Being comparatively long-lived and reluctant to die helped, as did the medical advances of their scientists, although recently it had been noted that the longest lived were developing problems of memory and irrational behaviour, Jeus himself, though he would not admit it, was prone to lapses of memory and irrational thoughts.

K'eth knew, as did all Hansar that according to legend, it was the job of the Hansar to monitor the Galaxy. They kept their senses tuned and their fleet's active, searching for developing cultures, once they had found one that was past the animal stage and was starting to think and show potential they acted in the same way.

First, a team of instructors would descend, to gently point the way in agriculture, building and astronomy, all the tenets of civilisation in fact.

Then they waited to see what happened. In the best case, the ideas would be acted on; in the worst the emissaries would be killed. If they survived, the emissaries promised that they would return.

From that point, the watch became more intense, until the point when they were judged ready to meet their neighbours. Then the Hansar would return and guide them into the ranks of the enlightened.

The council met to discuss matters as required, plan strategies and agree on timetables.

Tucked away in the long agenda was a decision on the future progress of the planet the inhabitants called Earth.

Jeus spoke, as befitted his status as a senior. Earth had been one of his projects; when he himself had been a young, rebellious councillor. He had been one of those who had helped plant the seeds of technology on the place; as far as he remembered, when he could remember anything, it had been a particularly barbaric planet.

He reported on conditions, a dry list of milestones reached, atomic power, advances in medicine and social matters, his delivery made the subject boring and there were sighs from the newer councillors.

Finally, he reached his conclusions, "I propose that we continue to do what we have always done; we leave subtle clues and see if they can reason it out. But these are stupid beings; they dismiss any idea of intelligent life anywhere but on their own world. They think themselves as the lords of creation."

There was polite laughter at that, Jeus favourite phrase was Lord of Creation, particularly when used in self-description.

"And is it not true," broke in another, "that they still believe that, in all the vastness of space, they are the only inhabitants. They use some kind of thing they call logic to defend their position."

That comment nearly raised the roof, “logic! if they think that logic dictates they are alone in the universe they are truly still undeveloped,” shouted Cran from his seat at the back.

“They say that belief is logical, they reason it thus, ‘because we have not found evidence, then none exists,’” retorted Jeus.

“Yet they still seek life beyond their planet, despite that belief?” someone shouted, “what dichotomy!”

“That is a strange way of using logic,” an old Hansar called Marij added, “I suppose they also assume that life must resemble them, walk upright, breath oxygen, require water and similar.”

More laughter, “surely that tells us all we need to know,” said Jeus, “until they can accept that they are not unique and that only things that resemble them or require what they do can exist then they should be left isolated.”

“I agree,” said K’eth, “but there is a problem.”

The noise in the chamber came to an abrupt halt at the words. All ears turned, nobody liked a problem.

“Elaborate,” requested the chair.

“It appears that some of our younger folk have started playing games with the inhabitants of this Earth; they obviously have far too much time and money.”

“What sort of games?” asked the chair, for they had heard the mutterings.

“They antagonise these bipeds,” explained K’eth, “they taunt and kidnap them, frighten them with displays of aerobatics and draw patterns in their crops. I don’t know if it is boredom or a lack of parental control. The ones I have spoken to say that they do it to hasten the conclusion that they are not alone.”

“And does that make any difference?” asked Cons, a female, one of the highest placed, “we all know this sort of uncontrolled action is frowned upon, do we have names?”

“None of note madam, apart from a few who I have admonished, the ringleaders hide from us behind a web of silence and influential parents. We should be pleased that their actions so far have had little effect, the leaders on this Earth still squabble among themselves; the few who see our clues and meet our youngsters are ridiculed and called mad.”

“So overall, there is no evidence that these beings are ready for the shock of our finding them, ready to take their place with the other great civilisations?” pressed Cons.

“None at all, when they think of a first contact, they still see it as a probable conquest of some sort, apparently they consider that their planet, alone in the entire Galaxy, would possess the only source of something that what they call ‘aliens’ might need.”

Again there was laughter at the deluded Earthlings. The chair called for silence.

“Don’t they see that if we can travel the Galaxy, we have no need for whatever exists on their rock?” asked a councilman called Trod. “Have any other species shown this ‘logic?’”

There was silence for a while as the councillors considered, after a period, the chair asked, “Well, can anyone think of a similar case?”

Again there was silence, stretching...

“It all comes from their arrogance,” said Jeus, “I remember it at the time; I thought then that the ancients might have put it there to test us, now it manifests at the time when our society is in crisis, it must have been planned.”

“Preposterous, how could the ancients have possibly planned this from so long ago?”

“So what should we do with this species?” asked the chair, indicating that the discussion had gone on long enough, “it seems clear that they desire contact but should we afford it to them? We need to show our feelings, for the record.”

“I say that we do not react to their idiotic behaviour, ignore them until they have grown a little more,” said Cons. “And tell those with nothing better to do than to stir up developing populations to employ their time in more useful pursuits.”

“What do you mean madam Cons?”

“Well, when my own young are talking nonsense, making a nuisance or ignoring the obvious, I say to them, ‘until you grow up, I’m not listening.’ Then I place my fingers in my ears and shout La La La.”