

**SEAQUEST  
ON  
THE PLANET OF THE APES**

**PETER KARSTEN**



## **SEAQUEST ON THE PLANET OF THE APES 2009**

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Picture of seaQuest DSV ship:

Retrieved from [www.minimodelmadness.com](http://www.minimodelmadness.com)

Picture of seaQuest Crew:

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Pictures of Virdon, Burke, Galen, Zaius & Urko:

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Drawing of the Orang-utan (Lawgiver) from production art of Planet of the Apes.

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Excerpt from 'The Holiness of Sleep' by Rudolf Steiner  
from "Verses and Meditations" 1993.

'Elegy' by Quasimodo from "Selected Poems" 1965

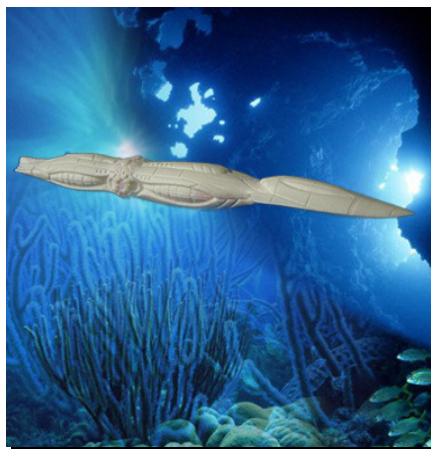
"The Sons of Horus" by P.S. Karbowski.

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# SEAQUEST ON THE PLANET OF THE APES

**“WHERE MAN ONCE STOOD SUPREME, APES NOW RULE THE WORLD”**



**I WOULD LIKE TO DEDICATE THIS STORY TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE**

Booth Coleman  
Roy Scheider  
Jonathan Brandis





## PRELOGUE

### UEO HEADQUARTERS HAWAII 2018

Admiral William Noyce sat at his desk contemplating the future of the UEO, the United Earth Oceans and seaQuest. Thirteen months ago the seaQuest under the command of Captain Marilyn Stark violated the then NORPAC (North Pacific) orders and converged on the Livingston Trench in a showdown with various undersea confederations and consortiums. Luckily Commander Ford, seaQuest's First Officer, averted the incident by relieving Stark<sup>1</sup> of her command.

'The Livingston Trench Incident' as it became known dissolved NORPAC and its military operations and the UN issued a new charter effectively giving birth to a new organization called the UEO. The seaQuest was put in dry dock and was extensively refitted with scientific equipment for research and exploration. But there was a problem, the seaQuest needed a new Captain to be the new face of the UEO and to ensure that the organisation's values were maintained if it was going to patrol, protect and research the world's oceans for the benefit of Mankind.

The solution? Nathan Hale Bridger.

And that came from the Secretary General himself in a secret meeting with Noyce.

"Will, I want you to get Captain Bridger back to command seaQuest".

"Sir, that's easier, said than done, I've known Nathan for over 35 years but even I might not be able to get him back into active service".

"It has to be done Will, the only way the UEO is going to work and be environmentally and politically sound, and to prove itself to other world governments and interested parties investing in the inner world of our oceans is to have someone they can trust and that we can use to keep the peace, it must be Captain Bridger".

"I'll do what I can sir".

"Do whatever it takes Will, anything, just get Bridger back on seaQuest".

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Noyce set his mind at work; Bridger was on his secluded island, and had been living there after his wife Carol had died, working with his pet dolphin by the name of Darwin; developing various communication devices and skills to teach Darwin to talk and to understand human speech.

Noyce finally came up with a plan, but it would require the personal touch to make it work.

It did, Bridger was back in the fold, devious really, and very cunning; Bridger of course didn't like it one little bit, but that didn't stop him from leaving. The seaQuest was his baby, it needed him, and he needed her more than he knew.

<sup>1</sup> See the episode 'To Be Or Not To Be'.



## PROLOGUE

### CALIFORNIA SANTA CRUZ 3086

The fugitives were resting by the side of the road with the view of the sea in the background after they had been walking for about a couple of hours; two days ago they almost had a run in with a gorilla patrol searching for them. Urko had given the now long standing orders that the fugitives must be found and captured, and taken back to Central City for trial and if Urko got his way, for interrogation and eventual execution. Secretly Urko gave orders that the fugitives were to be shot on sight; he believed that these so called astro-nauts were a danger to simian society and also a bad influence to the human populace at large. Galen on the other hand must be taken alive, for Urko didn't want Zaius' wrath when it came to killing apes and he didn't want Galen's blood on his hands, well not just yet anyway, still, let Zaius deal with Galen in his own way. Urko also put a bounty on the fugitive's heads to sweeten the pot and hopefully make his garrisons around the country look harder.

It was a nice sunny day as the trio sat on some rocks catching their breath and quenching their thirst enjoying the seaside view, when Galen asked, "Where do you think we are Pete?"

"Well, since we've been following the shoreline, I'd say we're near Santa Cruz. Would that be right Al?"

"Yeah, that'll be just about right, you can see over there", pointing his finger in the direction along the coast, "that might be Monterey Bay in the distance".

Both Burke and Galen turned their heads to have a look, it seemed so far away, but beautiful just the same, so picturesque.

"Is that where we're going?" Galen enquired.

"Yep, and then hopefully to Los Angeles".

"Al, tell me again why we're going to Los Angeles, I mean, what do we hope to find there anyway, besides a ruined city?"

"It's like this Pete, remember last year when we found that computer in Oakland?"<sup>1</sup>

"Sure, I'd wish we'd have more time to study it, before Urko and Zaius destroyed it, I hate to admit it, but it was a real gem of a find".

"Exactly, so I'm thinking if we go to Los Angeles, we may be able to find additional clues to the whereabouts of the other secret vaults. We might start with the Los Angeles Science Institute, where we found the first computer, then perhaps the State Library; and then look for museums, art galleries, anything that might give us any further leads".

"If any of them are still intact or standing Alan, I mean, Los Angeles was a big city, and if it is in ruins, which I don't doubt, considering Oakland, it's going to be difficult as it is locating any buildings we're looking for".

"Well, I think it's important, besides we might be able to find other things, like maps, or anything else that might be useful, or any information at all that may help us survive and keep one step ahead of Urko".

"To that I agree", added Galen, "Urko will not stop searching for us, to be honest I would like to one day stop running, perhaps find a secret hiding place and disappear", showing a slightly tired expression.

"You know, he's right Al, we can't run forever, someday we'll have to stop and find a place", Burke continued, trying to think of the trio's future.

"I hear you Pete, that's why I think it's important to keep moving and look for ways to avoid Urko, and perhaps along the way find a way back home to our time or make a home here, secure in the knowledge that we won't be hunted down and sleeping with one eye open".

"Will you be able to find any answers in this city of Los Angeles Alan? If the city is very big as Pete suggested, we could be searching for days-weeks even". Galen said a little concerned, contemplating the job ahead of them, searching very nook and cranny of the ruined city, but in one way Galen was looking forward to it. He'd already been to Oakland and to San Francisco—even if it were for a couple of days, but this Los Angeles was a major human city according to Peter and Alan. So there would be time—and lots of it to explore, especially with no gorillas around to hinder them, which was a plus in itself.

"I know Galen, and the city even if it is in ruins can offer us protection and many places to hide, making it difficult for any gorilla patrols that are out looking for us. It would take them just as long trying to find us, and I don't think the gorillas have the temperament to stay in one place too long searching for three fugitives if the task is too big for them, even if they had more apepower". Alan said, thinking about the clashes he and his friends had over the past year trying to outwit Urko's gorillas.

"If I know Urko, and I do, from the little experience I've had before you two came along", said Galen, "it wouldn't matter how big or small a place would be if Urko knew he could get his hands on us".

"I'll say this for Urko", Burke put in, "he is persistent, with a one track mind and aggression to match, and I should know, remember when he and I got trapped together underground after that little tremor hit San Francisco?"<sup>2</sup>

"Yeah, I remember Pete", said Alan, it took all of his negotiation skills and then some to get Urko's troops to join forces and work together to get Burke and Urko buried from under the street which had opened and swallowed them up, with a massive concrete wall falling over covering the hole, that was a hell of a day, "I just hope it won't happen again".

"You and me both", Burke said relieved, trying not think about it.

"I'm just glad you were still alive Pete", Galen said, reliving the memory, "I really felt you were dead".

"Don't worry Galen; it'll take more than a mere tremor to get rid of me", Burke answered with a little smirk of his face.



“Okay, I think we’ve rested enough you two, and it’ll be getting dark soon, how about if we head for the beach and find a cave or something to rest for the night? Then we can continue on tomorrow morning”.

Both Galen and Burke agreed, it had been a long day, so the trio searched for a path and headed down to the beach away from the road and hopefully any gorilla patrols; spending the night in soft sand and sea air would do them good.

<sup>1</sup> See the episode *‘The Legacy’*.

<sup>2</sup> See the episode *‘The Trap’*.



## SEAQUEST PHOENIX ISLANDS 2019

Captain Bridger got a communiqué from Admiral Noyce to come back to UEO Headquarters as soon as possible without delay, while the seaQuest was in New Polynesia trying to solve a border dispute around the Phoenix Islands. Between Britex Corporation and United America Incorporated, it was chaos, but eventually the boundaries that established each company's and countries territorial mining rights were resolved, hopefully to the satisfaction of both parties.

"That was one hell of a mess", voiced Bridger in the Ward Room, while watching the view-screen on the wall that was behind him observing the aft view of the seaQuest as it receded away from UAI's docking bay. The two men also watching with him were Commander Ford and Chief of Security Crocker, Bridger turned himself around in his chair away from the view-screen to face his companions, "Chief, you did a good job back there".

"Arh...it was nothing Cap'n, anyone could've done the job, I just happen to be in the neighbourhood that's all", Crocker replied, feeling please with himself on another job well done.

"All the same, I just hope we don't have any more those, I mean to say, if the UN has drawn up the boundaries to divide the ocean floor and the respective countries ratified them, then where's the problem?" Bridger commented looking tired, and his face showed it.

"I guess when it comes to greed, everybody wants more instead of less", Ford added, shaking his head slowly in disgust, lucky to see the last of this stupid argument, "I can't believe we wasted a week trying to clear it up".

"You and me both, Commander; listen, while you were on the UAI finalizing our departure, I got a message from Admiral Noyce to return to UEO Headquarters pronto, can you see that it's done please".

"Right away sir", getting up from his chair to leave, but before he did Ford asked. "Is there anything else?" trying to pry the Captain into revealing more.

"No, not at this stage, I'll just be in my cabin trying to get some sleep".

"I'll inform you if anything serious happens, sir".

When Ford left the room, Crocker felt very concerned about Bridger, they'd been friends for a long time, and he didn't like to see him in his present condition, "Nathan, you *really* okay?"

"I don't know, maybe, I'm just tired, that's all".

"Well, I won't keep you from your shut eye buddy, besides I got my rounds to do before I hit the sack myself", Crocker added as he got up and walked over to the other side of the table and helped Bridger to his feet, "come on, let me walk you to your cabin".

"Thanks Manilow, just don't tuck me in".

"No problem", as both men left the Ward Room, "I'll just read you a bedtime story instead".

"Great, just great, let me guess, '*Goldilocks and the Three Bears*'".

"Nope, '*The Little Mermaid*'".

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Commander Ford left the Ward Room and headed for the Bridge, he decided not to question Bridger about returning to Hawaii, as he felt it better left unsaid considering how tired the Captain was, so Ford just let it go. Besides, he trusted and believed in Bridger's command and judgement abilities. For over a year now Ford had come to respect Bridger and the way he got things done, especially with the seaQuest. If anyone knew how this ship worked, knew every nook and cranny, nut and bolt, Bridger was the man, hell, he designed the seaQuest. If anyone was able to do anything with this ship it was Bridger, pure and simple.

"Sometimes I think I'm just along for the ride", Ford said to himself.

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Bridger sat slumped on the edge of his bunk; I'm more tired than I thought he complained, I must be getting old, damn!, I'm not that old, I guess it must be due the stress and strain from the last couple days, trying to set things straight with those idiots back there, who knows, who cares? Perhaps Will has something cooked up that seaQuest can sink her teeth into; an assignment worth doing, instead of resolving some petty depute that wasn't really worth a grain of sea salt.

Bridger reached for the intercom that was just above his bunk, "Dr. Westphalen..." he called, "...can you please come to the Captain's Cabin as soon as you can, thanks".

Bridger didn't wait for a reply as he lay down on his bunk waiting for Kristin to arrive. *Let me dream the sweet dream, of eternal sleep beyond the darkened night*, Bridger thought poetically, as he sometimes did, he didn't know where these random sayings came from, but they just seem to pop into his head very now and then. Maybe they have some cryptic meaning or maybe it's just my brain telling me simply, 'just go to sleep'.

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Ford entered the Bridge and while he walked to his station, he issued the Captain's orders to Helmsman Chief William Shan, "Mr. Shan set a course back to UEO HQ, at best possible speed".

"Aye, aye sir; UEO HQ", Shan confirmed, as he lay in the co-ordinates, "course to UEO HQ all plotted and set sir, we should there between ten to twelve hours at our current speed".

"Very good Mr. Shan".

The Bridge personnel were a little confused, but not fazed by the order to return to dock in Hawaii; it wasn't the first time that they had to go back. But usually it only happened every six to nine weeks depending on the seaQuest's assignment, not three, as this was the case. Perhaps it was an emergency, or even worse some kind of ecological disaster, that needed the seaQuest's attention or...

"Sir", Ortiz queried, voicing what the Bridge crew might be thinking, "are we getting some R&R?"

"I don't know Ortiz, I wouldn't mind some considering what we've been through, a day or two would hurt, but all I know is the Captain got the orders to return from Admiral Noyce himself, it could be anything".

"Shall I inform the Captain that we're on our way, Commander Ford?" O'Neil questioned.

"No, he's not to be disturbed under any circumstances, if anyone's going to do it, it'll be me, is that understood?"

The Bridge personnel acknowledged the order by nodding their heads and or voicing 'yes sirs' all round.

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"Glad you could come Kristin", Bridger said, as he sat up from his bunk to greet her.

"I had a feeling you would call me, Nathan", Kristin said, as she sat beside Bridger putting her doctor's bag on her lap and opening it to take out some pills, "you'd better take these to help you sleep and take some of these to lower your stress levels".

"Am I that worse for wear?" taking the pills and popping them into his mouth.

"You did a great job back there, but I think that isn't the only thing causing your current condition, am I right?" Kristin asked; looking and feeling concerned with a touch of sympathy thrown in for good measure.

"It's nothing; I just need some rest and sleep, that's all", Bridger lied, he didn't like lying to Kristin; she was a good friend, perhaps more?

"Well", getting up and moving to sit down on a chair near the bunk, "I'll make sure you go to sleep before I leave, that way I know I've done my job...".

"...and see you in the morning, if nothing else", Bridger finished, making himself comfortable on the bunk to allow the pills to do their work, "G'night mother".

"Sweet dreams".



### UEO HEADQUARTERS HAWAII

The seaQuest arrived in Hawaii and headed for its docking bay; as the ship secured itself upon arrival Bridger gave orders to Ford to oversee any maintenance and the gathering of supplies that the seaQuest needed for her return to sea. Later Ford was in the Captain's Cabin, as Bridger prepared to go ashore to meet Noyce.

"I shouldn't be too long Commander, but in any case I think three hours of shore-leave wouldn't hurt".

"Aye, sir, I'll see to it right away", responded Ford, "it'll be good for some of the crew to go ashore for a bit of R&R, even for a little while".

"Even so, be prepared to leave at a moment's notice", Bridger said, as both he and Ford left the cabin and headed for the main hatch.

"Captain, if you don't mind me asking, I'm a bit curious, do you know what this is all about?"

"I'm just as in the dark as you are Commander". *In darkness, shall I see the light of a newborn day in everlasting life, in eternal whispers.* There are those random thoughts again Bridger; you better get a hold of yourself, "I'll let you know what's up when I come back".

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As Ford headed back to the Bridge, Lieutenant Krieg approached him with a little smile on his face.

"Commander, I've just heard that the crew's been granted some shore-leave, so..."

"Now, just hold on there a minute Lieutenant, how'd you know about..."

"Sir, this is Benjamin Krieg you're talking to, respectfully sir, I can smell R&R a mile away". Krieg replied with cockney confidence.

"And *how* do you smell, Lieutenant?" Ford questioned, with eyebrows slightly raised.

"Reasonably well...sir", feeling slightly uncomfortable, if not embarrassed.

"I don't know what you're up to Krieg..."

"...believe me sir, I just need a couple of hours; being the Supply and Morale Officer, it is my duty and responsibility to see that seaQuest fully equipped and its crew happy".

“Whatever it is I don’t want to know”, gesturing by putting both his hands up and then down, “but make it quick, we only have about three hours, and be ready to return at a moment’s notice, is that understood?”

“Understood sir”, as Krieg saluted and began to quickly walk away, “you can rely on me sir”. He called out as he left the Commander standing there thinking how Krieg got assigned to this tour; but all-in-all Krieg was dependable and competent where it counted, and another thing how did Krieg know about the Captain granting shore-leave, the information is barely five minutes old?

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Bridger entered Noyce’s office after his secretary informed the Admiral of Bridger’s arrival. In the room with Noyce who was seated at his desk was another man who was about mid-to-late forties, dark short hair, and wearing glasses, sitting opposite him.

“Nathan”, said Noyce, as he got up from his chair, “glad to see you, please sit down”, indicating the empty chair opposite to the man, “may I present Dr. Hurley Chapman”, while Noyce sat down again.

“Nice to meet you”, Bridger greeted, as both men shook hands.

“Likewise Captain Bridger”.

“Nathan, Dr. Chapman has come up from the Marianas Station which is in the Mariana Trench with some very interesting developments to say the least. I’ll let the doctor here explain”.

“Thank you Admiral”, turning to face Bridger, “Captain, do you know anything about the Mariana Trench?”

“Well just a little, the Mariana is the deepest known trench of the inner world, it’s located in the floor of the Western North Pacific Ocean, near the Mariana Islands, the trench’s maximum depth is 35,798 ft below sea level; and was first surveyed in 1951 by the Challenger II from the Royal Navy. As a matter of fact the seaQuest herself has been to the bottom as part of her preliminary testing when she was newly commissioned as I recall”, quickly looking at Noyce for confirmation, which he gave with a short nod, “anything else?”

“I’m impressed Captain, needless to say the Mariana is also the boundary of where two tectonic plates meet, the Pacific Plate and the Philippine Plate, it is my station’s responsibility to explore and monitor the trench and the plates movements. While one of my team was exploring the trench near the bottom, they came across a certain phenomenon...”

“Nathan, before the doctor continues; the phenomenon he’s about to describe has been given top-secret status, code-named: ‘Whirlhole’”.

Bridger had a sudden feeling he was not going to like what he was about to hear, but that was his military mind talking, his scientific mind on the other hand became curious.

“Will, you sound as though you’ve known this for a long time?” giving a questionable look.

“Long enough I’m afraid, doctor, please continue”.

"Thank you; Captain, what my team discovered can only be described as a freak on nature of the unnatural. To put it simply, one can compare this newly found phenomenon as an underwater Worm Hole".

"Worm Hole—like in space? But that's science fiction with no basis in fact". Bridger responded, not believing a word of it; nevertheless Chapman was a respected scientist in his field. Bridger himself over the years read various papers authored by the scientist, so what he heard shouldn't be taken lightly by the man, but then again?

"Well, there are those who would disagree with you Captain", continued Chapman, "but it's only a theory, in reality, it could be anything, I believe this Whirlhole was formed when we had a recent shifting of the tectonic plates combined with the sun's sunspot current activity, including the magnetic fluctuations at the earth's core acting as a catalyst to power up as it were this phenomenon".

"You mean it's still there, at the ocean floor?"

"The trench itself is acting like a giant funnel, keeping it in position, we sent a probe into it to see if we could analyse it, but the probe was sucked in, and all communication with it was lost. We did manage though to get thirty seconds of video footage, and only ten seconds of data, which is next to useless".

"And I'm here because..." Bridger said, wondering what this has to do with seaQuest, although he just had a terrible thought.

"Nathan, the seaQuest is the most advanced scientific equipped vessel the UEO has and with your knowledge and expertise, I want you and the seaQuest to help Dr. Chapman to explore, examine, analyse and find out whatever you can that makes this Whirlhole tick".

"And then what?" not liking this assignment at all, even though he felt there was more to this than met the eye, but he was curious...perhaps too curious.

"If nothing else Captain", put in Chapman, "it may be a new form of a power source that we can harness to benefit Mankind".

"Or a power that can destroy Mankind, if we tinker with it, it could do more harm than good; why don't we just let this thing run its course?"

"I wish it could be that easy Nathan," Noyce answered reluctantly, "but the UN has given its approval to go ahead with this investigation and the President has secretly indorsed it; our UEO hands are tied, so here are your orders Captain...", in a more official tone.

**SEAQUEST  
PACIFIC OCEAN**

Bridger was in his cabin preparing to meet with Dr. Chapman, the seaQuest was on its way to Marianas Station located at 30.000 ft below sea level within the Mariana Trench. It would be another twelve hours before the seaQuest would arrive; long enough to show Chapman around the ship and then to see the video footage of this so-called Whirlhole that Chapman's doomed probe had taken before it got sucked into oblivion. But first, he and Chapman were going to visit a friend, who is one of the most valuable members of this crew. You could almost say an integral part of this whole ship that married the human with the marine life. A synthesis of two species which try to help each other in an understanding of their worlds; born from the one—so alien, and yet, so familiar. When Man reached for the stars to explore and to search for life on other worlds; he really only had to search his own. The inner world, full of mystery and wonder; it was here that life awaited the mariner of man, if he knew where to look.

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"I hope your quarters are satisfactory Doctor?" Bridger asked, as he and Chapman entered that part of the seaQuest that contained a large pool specifically designed for its occupant—a dolphin, by the name of Darwin. In the middle of the pool with Darwin was a teenager by the name of Lucas Wolenczak, in his left hand he was holding a communication device and was trying to speak to Darwin with it.

"Yes, thank you Captain, it is quite comfortable".

As the two men approached the pool, Lucas noticed them, so he stopped what he was doing and waded towards them with Darwin watchfully beside him, "Captain".

"Lucas how goes it?" as Bridger put his hand out to give Darwin a welcome rub on his beak, Bridger was always glad to see Darwin, and he always felt good after seeing him, I guess that's the nature of animals of all species of human liking.

"Oh everything's going fine at the moment; just trying to improve Darwin's speech and vocabulary".

"How are you Darwin?" smiling at the dolphin.

"Darwin...fine...Bridger...happy?" Darwin communicated.

"Yes...Bridger...happy. Lucas", taking his hand away from Darwin, "I want you to meet Dr. Hurley Chapman the head scientist in charge of the Marianas Station, doctor, this is Lucas Wolenczak the ship's Computer Analyst, perhaps he can help you with the probe's data?"

"How do you do sir?" as Lucas and Chapman shook hands.



"Nice to meet you Lucas and please, call me Hurl; arh...perhaps you can young man, I've heard a lot about you, through your father".

"You've met my dad?" not liking anyone mentioning his father, since it pained him that he would like to be with him; but Lucas' father left—no dumped him aboard seaQuest so Lucas could get a proper education, however in reality he was just too busy to look after the boy.

"Oh, I've met him once or twice, he's a brilliant man".

"Lucas", said Bridger, before the young teenager said anything he might regret; "when you're finished here, perhaps you could meet us in the Ward Room, say at 1600?"

"Sure", turning his attention back to Darwin.

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"As you are about to watch, this video footage is all that I have at present of the Whirlhole", informed Chapman standing by the veivscreen, to a group consisting of Bridger, Ford, Wolenczak and Chief Engineer Lt. Commander Katherine Hitchcock, sitting around the table listening attentively, "in all honesty I don't know how long the Whirlhole has been there, but my estimate would be at least two weeks, and at this stage, it shows no signs of dissipating. My team have been successful in securing a camera near the Whirlhole, about two thousand metres for observation; even at that distance the Whirlhole's forces can still be felt. So when we get back to the Marianas, I will be able to show you more", Chapman then sat down and commenced the showing of the Whirlhole footage.

The probe began recording as soon as it was within range of the Whirlhole, the deep dark walls of the trench could barely be seen as the probe's camera focused on the Whirlhole, a gigantic colossus of massive swirling circular dynamics of a flowing rotating vortex. Its inner centre was totally pitch black; the Whirlhole's rims were emitting what looked like little lightning bolts radiating outwards, like thin elongated glowing fingers as they discharged themselves when they touched any part of the surrounding trench walls. As the probe moved in closer it picked up speed as the gravitational pull from the Whirlhole increased its hold. Then the probe began to spin wildly out of control, the video footage became static, then as the probe entered the Whirlhole, a minute low humming sound could be heard; the images of the inner Whirlhole were totally garbled beyond recognition—then...nothing.

After the video footage ended Chapman continued, "The humming sound you all heard at the end, was the probe's internal senses trying to analyse the Whirlhole's composition that was the ten second data I told you about Captain".

"Well I hate to be in the middle of that thing", Ford commented, not believing his eyes at what he saw.

"I hope you're right Commander," added Bridger, and then spoke to Hitchcock, "Lt. Commander, I want you to begin rigging one of our Hyper Reality Probes to hopefully withstand the turbulence of the Whirlhole, and make it more robust".

"Yes sir, I'll get on it right away", as Hitchcock got up from her chair to dismiss herself.

"Lucas," looking at the young boy's direction, "you can help by reprogramming the probe's matrix, so we can get a better look at it as well as collect more data about this underwater phenomenon".

"Okay, if you say so", Lucas said reluctantly.

"Where's your spirit Lucas? Consider it a challenge, unless it is beneath you?" What's the matter with Lucas? Bridger thought; he hasn't been himself lately, I better have a talk with him later.

"It's not that Captain", Lucas answered as he too got up from his chair, to follow Hitchcock. No, it's not that at all Lucas thought, it's just well, I don't know. Lucas' mind was racing as he tried to figure out how he felt about Katherine, was he in love with her or was it simply a crush? All he knew was his emotions were playing him, he needed time to understand, time to figure out what he actually felt. Maybe being with Katherine on this project would help him see the truth, and in a way he feared it because what would he do next?

After Hitchcock and Wolenczak left the Ward Room, Ford spoke up, "Would you like me to have a talk with Lucas Captain?" not liking how Lucas responded to a senior officer, even if he was a civilian, he still should've showed respect.

"No, I'll do it, thanks Commander", then turning his attention to Chapman, "sorry about that, it seems Lucas has something else on his mind".

"Don't worry about it Captain, he probably misses his father", Chapman commented.

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Hitchcock and Wolenczak were walking together heading from the Storage Bay where the Hyper Reality Probes are kept, when Hitchcock spoke up, "You okay Lucas? You seem to be on another planet", She was concerned about him, considering Lucas was the only teenager onboard the seaQuest surrounded by adults.

"Sometimes I wish I were".

"Well, if there is anything I can do to help, you can talk to me, really, so don't think I won't understand, okay", Hitchcock had a feeling what was bothering Lucas, but she decided to let Lucas handle it in his own way. I just hope I can handle it too; I don't want to hurt Lucas' feelings more than I have too. What Lucas really needed was to be with teenagers his own age, especially girls, so he could experience the normal growing up pains of life. It must be hard for him, to be alone here.

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"Captain", Chapman said, "the lost probe also had a homing device, which was activated before it went into the Whirlhole, in this way if—and that's a big if—the Whirlhole were to dissipate, perhaps we can find it again and retrieve whatever information was recorded".

"Well, bearing in mind what we just saw, I doubt that it survived to stay in one piece, let alone to keep on transmitting so it could be found". Bridger responded, not liking what Noyce had ordered him to do as part of this assignment, I don't like it one little bit and I know Ford won't be happy about it either; but the Hyper Reality Probe will hopefully give us a start.

“Commander, I want a full shipwide diagnostic, including structural integrity, internal and external, operational and systems status and I want it before we dock at Marianas Station”.

“Yes sir”, not liking the way Bridger said that, something must be up, he thought, perhaps I don’t know the whole story, but I hope the Captain will tell me; the seaQuest was just as much my responsibility as Bridger’s, “consider it done Captain”, leaving both Bridger and Chapman alone in the Ward Room.

“He’ll need to know Captain”, Chapman said almost in a whisper.

“Don’t worry, he will; it’s the reaction I’ll get when I tell him, that’s bothering me”. *He, who knows less, will know more; it is the way of life, the path to knowledge most walked upon.*

**MARIANAS STATION  
MARIANA TRENCH**

*Into the deep, into the depths of despair  
In darkness I call from far below  
And yet my strength shall forever flow  
I am at peace with myself  
For serenity rules my world within my world  
I live and I breathe, for life is my saviour  
But I am alone in the shadows of my being  
I am alone...I...am...alone*

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The seaQuest had arrived at the station to begin its investigation, Ford as ordered, reported to Bridger with the information in hand on the seaQuest's overall status. Ford felt as he made his way to the Captain's Cabin that something wasn't right. I mean he thought, why give the seaQuest a check-up, when it really wasn't necessary? Okay, granted that we were going down to one of the deepest trenches on the planet, but the seaQuest could handle it, I should know, I was assigned to her to test her out at this depth, even right down to the bottom. Arh...hell, I'm just being a little paranoid, all this was probably just a precaution, just to make sure everything was okay. Ford arrived and knocked on the cabin door, and heard "Enter" from within.

"Jonathan, sit down", Bridger said, as he to was sitting on his bunk.

Well, that wasn't a good sign, thought Ford; it was pretty rare for the Captain to use my first name, "Here's the Status Report you asked for sir", taking a chair to sit down in next to the Captain while at the same time giving him the report.

"Good", taking the folder and putting it beside him, "I'll look at it in the moment Jonathan", looking at Ford directly, "the seaQuest will be doing more than just helping Chapman with the Whirlhole. The first thing—and I'm sure you guest it already—will be to sent our probe near and *into* the Whirlhole, to try and analyse it further, along with any other information collected by Chapman's team".

"I understand that sir", responded Ford, still not feeling right about this situation, "as you know the seaQuest has the most advanced scientific equipment aboard, I'm sure we can find what makes that 'thing' tick out there".

"I couldn't agree more with you Commander, but what I am about to tell you comes from the top—not Noyce—but the UN itself; and believe me I'm not happy with the decision myself, so I will need your total unbiased cooperation for this assignment".

"I have no problem with that sir; I will do what I can to make the seaQuest perform all her assigned duties to the best of my abilities".

"No doubt you will Commander; I know you will, because we both will need it. You see—and I already made a formal protest", here it comes, "the seaQuest has been ordered to enter the Whirlhole".

Silence.

If Bridger was prepared for an outburst, he didn't get one.

Silence.

Ford just looked at him with his eyes wide open unblinkingly, for what seemed an eternity.

Silence.

"Commander?" Bridger said in a soft voice.

"As a military officer, and a soldier", Ford said in a calm, almost in a prophetic tone, "one is always prepared to do what is necessary to achieve an objective, and now I realize its meaning, I now realize how Captain Stark felt when she disobeyed orders to do what she felt was necessary. In some ways, necessity outweighs the needs of the few or the many, but one must know the necessity to justify the need. Captain, I cannot see the necessity or the need for that matter to put in jeopardy the seaQuest and its loyal crew to unknown dangers that could be fatal for both. I am not a coward, and I would gladly do what needs to be done to safeguard this ship, its crew and the country in which I serve, but I will not blindly go into a situation that could mean the death of myself and those I am responsible for—to put it simply, its suicide."

"I agree Commander, that's why this assignment will be approached with kid gloves—so to speak—listen; I for one will not put the seaQuest or her crew in unforeseen danger that may be considered suicidal. It might be that the seaQuest will not have to enter the Whirlhole, if we have gathered enough information about it to discern its properties and possibly its function, if it has one. But if there isn't enough information to satisfy the UEO and the UN, then I have to order the seaQuest to enter the Whirlhole for proper analysis".

Commander Ford sat and listened to his Captain as calmly and as patiently as he could, but he felt the anger slowly welling up from the depths of his inner emotions. He'd follow the Captain to Hell and back, but this time Hell was a whirling vortex of unimaginable force, and getting back out of it was very unlikely. Will the Devil laugh from his throne, seeing how pathetic the seaQuest was trying to escape his clawed watery hands of death, breathing hot fire, from the swelling maelstrom into the faces of the living, only to die, never to see the light of life again?

"Captain, for the record I wish to very strongly protest the orders given by the UN", Ford informed.

"I understand Commander, so noted, but the orders stand", and as an after thought, Bridger added, "until further notice."

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Bridger decided to check on the progress of the probe that Hitchcock and Lucas were working on, by all accounts they should be finished now; as he entered the Launch Bay that will release the probe, he saw the two of them working on the it.

"How goes it Lt. Commander?" Bridger asked as he approached.

"Almost done sir", Hitchcock responded, "just making some final adjustments".

"Lucas?"

"Captain, I've installed some pretty good software that will give us all the data we need on the Whirlhole, provided the probe stays in one piece, I've strengthened the probe's transmitter so we can receive her signals through the Whirlhole's turbulence as it enters and I've put in an internal recorder as a backup so if anything unforeseen happens, we can retrieve the information when the probe returns or find it, if it gets lost. Having said that, I made sure the homing device is in good working order, so locating it will not be a problem".

"That's excellent Lucas, you both have done a great job, why don't you two take a break; it will be at least a day or so before we have to use it anyway".

"Thanks Captain", Hitchcock said as she headed off to her cabin for a well earned break and a nice hot shower.

"Lucas", Bridger asked before the teenager also left for his cabin, "are you all right?"

"Sure, why wouldn't I be?"

"You don't seem to be yourself of late, is everything okay?"

"Yeah, everything's fine, it's just some stuff I need to work out that's all".

"Well, if you need any help..."

"Yeah, I know". Lucas said with a little smile.

"Okay, off you go", giving the boy a small pat on the back as he left.

Bridger watched as Lucas departed thinking how sorry he felt for him, being the only teenager on board, and not being able to mix with his own age group must be getting to him. This place is not for him no matter what Lucas' father thinks, he needs to be with other kids his own age, to experience, to communicate, to interact; and not be stuck with a bunch of adults that know no better how to treat him. There was Darwin, but that's not enough.

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Of all the insane—the insanity of it all, thought Ford as he made his way to the Bridge to secure the seaQuest at dock. I just don't believe it, what was the UN thinking? The seaQuest is the flagship of the UEO and without it, how can the UEO function? How could Bridger give in so easily? Or did he? Whatever happened at that meeting back in Hawaii sure must have put the Captain in his place? Then again, maybe it did—maybe it didn't? Bridger is a seasoned officer of old with experience to match, I'm sure he wouldn't directly obey the UN? Perhaps that's it; he just went along with it to please those idiots who think they know better. Just like chess, out think your opponent; make a move here to make a move there? Plan ahead; see the bigger picture, I hope Bridger has a plan and can see the bigger picture? The safety and security of the seaQuest depends on it, I depend on it.



## **MARIANAS STATION MARIANA TRENCH**

Three days into this assignment and Bridger was feeling the pressure to come up with some results to report back to Noyce. When the seaQuest was secured at dock, Bridger accompanied by Chapman returned in kind a tour of the station, in which he was very proud of.

"We have been operational down here for three years Nathan", informed Chapman who, on Bridger's request wanted to be on a first name basis, to make things a little more friendly, "as you can see we are self-sufficient to a certain extent", now showing the Hydroponics Section. It was here that Bridger was introduced to Dr. Angeline Phillips the station's Marine Biologist, a woman in her early forties, medium height, slender, blonde, blue eyed. "Angie, I'd like you to meet Captain Nathan Bridger of the seaQuest".

"Nice to meet you Captain", Phillips greeted, showing a smile while shaking his hand.

"Please, call me Nathan", Bridger replied with a smile of his own. If I didn't know better thought Bridger, I'd swear that Angie looked like a younger version of my late wife, Carol; whoa—hold on boy, don't let your emotions begin to resurface, I don't want to be reminded of the pain. I still have some healing to do, but I am in control of them for now, so it's not so bad—yet.

"I'm giving our guest a tour of my—our station", Chapman corrected quickly with a little pride in his voice.

"Our station is the most advanced marine habitat at this depth Nathan", Phillips responded, giving a quick glance at Chapman, "it took five years of constant lobbying by Hurl to the UN to get it built".

"It was tough going in the beginning, let me tell you, but in the end the UN saw the error of its ways, with food and energy shortages happening around the world, the exploration, mining and farming of the sea became top priority. Now they think they were instrumental in the station's development and importance to help secure the earth's resources for the benefit of Mankind".

"That's politics for you Hurl", Bridger added, thinking about his bout with the powers-that-be, in his lobbying days to get funding to build the seaQuest, "can't live with or without it, as a scientist myself, I can sympathise, you've done a great job".

"Thank you Nathan that means a lot; well my dear", acknowledging Phillips, "I have some more PR to do, we'll see you at dinner?"

"Of course, see you soon", watching the pair of them walk out, as Phillips returned to her work thinking how nice it would be to converse with another scientist, and a handsome one at that.

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Their final stop of the tour was the station's Command Centre; it is here that all the information concerning the station's operation and the ability to run efficiently was carried out. The heart and soul, the nerve centre if you will, including all available information so far about the Whirlhole, which was being observed and recorded twenty-four hours a day. While Chapman was showing Bridger around various monitors including the one keeping an eye on the Whirlhole itself; he introduced Marine Geologist Dr. Jeffrey Varden; who was seated at his workstation looking over some reports and photos of the trench.

"Jeff, I'd like you to meet Captain Nathan Bridger of the seaQuest".

"Hi", Varden said, as he turned around in his chair to greet both men.

"Any change in the stress levels of the surrounding rock strata where the Whirlhole has positioned itself?" Chapman asked.

"No, no change at all, it's like the Whirlholes' not there, but the forces it's generating should be affecting the trench in some way. I should see at least some formation of cracks appearing, but not a hair's breath of it, it's very strange, but I guess what we're dealing with here *is* a phenomenon unknown to science, thus new boundaries to cross and all that".

"Yes, well hopefully the seaQuest will be able to help us answer some of our questions, the sooner the better".

"I hope so too", Varden added, as he returned to his studies.

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Hope, thought Bridger, yes hope; it's a big word to fill, the word 'hope', and I just hope that the 'Whirly'—the probe's new nic-name christened by Lucas—will do the job. A lot was riding on this second attempt to gather information about the Whirlhole, if successful; it may mean that the seaQuest would not have to enter it for further analysis. *I hope as I dream, that in my days of youth, I shall hope and pray that my dreams are forever fulfilled, in the hope of a dream, to the end of my days of youth, fulfilled.* Bridger's poetic thoughts were plaguing him again as he stood at his command station on the Bridge of the seaQuest along with Ford.

When all was ready Bridger gave the order to Hitchcock to launch the Whirly. The air seemed to be filled with a mix of anticipation, anxiety, and a little tension, this was a big moment, for all concerned. The probe began its journey towards the Whirlhole being observed by the main Bridge crew and Chapman and his team of scientists on the Marianas. All of them waited with eagerness and with certain expectations as all concerned watch as the probe edged closer to the Whirlhole, picking up speed as the gravitational pull from the massive vortex became ever stronger.

"Begin transmission", Bridger ordered to Lucas, who was at his station monitoring the Whirly's performance, making sure it was functioning properly, in which he had no doubt.

"Transmission begun and recording", he said with confidence.

"How are you handling it?" Bridger asked Hitchcock, who was beginning to have trouble navigating the probe as it approached the mouth of the Whirlhole.

"It's getting very difficult sir; I won't be able to control it much longer".



"Then let it go, and let the probe be guided in by the Whirlhole".

"Aye sir", as Hitchcock surrendered the controls of the probe to the mysteries of the Whirlhole and perhaps beyond.

"O'Neill, get me Dr. Chapman and put it on speaker".

"Aye sir", O'Neill responded as he raised Chapman on the Marianas, "Dr. Chapman on line sir".

"Doctor, everything fine at your end?"

"Yes Captain, everything's fine", Chapman responded over the speaker, "the data being transmitted by the probe is being collected and recorded; hopefully your probe will be able to give us some more concrete information".

"I hope so too, keep your fingers crossed, Bridger out; Lucas you'd better switch on the homing device".

"Done Captain".

The Whirly, a probe with a mission, a tiny metallic speck against a giant maelstrom, was facing a swirling mass of oceanic water that could signal its doom. Its predecessor also made the same journey into the very heart of the Whirlhole never to return. Will the same fate also await the Whirly? It's more than likely, but it was made of stronger stuff, it should do the job more efficiently-to a point-then it would disappear into the blackness beyond its understanding, beyond its meaning. Perhaps beyond death itself, if it were a living breathing creature of flesh and blood, except it wasn't, thus it could only record what its sensors could pick up. The computer chip could no more understand death, than a human cell could life; but at least a human could think, and contemplate the hereafter, the computer, only the now, the present.

The Whirlhole reacted to another intruder to its peaceful existence by extending its blue electrical fingers to feel and prod this metallic ball that was alien to it. It had no fluid, no feeling; it was cold and lifeless, and yet it has life. The Whirlhole could sense the probe's internal rhythms, its pulsating computerised beating and beeping within, but it knew the probe had no heart. *How does it live? Where is its soul? Perhaps it's only a child wanting its mother, and its mother, where is she? Could that be her in the distance? Watching her child? Wanting her baby to come back? Do not be afraid of me, I will look after your child, but you must come and take your child back, for I am not its mother, come, do not be afraid.*

The Whirlhole sensed life within the mother, but many, it is filled with warmth and coldness, a composite of skin and metal, it had many hearts, many souls; its spirit is clouded, uncertain. But it does not weep for her child who cries for her, it only watches and waits. There is fear, curiosity, excitement, her emotions are varied, scattered. *I shall wait for you, come do not be afraid, I will understand.*



## **ANSA CAPE KENNEDY 1980**

Dr. Jameson Hughes was standing by the observation window looking down from the top floor above at the proceedings below as ANSA personnel were making their final checks at their workstations to launch the Hyperion into interstellar space. At the far end of the control room was a large view-screen showing the Hyperion readying itself for final countdown. All it needed now were the three astronauts to complete the final mission to the stars-to Alpha Centauri and they were standing behind him waiting patiently for the President to arrive to give his final farewell to the three brave men on this penultimate mission that will decide the future of the interstellar space program. Too many failures, not enough successes, Hughes thought as he reviewed the pass missions in his mind. Now as the new Director of ANSA since January he had other ideas, other directions, but they would have to wait until after this launch when he would talk to the President alone about what he had in mind for the future. But for now, the present is all that mattered.

Alan Virdon was standing alongside his friends Pete Burke and Stephen Jones also waiting patiently for the President to arrive to wish them well on their journey to Alpha Centauri. This mission will be the last, the final attempt to reach an elusive goal that has not been kind to those who have tried to do so in the past. If all goes according to plan he, Pete and Jonesy should be back within a year.

*Alpha, a woman cloaked in mystery, her black cape coverts her secrets through which anonymity dominates seductively, calling the unknown to beckon forward to help reveal her inner self, that is the calling of the stars, it is here, her voice, sweet with intoxication fulfils Man's desires, as he breathes in her perfumed vision of mystic beauty, only to find rejection in her arms of death.*

As Virdon was still pondering within his thoughts the door behind him opened and two secret service men entered to check and clear the way for the President to enter. Hughes turned around as they did so, eyeing Virdon, giving him a small smile of reassurance, which he returned with a slight wink of his left eye as acknowledgment.

The two 'SS' men (as they were commonly known) finished their inspection and motioned the President to come in as they themselves stood on either side of the door. Hughes moved forward with his hand extended to greet the President who walked in beaming with self-importance as a man possessed with God-given powers, while at the same time the three astronauts stood at attention in their crisp white ANSA uniforms awaiting so-called scrutiny from their fearless leader.

"Mr. President, it's good to see you again", greeted Hughes.

"It's good to see you to doctor, is everything going to schedule?"

"Yes Mr. President everything's fine, no hiccups yet, all is green for launch".

“Excellent; now”, turning his attention to the three astronauts, giving them the once over with his evil eye. The three men seemed to sense the President’s scrutiny by remaining silent and stood erect as possible for inspection.

“Here they are Mr. President; you know of course Colonel Alan Virdon, Majors Peter Burke and Stephen Jones”.

“Yes I do, very well, nice to see you all again”, shaking each astronaut’s hand in turn, remembering them from the White House luncheon two weeks ago, “Let me say, I am very proud of you for what you will achieve today, not just for America, but for the whole world”.

“Thank you Mr. President”, the three responded in kind.

“I know that perhaps there maybe certain concerns about this final mission but let me assure you that they are unfounded. It is true that perhaps you will meet the same fate that befell your fellow astronauts from previous missions; but Alpha Centauri is an elusive objective, a challenge that must be conquered. That is why according to Hughes here, your ship is equipped with state-of-the-art recording and homing devices, so if anything were to go wrong, you will return safely home. Not only that but there’s the late Dr. Hasslein’s Theory to consider as well, it needs to be proven so that we can better understand how it works, that is why this mission is more important than any other, being the last it must succeed. Those bastards at Congress just don’t know what they’re doing, but the evidence is against us, and my Administration must follow the recommendations handed down by them, and adding to the fact that the average American is giving weight to why we are spending their hard earn tax dollars on a venture doomed to fail is beyond them. Be that as it may, Alpha Centauri must give up her secrets; we must know why we can not go to her, for something out there is preventing us from coming to her consummating our union”.

‘Consummating our union’, thought Burke, I like that, who does he think he’s kidding, you poor excuse of a man.

“Mr. President, if I may be so bold”, this coming from Jones, “Taylor’s ship did return with three apes aboard...”

A slight unease came over the President, but he recovered within a nanosecond as he glared at the astronaut in response by cutting Jones off in mid sentence, “Jones, I’ll pretend I didn’t hear that, you know the story, the whole thing was a hoax, no such thing as talking apes, its scientifically impossible, it was set up by anti-government extremists to discredit the Administration for their own misguided purposes whatever they were suppose to be; and you also know the truth, both Taylor and Maddox’s ships disintegrated while trying to leave earth orbit, so forget it, that’s an order”.<sup>1</sup>

“I understand Mr. President”, feeling more uncomfortable than he was at this moment, even so there were those, himself included, which thought that the Administration was covering up vital information about the *Astræa*’s return with the three apes on board. There was even talk that someone from the inside had proof.

“But you boys don’t have to worry”, continued the President, “about your ship going the same way as Taylor’s, Dr. Hughes informs me that your ship is in tip-top shape and will have no trouble at all leaving the earth, isn’t that right doctor?”

“Yes, Mr. President”, answered Hughes, beginning to feel a little hot under the collar, from Jones’ sudden query, “nothing can go wrong”.

What was Jonesy trying to do? Thought Virdon, finding himself more nervous than he should've been; I know you're a little out spoken when it comes to certain issues, but this is certainly not the time and place to debate them in front of the President of all people. Even I believe there must've been some kind of cover up, but I don't going mouthing off about it, especially in this current political climate full of tension, intrigue and mistrust. The truth will reveal itself in one form or another one day, it always does, what was that saying, *Truth will set you free, as freedom will deliver truth from the hand of the oppressed, to know the truth, is to know thyself, and to know thyself is to know God.*

"Well gentlemen, I wish you well, it has been difficult to say the least, but, I want you to come back to us and to a hero's welcome to boot. Well I think that's about it, I'd just like to say finally, I wish I was going with you, but affairs of state prevent me from hitching a ride", giving a little snicker of a laugh, "good luck and God bless", and with that the President left, including the tension that was in the air created by Jonesy, and all four men could finally breathe a sigh of relief.

"Jonesy, what the hell was that all about?" Burke asked confronting his friend, trying to cleanse his lungs, now that the air was clean and clear from the political smog machine.

"Easy, Pete, let's just forget it, what's done is done", Virdon cut in trying to keep the peace between his buddies.

"Easy, I'll say", Burke said, with distaste, "what were you trying to do?"

"I just wanted to try and clear up a few things, that's all, okay", Jones replied, trying to appease his friends, "I felt it important...I wanted to hear it from *him*", thumbing the door where the President exited from, "I wanted to see his reaction, I wanted the truth, the *real* truth".

"And you thought he was just going to give it to you on a silver platter...", still not believing what just happened a few moments ago.

"Pete..." Virdon said in a calming voice as possible.

"Alright you three, settle down", Hughes interrupted pulling authority to control the situation, "we haven't got the time to debate this discussion, just relax, take a few deep breaths and just calm down", the three men did as they were told, "good, now doesn't that feel better?" the astronauts nodded after a moment, "right", in a much more soothing tone, now let's get out of here, and prepare ourselves, we have a ship to launch..."

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Virdon was lying on the beach near Santa Cruz, looking up, staring at the clear starry night sky with a small fire burning behind him keeping him warm, as he pondered that day meeting the President and the abrupt exchange between him, Pete and Jonesy, poor Jonesy, then again, maybe he's the lucky one. Oh, I don't know, this world, this upside down world where ape is the master and man is the slave. Where did we go wrong? Were we as Man destined to be ruled by the Ape, the new simian super power of the known world in their eyes? Will there ever be a chance for man and ape to be friends, to work together and build a better future for both races?

Hell, all these questions are giving me a headache; all I want to do is go home to Sally and Chris. Well I had my chance at ChronoDyne<sup>2</sup> but I blew it in a way, no matter, I have no regrets, there was no way I would leave behind Pete and Galen. If we do find a way

home, we will do it together, that's the way it is, and as the senior officer, that's way it should be, I have a duty, I have a responsibility to get myself and Pete home.

<sup>1</sup> See the film *'Conquest of the Planet of the Apes'*.

<sup>2</sup> From the Fan Fiction story *'Values'* by Dave Ballard.



**DETROIT, MICHIGAN**  
**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY 1971**

Burke was one of the first to hurriedly grab a seat near the front of the stage in the auditorium; this was a big day for the university, as a special guest was coming to visit and talk about next year's mission to Alpha Centauri—the first interstellar mission to the stars, beyond the womb of Man's birth, to go beyond the known understanding that is the universal constant of life—perhaps; even death. The hall was filling up fast with students' eager to get a glimpse and possibly capture a photo or two for their own photo albums of the astronaut in question; this was to be one of the university's most historic dates on its calendar. As Burke settled down, his friend Dave Whiteman got a seat next to him.

"Hey, this is great..." Dave said excitedly to Burke, "...don't you think?"

"Sure is", having a quick look around the hall, "hey look at Mac over there with his camera", pointing to Guy MacDonnell, the student photographer for the uni's paper, trying to position himself near the stage for that all important shot, "hey Mac!" called out Burke, "you sure, you got film in that thing?" both Burke and Whiteman began to laugh.

Mac looked over to where Burke and Whiteman were sitting, and gave them the finger.

"Touchy, isn't he?" Whiteman commented.

"Don't worry; I took the liberty of replacing his rolls of film with pre-exposed film for his camera".

"Oh you sick bastard, you are *still* the master".

"Just wait when he tries to develop the film, and find absolutely nothing", smiling to himself as he visualized Mac in the darkroom trying to develop his film, only to realise there's nothing on it. It'll tear him up.

Whiteman looked over to where Mac was kneeling, checking his camera, and gave him a big cheeky grin and a little wave with his left hand. Mac was not impressed and ignored him, "I'd like to be a fly on the wall in the darkroom, when all Hell breaks loose".

"Oh yeah, you and me both", Burke said, thinking about next year, which will be his last at college, and then I will enlist in the Air Force to begin my training that will hopefully lead me to becoming an astronaut for NASA and maybe if I study hard and put in enough flight time and training; I might be lucky and get selected by NASA for interstellar missions beyond our Solar System. If this first mission to Alpha Centauri is successful and I don't doubt that it will be, I might be selected as one of the next generation of astronauts to go there, and prepare Man's next foray into space exploration; or maybe stay with NASA and help with the colonization of the moon. I hear that NASA has already completed various drawings on Moon Base design that will help man stay, live and work there. Just think, our

first off-world colony beyond the earth, this century is truly the age of Man's greatest achievements to date, let's hope it stays that way.

All the students and teachers were finally settling down for the big moment; silence now reigned over the auditorium as the Principle, Mr. Lachlan Forbes, a man of about sixty, made his way across to the mike at the centre of the stage to address the eager audience.

"Fellow teachers and students, it is my privilege and pleasure to welcome a very important representative from ANSA who has kindly taken the time from her busy schedule to visit our humble university and talk about next year's mission to Alpha Centauri. She is one of four astronauts selected by ANSA, and I might add the only woman to travel beyond our solar system to another star system for the purposes of exploration to determine possible future colonization by Mankind. So please make a very warm welcome for Lieutenant Catherine Stewart".

The hall erupted with applause as Stewart made her way to Forbes to join him by the microphone. The twenty-seven year old was wearing the ANSA white uniform, which added a certain godlike stature to cement the importance to the public how significant next year's launch will be for not only America, but for the whole world, in the endeavour to travel beyond the solar system and conquer space. The moon was only the beginning, a stepping stone; now the government wanted more, and on the wave of public euphoria on the success of the first moon landing back in '69, it formed through NASA, the ANSA— American National Space Administration, designed specifically to deal with interstellar missions outside the solar system, while NASA handled internal missions within. As the audience quietened down, Forbes greeted Stewart.

"Lieutenant Stewart, I speak for all here, when I say welcome to Michigan State University".

"Thank you Mr. Forbes, it's a pleasure being here, I must say I've never been to Michigan, but what I have seen of it so far has thrilled me to no end and you have a great university here, so I am very pleased to be here today and speak to your students on behalf of ANSA".

Applause.

"Well Lieutenant Stewart, I hope that we here at Michigan State can make your stay more enjoyable and I hope you will have fond memories also and having said that..." Forbes indicated to the side of the stage, which initiated the Vice Principle Mrs. Nellwyn, a middle-aged woman of fifty, to walk on stage carrying a small plaque.

Applause.

"...I would like to present to you a small token of our appreciation with this plaque that honours your visit here today, as well as the memory of this university."

Applause.

"Thank you Mr. Forbes..." taking the plaque, and receiving cute handshakes from Forbes and Nellwyn, "...and thank you Michigan State..."

Applause.

Not bad looking, Burke thought, blonde, blue-eyed and single, but I'll bet she has a boyfriend, oh well, there are the brakes; I mean sure I got a girl but being hooked up with

Catherine Stewart wouldn't hurt either, then again, she'll be gone for a year so what'll I do then? Stay single, stay true, and not go out with other girls, so as to wait for Catherine to return? I don't know if I can handle that, and if I were to become an astronaut, what about my girl or wife even, that'll be hard; maybe it'll be best to just stay single, that way I won't have to leave any broken hearts behind, just have fun and don't worry about tomorrow. Well tomorrow is a few years away yet, so let's just see how today goes, shall we?

"...when I was chosen to be one of four astronauts for the Alpha Centauri mission, I did not realise then that I would be the first woman to travel on an interstellar voyage that would take me beyond our known solar system; but I was also honoured to learn that I will become the second woman after Valentina Tereshkova to enter space, and that is a real privilege for me to follow in her footsteps to journey beyond the earth. As you know there have been many firsts in space exploration from Yuri Gagarin to Neil Armstrong. Now a new age in space exploration is upon us with the first launching next year of the *Astræa*; with a set date of the 14th of February. All the eyes of the world will be witnessing this historic event in the making and being the only woman onboard makes me proud to represent the female half of the human race and to show those that it is only when we—man and woman—work together as one will we achieve our dreams, our goals and our objectives in understanding not only this world—our earth, but other worlds as Mankind moves ever forward in the search for knowledge; and to expand Man's influence in space".

Applause.

"With space exploration being on the forefront to help Mankind come to terms with his ability to gain knowledge from; various space technologies have been developed to reach the goals set by NASA and the ANSA to achieve our understanding of the universe in which we live, and it is these technologies that are passed to the public to help our standard of living. So, if there is anybody out there—so to speak, that believes spending millions of dollars on space technology and its related sciences gets us no where, well think again..."

—\*—\*—

Burke was lying on the beach near Santa Cruz, looking up, staring at the clear starry night sky with a small fire burning behind him keeping him warm, as he pondered that day in the auditorium watching and listening to Lieutenant Catherine Stewart. He realised now that perhaps somewhere out there trapped in a future earth she might still be alive awaiting rescue, now that he believed the truth. The truth that Taylor's and Maddox's ship did not disintegrate in earth orbit as was reported by NASA and ANSA, and the cover up by the government of the day, the lies, the deceptions and the hidden truths about Cornelius and Zira. Jonesy was right, damn you Jonesy...I miss you, you were a good friend—even if you were a pain in the neck...sometimes. All was realised then and there when he and Alan viewed Farrow's book back in his bomb shelter<sup>1</sup>, and then hitting home with his first sighting of a gorilla—the talking apes were real—this future earth *is* real—the past nuclear war was also real—how and why it happened was anybody's guess, but one day, the truth will be revealed, one day. The truth has set me free, free from the lies, the cover up's, and the deceptions. I know the truth. Why did the government hide the truth, what really happened to Taylor and his crew, could Maddox's ship be somewhere on this planet just waiting to be found?

<sup>1</sup> See the episode 'Escape From Tomorrow'.





## **HIGH COUNCIL CHAMBERS CENTRAL CITY**

Urko was not a happy gorilla, brooding as he sat awaiting Zaius and the other Council Members to arrive, then again he was never happy, and he could put the symptoms down into three words—Virдон, Burke and Galen. For just over a year now ever since the ass-tro-nauts—as they were called crash-landed from their world into his, they had been on the run avoiding capture and eventual execution. As far as humans go, these two men were a pain in the neck, to a certain degree Urko enjoyed the chase, it made him more aware of his ability to develop his instincts and that of his troopers, which lacked any if not all discipline to deal with these two special humans. He could not understand why Zaius wanted the fugitives brought back alive? Oh yes, to question them, to find out information about their past, about their world, and more importantly why they are here now, what is their purpose, what do these ass-tro-nauts want from the world of the apes? Perhaps it was to undermine the simian culture, to corrupt it by infecting the humans of this world with lies about the apes themselves, to gather up and form an army of humans to rebel against their masters, to overthrow the Council of Elders, and bring down simian civilization to the level of man that Urko's forefathers have tried so hard to control and dominate for centuries. Well it's not going to happen, not while I am the Chief of Security and the Supreme General of the Simian Army, I will find them, and I will kill them...

Urko was interrupted in his thoughts by the opening of the Council Chamber doors to allow Zaius and the other Council Members in; as they walked to their assigned places Urko glanced at Councillor Yalu—Galen's father, Galen the only chimpanzee officially helping the ass-tro-nauts avoid capture. The *only* ape that has helped them, but Urko knew there were others—ape and human, but Galen was different, he was a wanted ape, he killed one of Urko's troopers while helping the ass-tro-nauts to escape, now he too was a fugitive from justice. An ape loving human; it must be difficult for Yalu and his wife Ann to live with—so be it, one day Yalu will fall from grace and I Urko will be there watching, laughing, ready to see the pain in Yalu's face as he recognises the shame, the humiliation and the dishonour of being a father to a human lover.

As the Council of orang-utans settled themselves in for this morning's session, Zaius called the meeting to order, by tapping the chairape's mallet on the table to silence and to begin proceedings. "The Council meeting is now in session, I see as always General Urko you are punctually early".

"I don't see why I should arrive late Zaius", adding a little sneer knowing the elders were a little late, probably due to their age if nothing else, Urko thought.

"We as Council Members may not be as liberal with our movements as we would like Urko, but age and wisdom has its advantages over youth and impudence".

"Arh—words, just words Zaius, let's begin and get on with it", feeling impatient, as he had other duties that required his attention.

"Councillors, it has come to my attention as to you all know, that this past year has been taxing to say the least, especially since the arrival of two humans who claim to come from our past; two ass-tro-nauts—they call themselves. These creatures were to be questioned by myself and then handed over to Urko for execution. But they escaped custody with the help of Galen, Councillor Yalu's son".

All eyes focused on Yalu as he sat there a little uncomfortable upon hearing his son's name. It had been a while since he saw his son last, but he knew Galen was in good company, no matter what any ape would say about him; at least he was still alive and healthy, perhaps one day, this madness will end and Galen will clear his name, his son was no murderer, it had to be a setup and the only ape responsible for that was sitting here in this room.

Yalu looked at Urko.

"Although evidence maybe lacking", voiced Yalu firm and sternly, "I believe my son innocent, as the Lawgiver is my witness, justice will be served to those responsible, and the truth revealed to clear my son's name; as for these humans you speak of, I find it disturbs me that General Urko here", glancing at his direction again, "has yet proved himself worthy of Chief of Security, since they are still at large, they are after all only humans, two humans in fact, and with an army of troopers at his command, can't seem to capture them without—as I have heard—a fuss full of excuses".

A murmur of approval radiated around the room as the elders agreed to Yalu's words, but before Urko could voice his reply.

"Silence!" Zaius commanded from his chair, "We are all well aware of Urko's abilities as Chief of Security, and I have no complaints, these two humans are not ordinary humans like ours, they are special, more intelligent, more aggressive, and every effort is being taken to track them down before they impart their knowledge to other humans—our humans who might rise up against us and threaten the stability of our society. They elude us because of their cunning, that's all, but they will be caught, it's only a matter of time..."

"...and how much time will General Urko need?" this coming from Councillor Valentius, not particularly happy with the progress so far in capturing these humans that menace the fabric of simian culture.

"As much time as is necessary, Councillor Valentius", Urko answered slowly with disgust, "if you feel that you can do a better job than I, please feel free to take over my duties as Chief of Security, I'm sure that within a week you will be parading these ass-tro-nauts before us for all to see", finishing with a little laugh.

"I find your abilities, less than impressive Urko; it doesn't take a year to hunt and track down two humans, regardless of their diminutive intelligence; perhaps your lack of it however small seems not enough..."

"I am quite capable!" jumping out of his chair shouting, "of dealing with humans, any humans that get in my way, these are no different!" but as suddenly as Urko was loud, he quietened down and turned to look hard at Yalu, "the only reason Virdon and Burke are still alive, is because of your son Galen, he knows our ways, our culture; if it weren't for him, I would have those ass-tro-nauts in the palm of my hands".

"Be that as it may Urko", Yalu said, "I find it amusing that a chimpanzee has more intelligence than a gorilla of your standing, perhaps two Chief's of Security would be more than needed to bring the fugitives to justice than one".

A general chuckle of laughter was heard from the orang-utans, even Zaius himself showed a little smile at this quibble, but composed himself quickly to bring the session to order.

“Enough! This is getting us nowhere, Urko please sit down”.

“I will not, I have had enough of this foolery for today Zaius! I have duties to attend to!” and with that Urko left in a huff and hurry, grumbling to himself as he left.

“It seems our Chief of Security can’t take a joke”, Valentius added with a smile on his face.

“Even so...” this coming from Zaius, “...he is the best ape for the job; I can’t recommend any other, Urko’s record speaks for itself”.

“Perhaps, but there is my son to consider who has shown promise of late Zaius, you must agree”.

“Yes, I have observed your son’s career, he does show some talent”.

“Then, I think it would be wise to assign him to Urko, as let’s say—Deputy Chief of Security, to give a fresh perspective on things; if I am not mistaken General Urko has taken on the burden long enough to find these fugitives, he needs to lighten the load a bit, surely this Council should give him as much assistance as required, even any recommendations to help him do so”.

There was general consensus all round; even Yalu agreed that Urko needed help; perhaps by adding Valentius’ son in the mix, it could prevent Galen from accidentally meeting an untimely death by hands of Urko, who was rumoured to want his son’s death. With an extra pair of eyes watching Urko’s back there was less of a chance of a cover-up.

Zaius contemplated the idea for the moment, and it had merit, “Very well, all those in favour”.

The show of hands was unanimous.

“Now to the next order of business”, Urko won’t like this Council decision, Zaius thought, nevertheless, what’s done is done. Maybe Valentius was right, Urko has been under a lot of stress ever since Virdon and Burke entered our lives. But it also gave Valentius an opportunity to advance his son’s career, including his own—to whatever ends, so I’d better be watchful. There were rumours that the old orang-utan has been quietly gaining influence amongst various prominent simians within the city. I must keep an eye on him.



## COUNCILLOR ZAIUS' HOME CENTRAL CITY

Later that day just after lunch Zaius was in his study sitting behind his desk waiting for Urko to arrive. I must admit thought Zaius, that today's Council Meeting did not bode well; try as I might to support Urko in his endeavours to capture the fugitives this past year was not looking good. Valentius was devious and cunning in how he was able to voice his concerns about Urko's abilities and add to the fact that Valentius was able to present his son Magnus to help Urko assist him in capturing the fugitives was a stroke of subliminal—if that was the right word, political manipulation. Then again, it may be also due to the fact that Valentius has been slowly gaining support—albeit behind my back from the other Councillors in whatever plans he has concocted for himself and his son. It will no doubt further advance the old orang-utan's career, as well as Magnus—in making him Deputy Chief of Security. A little smile came onto Zaius' face, he had to admit it was genius—Valentius you old ape you—but I will be watching, more closely now that you had the upper hand with your small—but significant victory. If I didn't know better I'd say that Urko could be replaced by Magnus if he was unsuccessful in capturing the fugitives himself. Chief of Security Magnus—an orang-utan, Zaius mused over, unbelievable; but I guess stranger things could happen. There were occasions when Urko and I had Virdon and Burke, but not together;<sup>1</sup> although there was that one time when the ass-tro-nauts first came here in their flying ship—what was it called, a 'spaceship', 'spacecraft' or something like that.<sup>2</sup> I don't know, pausing for a moment to reflect on his thoughts, I just don't know what our society is coming to, well whatever the future holds, I want to make certain that I will be in control of that future, to shape and guide it for a better tomorrow, if not a better today.

—\*—\*—

Urko was fuming inside, but he tried to control himself as much as possible; after he had finished his duties and issued new and standard orders pertaining to the city, and the surrounding villages—both ape and human. Urko made his way to Zaius' home on horseback, if the rumours were true, and he didn't doubt it; the gall of Valentius *and* Zaius for allowing it; making Magnus Deputy Chief of Security to help assist him in apprehending the fugitives. Well I don't need any help, especially from an orang-utan; creating a new office; the Council must be mad. Urko spat in disgust at the thought of an orang-utan helping a gorilla do his job—it's unthinkable; it's an embarrassment and demeaning to gorillas in general. We are the law enforcing agents of this culture; we bring safety and security as well as much needed protection. I have to admit that there are a few gorilla farmers, who prefer tilling the soil in some villages, but our main aim as the gorilla faction of our society is to bring peace and stability to our world; and that's the way it has been for centuries. I will not allow an orang-utan to go above his station in life—especially mine, he might even try and takeover my position as Chief of Security and that will not do, I'll see to that.

—\*—\*—

Urko trotted up to Zaius' house and got off and tethered his horse by the railing in front. He knocked on the front door as respectfully as he could and waited to be invited in.

Ullman, Zaius' male servant heard the front door and walked over to open it. "Hello sir, can I help you?" asking politely.

Urko made a little grunt at seeing Ullman—a human and looked at him straight in the eye, "I'm here to see Zaius, is he in?"

"Yes sir", said Ullman, feeling intimidated by the presence of Urko, "he is in the study shall I..."

"Fine", Urko grunted, cutting Ullman off, "out of my way human", as he pushed Ullman aside and walked towards the study and opened the door.

Zaius sitting at his desk; looked up from studying his scroll he was reading as he heard the door open. "It is customary to knock before entering Urko".

"My *apologies* Zaius", closing the door behind him, "but I'm in no mood for civil niceties at the moment".

"No doubt, please sit down", indicating a chair opposite the desk.

"Well Zaius", making himself comfortable, "what did that old weasel Valentius get out of you this time besides making his son an assistant to help me get those fugitives?"

"So you've heard?"

"Did you doubt that I wouldn't?"

Here it comes, thought Zaius, "No, but it's true, the High Council has agreed to appoint Valentius' son Magnus, Deputy Chief of Security".

In an instant, Urko's eyes widened ready to pop out of their sockets, as he swiftly rose to his feet and began pacing up and down in anger, so the rumours were correct, Urko thought, by the balls of the Lawgiver, "No! I don't believe it, how could the Council vote on such a thing? It's inconceivable, its madness and foolhardy in its stupidity, why Zaius—why? I don't understand it; the capture of the fugitives is my responsibility—mine, mine alone, I don't need any help or assistance, especially from an orang-utan!"

There he said it, Urko couldn't believe his ears, but he said it, in his rage he outwardly voiced his distaste of an orang-utan. Then recognising his sudden outspoken thoughtless dilemma, Urko quickly quieten down and looked at Zaius and politely as he could apologised, "I'm sorry Zaius, I didn't mean to offend you or your kind...it's just...difficult...difficult to believe I am being taken as incompetent in my position as Head of Security"; and with that, Urko sat down again, trying to calm his nerves.

"Your apology is accepted Urko, and I understand how you feel, we as a society and as individuals all have a role to play to advance our simian way of life and culture; it is difficult at the best of times to think otherwise. But in this case we must, Virdon and Burke are a dangerous pair of humans that must be captured at all costs. It is imperative that we seek possible alternatives in bringing them to justice, before they impart their knowledge to other humans who may rise up from their servitude and question their role in our society. Our humans know their place because we keep it so, if Virdon and Burke start to influence our humans to their way of thinking, then we will have no choice but to exterminate those that go against simian doctrines, including I might add any fellow apes that may question our beliefs. Sadly there are a few, including poor Galen who was the first to fall under the influence of these ass-tro-nauts".

"All you say is true Zaius", confirmed Urko, who had calmed down somewhat, and was able to control his emotions a bit better, "but I am in command of the search, I work night and day, it is only a matter of time before I will have the fugitives under lock and key, but to have a Deputy Chief of Security, the position is unheard of, it undermines of authority, and to have an orang-utan..."

"...as I have said Urko", Zaius interrupted quickly, "it was felt that you needed—shall we say, additional support, in your endeavours where the fugitives were concerned in bringing them back for trial and execution; but I do understand, for there is another reason why you should indulge the Council's recommendation, Valentius has his sights on becoming President of the High Council, I have known for quite sometime now of his political ambitions, which also include his son Magnus, who is after your position as Chief of Security. But there is a little flaw in Valentius' plan, it all centres on the capture of the fugitives, if successful my position and certainly yours..." pointing to Urko, "...will be in doubt, the High Council will definitely recommend your demotion and replace you. Now if the fugitives remain at large our positions and influence will remain and Valentius' ambitions will be deferred until we can think of a way to disgrace him. Until then, by having Magnus by your side, you can keep an eye on him, as I will with Valentius. There may come a time, and I would hate to think of it, but if the fugitives were captured by Magnus, perhaps you could arrange for their escape again", Zaius waited while Urko absorbed the information, unthinkable, but a necessary evil if he and Urko were to keep and remain influential.

"As much as I hate the fugitives, I love my job more, perhaps in time we can put Valentius and Magnus in their place and out of their misery—so to speak. It would be good to plan their disgrace and downfall". Urko responded with a scheming smile.

"Humiliation Ukro, that will be our plan to set in motion, and to think that Virdon and Burke will play their part willingly when the time comes; but until then you must adhere to the Council's wishes, and accept any help that Magnus offers in hunting down the fugitives".

"Very well Zaius", Urko responded begrudgingly, "I'll play along; it may be amusing to see the outcome of our little plan, just as long as it works".

"Oh it'll work Urko, be assured of that, it is only a matter of time, patience is the key, we watch, we learn, and then we strike".

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Only a matter of time, Urko thought, as he trotted back on his horse to his office. Magnus, I will make you pay for your father's foolishness, Chief of Security Magnus indeed. Urko laughed at himself at the thought of an orang-utan being the Head of Security of Central City; for Magnus will have problems if he did succeed to the position because none of the gorilla troopers will take orders from an orang-utan. Arh...the sweet smell of revenge will be music to my ears when Magnus realises that he will—no, can't give orders to my troopers. Perhaps my position as Chief of Security is not in jeopardy after all; only a gorilla can order another gorilla, especially pertaining to the security of Central City and the surrounding provinces, only I, Urko can maintain law and order and discipline amongst my gorillas. And if any gorilla were to listen to Magnus, then I will make his life difficult to say the least, no gorilla could stand being humiliated by an orang-utan, let alone by Urko himself, it would mark him for life, he would lose any respect and dignity that he would have gained for himself, including that from his family, no gorilla would willingly submit to that, no gorilla, it wouldn't be worth it. It would be seen as an act of Cowardice.

Urko remembered long ago what his predecessor Granikus once said to him in confidence, when he retired from the service to hand over the reigns to the young gorilla,

“Urko, I want you to keep your nose clean and your eyes and ears open, you are now the new Chief of Security and the General of our gorilla army, so watch your back, humans are not the only scum to watch out for, there are apes who may covet your position, so don’t let them take away your power and the prestige that goes with it; be strong, be brutal, and don’t give an inch. You must gain respect from your troopers if you are to be a true leader, do you understand?”

“Yes, I understand”.

<sup>1</sup> See the episodes *‘The Legacy’* & *‘The Interrogation’*.

<sup>2</sup> See the episode *‘Escape From Tomorrow’*.



## COUNCILLOR VALENTIUS' HOME CENTRAL CITY

Councillor Valentius was in his study awaiting his son's arrival; soon he will inform Magnus of the High Council's decision to promote him to Deputy Chief of Security. Valentius gave himself a little smile at the thought while he sat at his desk thinking of the future ramifications if Magnus were to find the fugitives before Urko; and add to that his own future as the President of the High Council itself. Zaius you old fool, I know you're trying to undermine the Council for your own personal gain and prestige, you have been the President for far too long, it's time for someone new, someone who can direct the High Council to new objectives and new priorities that would elevate orang-utan power and influence throughout the simian community. The first step has already been implemented by having my son appointed, Valentius surmised, as he reviewed the rest of his plans, the second is to ensure Magnus' success by capturing the fugitives, which will ensure Urko's resignation from active service, and thirdly to replace Zaius as President, that will be a little more difficult, but not impossible, as I have already laid the seeds of discontent, which will make certain his compliance to step down. With these objectives in place my son and I will discredit Zaius and Urko, and with any luck they will both be retired from public life, but if they were to become somewhat problematic in their new roles as ordinary citizens, I'm sure a well planned accident or two can be arranged to silence them...permanently.

With this last thought in mind Valentius would have to be very careful indeed, the ramifications of murdering an ape would more than discredit him, but it would also bring disgrace, dishonour, and destroy his family's influence and reputation, and bring about a life sentence in prison, *the Lawgiver would never forgive me for such actions*. All of Valentius' personal belongings would be sized and all property confiscated and the rest of his family would be ostracized into the Forbidden Zone, never to return. Dark days lay ahead if Valentius failed in his plans for self-elevation within the simian hierarchy, but if he succeeded a new dawn of light will shine, plus new opportunities for those who grace his presence favourably.

There was a stern knock at the study door, "Enter", answered Valentius, looking up to see who it was. The door opened and in stepped Magnus in a gorilla uniform. It was very rare that an orang-utan enrolled and succeeded in military training at the Academy, but Magnus was a special case, he had plans of his own and with the help of his father, they too will be accomplished in due time. While at the Academy, and even now Magnus was stared at from the corner of every eye, by every simian he came into contact with, even on the streets, an orang-utan in a gorilla uniform was out of place in the normal scheme of things—unheard of by all, but secretly there were murmurings from orang-utans in general that Magnus was doing them proud, showing that gorillas were not the only ones capable of being groomed to the military mind. During his years at the Academy, Magnus became a loner, this was understandable considering that he was the only orang-utan; which suited him just fine as he didn't bother the rest of the gorillas and they strangely enough didn't bother him. Maybe this was because he was sponsored by his father and thus the High Council itself and the gorillas didn't want any trouble of any kind, so any practical jokes that were the norm for new recruits were not extended to Magnus for fear of political reprisals against them and or their families. In the end Magnus graduated the top of his class with



honours, much to the dissatisfaction within the gorilla establishment, but to the delight of the orang-utans, in any case Magnus was ready for his next challenge, which would come soon enough.

"Magnus, how nice to see you", Valentius greeted, half getting out of his seat to welcome his son and indicating to him to sit down as he did so himself again.

"Thank you father, it's nice to be back", making himself comfortable, "so any news?"

"Yes, the High Council as predicted has elected you Deputy Chief of Security; this will make you the youngest simian to hold a responsible office of high esteem, naturally, Urko was not impressed to say the least, it was to be expected of course, when he heard the news, I made sure of that".

"Naturally, but he to will be dealt with in due time".

"Yes, and time is on our side at the moment, remember the apprehension of the fugitives must be achieved within the next twelve months if our plans are to succeed".

"What about the renegade chimpanzee Galen, I heard rumours that Urko wants him killed, is that correct?"

"According to my sources Zaius has indicated as such, but he has had a change of heart, and may pardon Galen if he disavows any knowledge of human past history and disassociates himself with any history concerning humans who were the past masters of earth, even this knowledge is unknown to the rest of the Council".

"Then how..."

"Let's just say I have certain resources at my disposal, even I am not to know such information, but Zaius cunning as he is has certain fallacies, which I can exploit from time to time".

"Good, very good", Magnus said with a smile.

"I'm glad you agree my son, but all the information in the world will do us no good if we can not use it. In two days time you will present yourself to Urko here in Central City, but until then you can make yourself at home and prepare for your role as the *new* Deputy Chief of Security".

"I'm looking forward to it, but I have already started in my quest to find the fugitives and have recruited an ex-soldier turned bounty hunter who was dishonourably discharged from the armed services by Urko himself", Magus then called out, turning his head slightly, "you may come in now!"

As the door opened a gorilla walked in with his rifle slung over his shoulder and approached the pair of orang-utans.

"Father, I'd like you to meet a friend of mine, who also shares our, or my distaste for Urko, as he to was disgraced by him last year for failing in his duties to capture the fugitives".

"How do you do Councillor, I am please to meet you and be given this opportunity offered by your son to humiliate not only Zaius, but Urko himself".

"Fine, fine, and what did you do to deserve such treatment from your ex-General?"

“Apparently”, Magnus cut in, “my unfortunate friend here was a victim of poor circumstance”.

“Oh dear”, Valentius said sympathetically, trying to look rather sad, “I hope we can remedy that for you?”

“I hope so too Councillor”.

“Please called me Valentius, we’re all friends here, and our cause is just”.

“Thank you, Valentius”.

“Continue”.

“I was in command of a garrison stationed at Wymer near the human village called Theda run by the human Farron; one of my troopers was attacked by a crazed human there, so I got my soldiers together and rode off to the village to teach the humans a lesson, what I didn’t realise was that the fugitives were at the village also, my entire company was killed by this crazed human after we burned the village to the ground and killed some more humans, but I alone survived the attack so I took it upon myself to avenge my comrades deaths; in so doing I came across these fugitives who called themselves Virdon, Burke and Galen, which I didn’t know at the time. I basically had them in my hands, but let them go, anyway I reported back to Urko of what I had done and he wasn’t pleased that I didn’t recognise the fugitives when I had them so he dismissed me from active service and said if you want to come back and be under my command again, get me those fugitives”.

“My, my, what a sad story”, Valentius commented with concern, trying to look depressed, “after years of loyal service, to be treated like that, it’s inexcusable, just inexcusable”.

“It was luck more than anything else that I was able to find him father, and I promised him, that he will be my Deputy Chief of Security, once we have succeeded in our plans”.

“Excellent, excellent, please take a seat and tell me what is your name my friend, so we can all be acquainted”, Valentius indicated to the gorilla, who took a spare chair and sat down.

“Juba, my name is Juba”.<sup>1</sup>

“Well Juba, we have a lot to discuss, we three...yes, a lot to discuss, for the future is at stake...*our* future”.

<sup>1</sup> From the Fan Fiction story “Killer Instinct” by Dave Ballard.

**SEAQUEST  
MARIANAS STATION**

*Darken tranquillity beyond lights glow  
Where the soul and spirit weep in contemplation  
I shall await judgement upon the world  
Where life and death are one  
There is peace; there is war, there is...nothing  
And yet, I seek that which is beyond myself  
Beyond the past, beyond the future  
The darkness is shadow in the depths of the waters  
I am at peace, I...am...myself*

—\*—\*—

Bridger was in his cabin contemplating his next move, with two lost probes already, with as little information as before but twice as much now as they had. Bridger had to make a decision to possibly enter and explore the Whirlhole. The seaQuest was the only ship capable of withstanding the forces of the Whirlhole, but there was his crew to think about as well, all good men and women. Would they enter death's doorway to seek the fires of Hell from beyond the grave? *I am death incarnate, I am the devil, I am the darkness, upon which I live and breathe, I call your name, come to me my friend, and let us embrace life in the shades...of your mind.* Bridger decided he needed a little help to put his thoughts in order and to see where they would lead; he picked up the remote control for the hologram and turned it on. The image of Professor Morrison a grey-haired man with a beard who looked about sixty-five years old instantly came online and was looking at Bridger as he politely said, "Good evening Nathan, and what do I owe the pleasure of your company this time?"

Bridger breathed in with a sigh and answered, "I have a problem".

"All problems have a solution Nathan; it is just a matter of finding that solution which best fits the problem".

"Perhaps but this problem has death written all over it, and dying is not an option for me or to my crew".

"Death is a physical manifestation of the mind; if memory serves, there are those who believe that there is life even after death, I believe they call it rebirth or reincarnation".

"Well yes, but that isn't what I'm after, there's a thing out there called a Whirlhole, and we lost two probes trying to figure out what it is and what it's made of without too much success".

"Arh yes, the Whirlhole now I understand, the information I have which you have so kindly downloaded into my memory suggests that this Whirlhole even being of unknown natural phenomenon is too dangerous for human life, therefore I conclude that death is a certainty".

Bridger gave a short sarcastic smile with a huff, and said, "Thanks for the reassurance, but what a need to know is can the seaQuest withstand the forces that the Whirlhole can produce so my ship can enter it without too much damage?"

"Are you expecting not to return Nathan?"

Bridger quickly understood the question, which was typical of a computer, even for a hologram, "I expect to enter the Whirlhole and exit it in one piece".

"I have calculated that the seaQuest has a 90.45 percent chance of entering the Whirlhole intact and a 20.65 percent chance of exiting the Whirlhole in the same manner; as for the crew of around 240 personnel, I expect a 95.95 percent loss of human life. These figures of course are given with only the current available data at my disposal, with an unknown margin of error of 10.75 percent to all known factors as stated, naturally if I had more information, the percentages would change accordingly".

"Naturally, but now that I think about it, the seaQuest can run on a minimum crew requirement of 75, thus decreasing that 90 percent".

"You are correct Nathan; the loss of human life would be reduced but it would still be at 95.95 percent for those crewmembers who stay aboard".

"Alright, but at least about 165 of my crew will be alive, and maybe about a half a dozen more from the seaQuest herself, but even so having 70 lives lost is still a very high number for what needs to be done, and for what, just so the UEO can satisfy their curiosity, it's just not acceptable, not in my book, I just won't do it!"

"Do you have to enter the Whirlhole Nathan?"

"Apparently so, why?"

"According to my figures there is 75.95 percent chance of survival for the ship and her crew, thus 19.05 percent damage calculated for the seaQuest and 5 percent loss of human life, which equals 12 crewmembers".

"But that's with all the crew aboard, what about with just the 75?"

"3.75 crewmembers".

"Now that's more like it", Bridger couldn't believe what he was saying; gambling with his crew against a hologram to better the odds of survival, this was no game, it was insane, life was precious...every life, animal or human.

"I thought you would be pleased, but can you live with the loss of 4 crewmembers, will your conscience allow it?"

"No, not really, never, even 4 dead crewmembers is still 4 too many".

"Do you have any more thoughts or information for me to help you decide the outcome of your predicament?"

"Actually, I do have another idea, let me run this by you and see what you think".

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After a few more minutes Bridger had finished his discussion with Professor Morrison and turned off the hologram and reached for the intercom to establish shipwide communication, "This is Captain Bridger, I want Commander Ford, Doctor Westphalen, Lt. Commander Hitchcock, Chief Crocker and Lucas in the Ward Room in 10 minutes, and O'Neill, tell Dr Chapman to join us as well".

"Understood Captain", O'Neill said from the bridge.

"Captain, this Ford, what's up?"

"I'll tell you in the ward room Commander, Bridger out".

Yes I'll tell you, Bridger thought, and he got up and left for the Ward Room, thinking of the madness of what was to come, but he asked himself why, why do it at all?

—\*—\*—

"Well there you have it", finished Bridger as he looked around the table, "thoughts anyone?"

"Nathan, as a doctor", this coming from Westphalen, "I think it sheer madness to even contemplate such an idea let alone to consider doing it at all regardless of the risk, human life is human life, and no one in their right mind would voluntarily assign themselves for this mission knowing the consequences, it would be like playing Russian roulette, only on a larger scale", she commented very strongly, not happy with what Bridger had informed them about their chances of survival with the Whirlhole.

"I agree to a point", added Chapman, "and as a fellow doctor, although in a different field I sympathise with your feelings, but orders are orders, and the Whirlhole is unique and it must be studied at all costs, we must know how it formed and what it is made of, if we are to understand the mysteries of the inner world".

"We could reduce the crew complement down to 50, to make the odds better", Ford said, feeling a little more comfortable and confident about what lay ahead, but still he felt uneasy and shocked at the same time, he had to agree with Westphalen on this occasion, it was madness, and the Captain already knew his thoughts on the subject.

"True Commander, but if we don't have enough crew, the seaQuest will be useless to manage, especially in the upcoming situation we will face", Bridger replied. "We'll still need the 75, pure and simple".

"I could reconfigure the main computers and put together some automated systems which can be used as a backup as well as to help the seaQuest navigate and help better her manoeuvrability as we approach the Whirlhole", Lucas suggested.

"I was actually thinking the same thing Lucas; it would improve our chances a great deal", Bridger added, "perhaps you and Hitchcock can work together on it, especially the Engineering Section; we'll need all the power we can muster".

"If Lucas can squeeze the seaQuest's engines to deliver more than 160 knots that would give us more of an edge to handle the ship against the Whirlhole. If done I could recalculate the stresses of the fission turbines for maximum efficiency", Hitchcock responded with self-belief knowing she could do the job as long as it would work, and she knew Lucas would be able to help her achieve it; a real smart kid that boy, she thought, he's going to be somebody, someday. But she also had mixed feelings about this whole situation, I'm not

afraid of dying just as long as it was for a good cause, but this Whirlhole thing...was pointless.

“Good, but now here’s some information I didn’t tell you earlier that might sway your minds, there’s a 86.95 percent chance that the seaQuest can survive the Whirlhole intact, which leaves 13.05 percent, 3 of which means loss of life equalling in round figures 2 crewmembers instead of 4, the rest is the damage sustained by the ship, this means that in order to attain those figures the seaQuest has to approach and perhaps enter the Whirlhole differently, and I state differently”, Bridger paused to allow what he was saying sink in before he continued, “the seaQuest will approach the Whirlhole backwards, the seaQuest has more power to forward thrust than it has in reverse, so we can control the ship’s power in a more stable manner for maximum efficiency, unconventional yes, but it will work”.

“Brilliant Captain”, Chapman said with renewed enthusiasm, knowing that his plans and that of the UEO’s were getting closer to being achieved, “and remarkable, this will certainly maximise our chances of studying the Whirlhole”.

“Even at the cost of losing two lives?” Westphalen replied still not happy, folding her arms in a show of defiance.

“If I may be so bold doctor, but the loss is not guaranteed, only calculated, isn’t that right, Captain?”

“Yes that’s right”, Bridger answered, suddenly feeling tired, “we may only sustain a few injuries and not lose one crewmember at all”.

“But it’s still possible?” Westphalen questioned.

“Yes, it’s possible”, Bridger answered, “okay, this is what needs to be done, Chief, you and Lt. Krieg make up a list of the 75 volunteers who wish to stay aboard while the rest disembark onto the station”.

“You got it Cap’n”, Crocker replied, who remained silent during the meeting, he also didn’t like what he heard but he was a navy man through and through and orders were orders, and besides he trusted Nathan, he’s a good Captain as well as a very good friend.

“Dr. Chapman, I assume you’d be joining us onboard?”

“Absolutely, I wouldn’t miss this opportunity for the world”, no, not a chance, he thought, I’ve waited my whole life for something like this, this was a rare occurrence; yes I do realise that lives are at stake here, but the chance to observe, study and gather vital information about an unknown freak of nature was too strong to ignore. Nothing like it has ever been seen or recorded before; I must know what the Whirlhole is made of...I must.

“Good, now I think 24 hours is long enough to do what’s required, so let’s summarise what’s to be done and make our preparations”.

—\*—\*—

As the Ward Room was vacated to prepare the seaQuest, Westphalen stayed behind to speak to Bridger, “Nathan”, she said quietly, “do you really believe you can do this, I mean risk the lives of this crew to possible suicide, is it really that important a mission?”

“Kristen, don’t you think the word suicide is a little too strong, it isn’t—look don’t you think I know what I’m asking of this ship and its crew? If I’d have my way I wouldn’t be doing

this at all, that Whirlhole out there is too unpredictable, but like Chapman said, the scientist in me wants to find out what it is and how it formed, and the military side of me has to deal with the naval bureaucracy because they believe that the Whirlhole may have the potential power that could be developed for military purposes”.

“But what do you believe in Nathan?” Westphalen questioned sensitively not believing one word what Bridger was saying, she knew him better than that.

Bridger looked at her and after a moment calmly said, “I believe we should just leave it alone, just let it be, I feel somehow we should just walk away, I believe that there are some things in this world—even in this universe we should just let alone. I’m all for exploring new frontiers in all aspects, but there are times we must just step back and say *‘leave well enough alone’*, that’s how I feel”.

“But you’re still going to try, aren’t you?”

“I have no intention of deliberately jeopardising my ship and its crew to unnecessary danger that could mean our destruction, at the first sign I will pull out”.

“I hope you’re right Nathan I really do”, with this Westphalen got up from her chair and added, “well I better get things prepared if we’re going into the mouth of the devil”. Then she turned around and exited the ward room leaving Bridger to ponder her last words, into the mouth of the devil and added his own phrase, into the mouth of the devil, for his breath breathes fire and brimstone from the bowels of the earth known as hell to the heathen born and bred.

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Crocker knocked on Krieg’s cabin door to which the Lieutenant opened, “Hi Chief what’s up?” he said with a wide brim smile.

Crocker always had an uneasy feeling about Krieg’s smile, because he knew that Krieg always had some scheme cooking for his own personal gain wherever opportunity presented itself, but he was a reliable officer and being in Supply could always guarantee to get whatever was needed for any job that required to be done.

“Krieg you and I are in charge of assembling a list of volunteers for the upcoming assignment to gather data about the Whirlhole, the Captain’s gonna make a shipwide announcement for those who wish to participate to see us in the Mess Hall”.

“Sure Chief, but does it have to be right now? I mean...”

“Yep, right now”, Crocker cut in promptly, taking a quick glance over Krieg’s shoulder into his cabin, “sure you don’t want me to come in there and make a quick security check, would you?”

“No, I don’t think that would be necessary Chief”, giving a little nervous smile as he closed his cabin door, “I’m ready and willing right now”.

“Good, glad to hear it”, waiting for Krieg to move, “so let’s go”.

“On the job Chief, on the job”, Krieg replied, as both men headed together to the Mess Hall.

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Chapman was gathering his things—some computer equipment to help analyse the Whirlhole and was preparing to leave for the seaQuest when Phillips entered his quarters.

“Hurl?” Phillips said in a quiet tone.

“Arh Angie, come in”, he said enthusiastically.

“Door was open”, then continued, “you might not come back you know”, feeling suddenly alone and afraid.

“Don’t worry”, turning to Phillips giving her a reassuring smile, “I will be perfectly alright; you know it has to be done, the information I will gather will be invaluable”.

“Are you sure, is it worth the risk?”

“It is; believe me, what’s out there...”

“...could give you the Noble Prize”.

“Perhaps”, giving a smile, “but that is not why I’m going, someone has to, and the only one responsible enough...is me; I will not risk anyone else’s life”, before Phillips could reply, “now please I have to go, I’ll be back you’ll see”, and with that he gave Phillips a little peck on the cheek and left her standing by his quarters. Phillips watched as Chapman walked away, with a little tear forming in her eye, she unexpectedly felt cold, as if death had visited her grave, stealing her soul...or was it another’s.

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On the Bridge of the seaQuest, Bridger was overseeing the final preparations for departure, thanks to Lucas, the seaQuest was able to run various computer systems automatically without human intervention, which meant another 10 crewmembers were not needed, that just left 65 on board, not bad, not bad at all he thought as Crocker approached him, as Bridger indicated to Ford to double-check everything before the eventful, if not fateful launch...or was that fatal?

“I’ve checked the ship from top to bottom Cap’n, it’s all secure, and Kreig double-checked the crew manifest that disembarked onto the station to make sure they all were off the ship”.

“Nicely done Manilow; well you’d better get to your station, it’s definitely going to be a very rough ride”, Bridger replied knowing it was the biggest understatement of the year, maybe this century.

“Aye-aye Cap’n and...” after a short pause, “...good luck”, Crocker responded with a relaxed half salute and went off to allow Bridger to do his job.

On the Bridge also was Chapman at his allocated station to monitor and record all information and data pertaining to the Whirlhole. Bridger saw him working feverishly over his computer making adjustments here and there”.

“All’s well doctor?” Bridger called out to him.

“Fine Nathan, fine”, Chapman replied, not even looking up from his work to acknowledge the Captain’s query.



That's dedication for you; Bridger observed as he quickly scanned the Bridge, well this is it I guess. "All right Commander, is everything green for go?"

"Yes sir, all is green, just give the word".

"The word is given Commander", then he repeated to himself more softly again, "the word is given".

"General quarters, general quarters, condition red, repeat condition red, secure all stations, I say again, secure all stations", the claxton sounded all throughout the ship as Ford gave the orders to secure the seaQuest for departure, "disengage the ship from the Marianas and head out towards the Whirlhole".

"Commander, when we've cleared the station, prepare the seaQuest to turn 180 degrees".

"Aye Captain, prepare to turn 180 degrees on my order Mr. Shan".

"Aye sir".

In the back of his mind Bridger recalled a part of a play by Karbowski, how did it go.

*'Tis folly aplenty that I seek my foe so close to thy heart of mine.*

*Nay O brother, since the dawn of morning as the dew dries thy tears, it is but fear that relents in thy presence.*

*I have but one heart, one soul, one sword, 'tis it not enough that I sacrifice my spirit as well?*

*Only if the shards of the flesh remain O brother, it is no consequence to thee, for thee is strong in statue, and thy frame is robust.*

*True, but will my enemy falter at the sight of my coming? For I know I must strike before the hour.*

*Blood shall not stain your conscience, nor the ethic hence morals dwell.*

*Battle of wills, strength of heart, steel upon steel, the red cloak shall cover the fallen to lay the innocent before thy feet.*

*Osiris will be pleased.*

*Nay, only a fool would approach the devil and live.*



**WHIRLHOLE  
MARIANA TRENCH**

*Silence.*

*I dream of silence; I dream.*

*This place, cold, dark, I am alone.*

*But I sense the thoughts of those who are distant.*

*If I am here, then where am I?*

*If where I am is here, then here I must be.*

*Strange, I feel no warmth, but I feel I am safe.*

*Safe?*

*From what, from who, from where?*

*The depths of this world are alien to my soul, and to my understanding.*

*I need to know why I am here, and where I am going.*

*What purpose do I serve by staying here?*

*There are many questions, many thoughts; guidance is but rare.*

*I touch, I feel, the substance is cold all around me.*

*And yet I live within this world, within this being.*

*She is alive, she is young; she is dying.*

*I can not help her, I can not communicate.*

*But I feel for her, she weeps, for I am within her tears.*

*I mourn.*

*I must leave soon, for this place disturbs me, but all is silent, quiet.*

*I rest, I sleep, I dream.*

*Listen, I can hear you.*

*Approach, do not fear, I will not harm you.*

*The mother comes seeking her children.*

*She is warm and cold, life and death.*

*I sense her fear.*

*Do not be afraid, I will guide you to your children.*

*Do not resist.*

*My senses blue to the touch know your feelings.*

*I will not harm those within your womb.*

*Flesh and metal, metal and flesh.*

*Heart and spirit, spirit and heart.*

*Many beats, many pulses, many souls, many thoughts.*

*You are fragile, weak, yet death is foreign to you.*

*I sense no heart, no spirit, but I know you live, and yet you do not breathe.*

*Why is that?*

*Even so, there are many breaths within your care inside your soul.*

*They are different than you,*

*Hello, can you understand me?*

*Speak, I will listen, speak, who are you?*

*Perhaps you are angry that I took your children, yes?*

*Then come closer, they are within me.*

*Strange how they do not cry for you their mother, no wait, they do.*

*Sounds, I hear their voices, sounds, tiny but faint.*

*Closer, closer, that's it, I will guide you.*

*Sorry, did I hurt you?*

*Interesting, you do not bleed, you are a soul without life, but you are alive.*

*I embrace you now, I will guide you now, I will help you find your children.*

*Now.*

**CALIFORNIA  
SANTA CRUZ**

Dawn had arrived; the sun in a glowing orange-yellow circular embryonic haze rises up above the horizon as the sea unveils it's raw beauty to the world, a world scarred by war, global warming, greed, self appeasement, anger—and that was when the human race was in control; now it is a world dominated by a different kind of race, a race preaching peace, equality, justice, faith and belief. But it had a dark secret, a secret tainted in blood and death. This world scarred by the hands of demons—human and ape; after the nuclear war that devastated the earth, this race rose up to take control, and to give back to the earth a breath of new life for it to breathe again in a new dawn of awakenings, a new soul, a new beginning, that race was the humanoid ape; its origins still a mystery, but nevertheless they had arisen—and the apes secret? The enslavement of man in all his forms, physical, technological, social and mental; man the destroyer, man the animal, man the infectious. A disease that needed a cure, and there was only one cure—extinction.

*“Extinction is but a word, and the word of law, for within us lies a great path towards enlightenment, the true path. Know this that man must be cleansed; the animal must be put down, for the beast corrupts his soul, and the beast must be extinguished, for his soul to be set free, but man has no soul, he is in eternal pain, and he asks—he asks to be forgiven. I forgive man, but I do not forgive his transgressions, for he must find his own path to enlightenment, but the beast within clouds his judgement, for the devil knows his brother”.*

Julian, the Lawgiver.

Galen had woken early and gathered some more wood for the fire to make this morning's breakfast, as he sat by the fire watching the cooking pot boil away, his thoughts were of Alan and Pete, his two friends—his two human friends, still sleeping away the dreams of tomorrow, which would be the reality of today if Alan has anything to do with it. Yes, Alan Virdon a human, an astronaut as was Peter Burke, two men from earth's past caught in earth's future trying to find a way home—a way back to their world. Alan was more determined than Pete because he had a wife and son to go back to, while Pete had no one, well not that he knew of anyway. In any case Alan was unwavering in his search to almost being single-minded in his quest to get back, while Pete took things in his stride, meeting any situation the group came across with an uncomfortable ease, Pete still had bad memories of Wanda<sup>1</sup> and what she did to him, but slowly Pete was getting there, but the psychological scars will remain and they will never heal. It would be up to Alan to see that Pete can recover from his emotional demons, and so far he's done quite well, they were both friends, they shared a lot of times together even before they came to my world, a world they have tried to understand, the why of it all, but they knew, the proof was all around them, his brothers—his fellow man had unleashed a power far greater even in the eyes of the Lawgiver himself, that power, was nuclear war Alan had called it, he said many human nations—countries he explained, had nuclear bombs. I asked why? And Alan simply said that man didn't trust his brother, and if one country had more than one bomb, another country had to have still more, and it escalated until every nation feared one another, and it was only a matter of time, and it came—the war to end all wars.

Now Alan and Pete know the truth, but even they still don't understand how it all happened, perhaps Alan had said that they might find the answer in my world. They came close last year when we found that computer in Oakland,<sup>2</sup> but it was not to be, Urko and Zaius saw to that. Alas, now we are three, and with my help I have been able to help Alan and Pete survive in my world but there was a cost. My life in the simian society had been compromised, now I am a fugitive as well, framed for murdering a gorilla by Urko because he wanted to kill my friends, he believed along with Zaius that they were dangerous, but to whom?

The simian way of life or to their fears?

But what kind of fear?

The truth?

Why must the truth be suppressed, could not the humans like Alan and Pete be a benefit to simian society in general, to help improve and educate our fears so we can understand them? But the truth, the real truth, lay in the past, man has abused the earth for his own selfish gain and it cost him his life, his intellect, his ability to comprehend his ongoing mistakes and his understanding of what is right. Now the humans in my world are docile, subservant, unintelligent, and know their place without question, without thought of rebellious action. Could ape and man albeit live together, be together as friends, as equals? Not if Urko and Zaius have their way, that's why Alan and Pete are dangerous, they can think, act, and incite the humans to be more than they are, they were the proof that man could be more than slaves, to be the thinking animal once again, to rise up...

"Hey buddy, you look deep in thought, what's up?" Burke surprised Galen, as he came up behind Galen to join him by the fire, sitting down next to him.

"Oh nothing, I just--well, just thinking about us, about when this will all end", Galen replied, not telling the whole truth with a sigh.

"One day", Burke said, as he helped himself to some breakfast, taking some broth from the pot and putting it in a small bowl he had taken from his knapsack, "one day Galen, it will end, but how it will turn out, that's anybody's guess", taking a small mouthful of broth and having a taste, "this is great, sure warms the stomach".

"Glad you like it", trying to change the subject, "you know the more I learn to cook the more I appreciate food, especially as I can experiment on different kinds of vegetables, and the occasional meat mixture, which I know you love".

"I can definitely agree on that", Virdon said with a smile, as he joined in on the group for breakfast.

"Well I guess being a farm boy does have its advantages", Burke quipped.

"Don't knock it Pete", sitting down beside Galen helping himself to the broth, "smells good", taking a spoonful and putting it to his nose to allow the aroma to fill his lungs, "a-la Galen, I think, I can smell his culinary skills anywhere", then putting the spoon in his mouth, "hmm...real good", then he began filling his bowl to continue his eating.

"Some of us are just born critics, but me, I like it no matter what", Burke put in, as he too gulped another spoonful.

By this time Galen had also served himself his broth and tasted it. "Not bad, not bad at all, perhaps just a little more salt..."

"You mean you haven't had a taste before now?" Burke asked, looking a bit surprised.

"Well, I waited to see if you both were still breathing after your first bite", Galen replied with a smirk on his face.

"Well how do you like that", continued Burke, "we've been suckered Al".

"What can I say", with a grin, "he's learned from the best, so maybe next time I'll make breakfast..."

"...starting with dinner tonight", Burke put in quickly; "just to be sure I wake up tomorrow".

"I would never, don't you trust me Pete?" Galen asked sarcastically.

"Sure—sure".

Then all three of them began to laugh.

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While Galen was clearing camp to make ready to move out for today's journey and Alan was doing some scouting around, Pete was by the seashore cleaning the wooden bowls, utensils and the pot to put in the group's knapsacks. As he was finishing up and putting the stuff away, he heard what he thought was a dull metallic thud. Burke stood up and looked around but couldn't see anything. Must be my imagination he thought, oh well better get back to Galen to see if he's ready to go. As he turned around to head back, he heard the sound again, and again Burke looked around to see where the sound was coming from, this time he spotted something floating against the rocks in the distance, or what looked like something floating, it seemed to be bumping against the rocks in motion with the waves. I'll be... Burke wondered, I wonder what that is, couldn't hurt to take a look since we won't be coming back this way, not for a while anyway?

So Burke left the knapsacks where he was and casually jogged to the rocks; a minute or so later he was by a rock pool, and all this time he kept his eye on the floating object which was partially covered by seaweed so as not to lose sight of it. As Burke climbed the rocks to get near, he was careful not to hurt himself, but he made it to an outcropping where the main rock was jutting out towards the sea. It was here that he saw the floating object, at first Burke thought it was an old world war two mine, and for a minute he panicked, as this being over 2000 years old it could explode any time soon—like right now, as it was bumping against the rock. But Burke relaxed as he quickly noticed it didn't look like a mine, similar in size and shape but definitely not a mine, and besides he saw what looked like a light, yes a flashing orange light, but what could it be?

It was then that Burke decided to get Alan, and together they could rescue this thing—whatever it was—and study it. Looks like we'll have to postpone Los Angeles for another day Burke thought, as he climbed back over the rocks and ran to get Alan and tell him what he'd found, the interesting thing is, it's working, and no ape had the ability to build or make such a thing. So it had to be manmade, from our past, or our present—because it looks new—very new. Could there be a human colony somewhere out over the sea, or even under it, who knows?

<sup>1</sup> See the episode, *'The Interrogation'*.

<sup>2</sup> See the episode, *'The Legacy'*.

**MAGNUS' OFFICE  
CENTRAL CITY**

It was evening and Magnus was bent over his desk studying his map which he made consisting of the surrounding land which included Central City; he in put as much detail as he could to make it as accurate as possible. On the map were various coloured dots, mainly centred in and around the city, with a few scattered north and east, while the rest were out towards the west and south. He smiled to himself as he contemplated the position of these dots, for they represented the fugitive's locations which they had been reported seen in the past year and at present. Magnus hoped that by knowing where the fugitives were, he could predict where the fugitives might be in the future, and he would be able to plan his next move to foresee the fugitive's eventual capture. As predicted Magnus did notice a definite pattern emerging, this led further west then gradually down heading south.

With this in mind, Magnus earlier in the day sent Juba towards the fugitives last known location along with six gorilla troopers to command; it seemed that being the Deputy Chief of Security hadn't sunk in yet with the city garrison and that taking orders from an orang-utan was difficult at the best of times, but Magnus suspected that Urko had something to do with it. I guess that's what you'd expect from gorillas, he thought, they stick and stay together, inferior as they are as intellects, that's why I got Juba to do my bidding, being a gorilla and all, at least he can gave and take orders and has the experience of a commander to discipline the troopers if they got out of line.

Magnus eyed the southern part of the map, to contemplate his next move, for he too will be joining Juba in a day or so to help hunt down the fugitives. Magnus studied the map and made some mental notes, there were some small simian villages in that part of the country including human ones; the only major simian settlement was a fishing town called Khanoch, and further down was the villages of Santas and Zharnn and beyond that was a reported ruined city made of rock and metal known as concrete and steel. They said it was built by apes long ago, and that the humans of that time destroyed it, because they were jealous of simian intellect and knowledge. Magnus somehow didn't believe it, the humans would have to have weapons—very destructive weapons to do that amount of damage, and besides if the apes of that time were smart, they should've hunted the humans down before the city was destroyed in the first place and where did the humans get their weapons from anyway?

Humans—hairless creatures, their only purpose was to serve the apes, they don't have the intelligence to rise up and threaten simian civilization. Their only function is to provide labour and their meagre abilities to help build a better simian culture. A *superior* culture, as long as the humans know their place, all would be well as was ordained by the Lawgiver. Magnus had to admit that he and Urko could agree on one thing, humans were a pest and needed to be controlled; and thinking of Urko, where was he? He was supposed to be here by now, maybe he's making me wait for him; he's probably sulking because now he has a deputy to help him capture these ass-tro-nauts and that renegade chimp. No matter, I'll show him, and get his job in the process too, all in a matter of time; Chief of Security Magnus, it had a nice ring to it, yes indeed—a very nice ring to it. With that last thought



Magnus gathered up the map and left his office to tell his father of his plans, and then in the morning he will organise himself to join Juba.

—\*—\*—

Councillor Yalu and his wife Ann were sitting quietly by the fireplace in their living room. While Ann was doing some knitting, Yalu was reading a scroll going over the last Council Meeting in which Valentius' son Magnus was voted as Deputy Chief of Security, this was a new position created to assist Urko in his endeavours to capture the fugitives. Yalu didn't like the outcome because he knew Valentius was ambitious; rumours were that he wanted Zaius' position as President of the High Council. If there is one ape Yalu didn't like, and that of an orang-utan it was Valentius; and I better keep my eye on Magnus as well, he too may have ambitions of his own. Father and son—a lethal combination, and the question is will I be a victim in some way, will my political career suffer and not to mention my wife's standing in the community? Political tensions have been rising of late, but the real question is, where will it lead? What will be the ultimate fate of Central City under a new political ethos, who will survive the blood letting when the rains wash away the stains of injustice, who will stand over the fallen, and more to the point, who will be the fallen?

It was a long climb back for the both of us when Galen became a fugitive helping Virdon and Burke escape from Urko last year when they first arrived from the sky—what did Virdon call it—space, yes, from outer space I think, from beyond the earth, from earth's past, where man was the dominant species, not the ape. Ann had trouble regaining her trust among her friends, she almost was left alone with no one to talk to, no one to help her when she needed it. Even I was put under suspicion and my election to the High Council was in jeopardy, but Zaius was able to put the other Council Members minds at rest and said that I should not be a reflection of my son's deeds and that my contribution to the community was invaluable after years of service to enlighten and advance our simian culture...

"Are you alright dear, you look unhappy?" Ann asked, interrupting Yalu's thoughts.

"Yes, yes I'm fine", Yalu replied with a sigh, "I was just deep in thought that's all, thinking what the future may hold for us, for our society".

"I'm sure with you on the Council, your voice will be heard if anything were of consequence", Ann added confidently with a reassuring smile, "and besides you are well respected..."

"That's just it Ann", Yalu interrupted her, "I just don't know, things are happening, not socially mind you, but politically, I can feel it, something's not right, and I feel it's going to happen soon, and we could be a causality".

"You talk as if we were going to have war or something", shuddering.

"Perhaps, but a war of minds, not with guns".

"I don't understand; who are we going to fight anyway?"

"Ourselves Ann, ourselves", Yalu said quietly.

Just then there was a knock at the door and both Yalu and Ann looked in that direction simultaneously. "I wonder who it could be at this hour", Yalu questioned, as he got up from his chair and walked over to the front door, as he opened it, to his surprise it was Urko, "well, well Urko, you're the last person I would think of coming here again, sorry my son isn't here, maybe tomorrow if you're lucky", Yalu greeted Urko sarcastically.

"Don't worry, I know he's not here", Urko responded dryly, "I'm actually here to see you", in a more serious tone, "may I come in?"

"Of course Urko", showing him in.

"How are you this evening Urko..." Ann enquired, getting up from her chair to greet him.

"As well as can be expected", Urko replied with a nod.

"...and Elta; how is she?"

"She's fine; just worries that I work late".

"Well that's to be expected Urko, we wives have to look after our husbands, since they have trouble doing it themselves", giving a sympathetic; reassuring look at Yalu.

"Well, yes", Yalu replied, grumbling lightly under his breath, who suddenly felt a little uncomfortable.

"Good, good, well I think I'll go to bed and leave you two to discuss whatever it is you wish to discuss, politics I suppose, which isn't really my thing you know, but interesting nonetheless, good evening Urko", Ann said, and then gave her husband a light peck on the cheek.

"I'll be in soon dear".

Satisfied, Ann left Yalu and Urko alone.

"Would you like to come into my study Urko, or would here be acceptable?"

"No, this will be fine", Urko answered and indicated to the chairs for permission to sit down, which both of them did, "I'll be frank and straight to the point with you Yalu, I want you to help me in my plans to discredit Valentius and especially his son Magnus, are you interested?"

—\*—\*—

Juba was in command, and it felt good, he along with six troopers were camped for the night off the main road beside a stream. They were all sitting around the campfire having their dinner. Sergeant Hakonn who was sitting opposite him was his second-in-command and put in charge of the others to keep them in line. Juba felt their tension all day, their distrust, their unease of being given this assignment by an orang-utan. But since the High Council was backing the new Deputy Chief of Security, there was nothing the gorillas could do but obey the orders given, with as little grumbling as possible to the point of tolerability. Nevertheless Juba knew how to handle various forms of—shall we say—disobedience. So he decided now would be a good time to give a little prep talk to ease the coming days ahead.

"Right...", standing up so that every gorilla could view him and pay attention, "...now I know that some of you, maybe even all of you have some difficulty understanding certain news which has arisen lately in Central City, mainly our new Deputy Chief of Security by the name of Magnus...", he began to slowly pace up and down, "...let me assure you that, Urko also approves of this appointment because as you are well aware he too is a member of the High Council. I must admit myself that it is difficult to fathom and accept an orang-utan at such a high position, but even I have to obey orders from him as much as you do..."

"But you Juba are a bounty hunter..." Hakonn added, as the other gorillas grunted and shaking their heads in approval, "...you have no reason to obey an orang-utan".

"True", Juba stopped his pacing to face Hakonn, "except I have been offered certain incentives if I help bring in the fugitives", he paused before continuing, "I was once like you so I know how you feel, we are simple soldiers, we do our best to maintain order within our society. The High Council has made a political judgement and we must abide by it, if something were to go wrong, then don't you think Magnus will get the blame?"

"What you say is true Juba, but what about us if we fail?"

"Nothing, maybe a slap on the wrist, that's about it; remember we follow orders to the best of our ability, nothing more, nothing less".

"Except Urko may discharge us from service, like you Juba", Hakonn added, "I did some checking and I found out you were once a Commander of a garrison, what happened?"

"Yes, I was", not too surprised that Hakonn knew, anyone who had any brains could find information about anyone, if they knew who and where to look, "I made a mistake, but at the time I didn't realise it. You see, I had the fugitives in my grasp, but I didn't know it at the time, so I let them go, so when I reported to Urko—he being Urko decided to make an example of me, so he dismissed me from the army and I've been after the fugitives ever since", there was a short pause as the group absorbed the information before Juba continued again, "you see, with me along as your Commander, I can take the heat if anything were to go wrong, thus keeping you lot in the clear so Urko won't have to blame you and dismiss you as he did me if you stuff things up. I'm your—shall we say—your insurance".

That last comment struck an approval with the gorilla group as they knew all too well how Urko deals with incompetence within the ranks of his army. Urko had little patience for those who displeased him when it came to the capture of the fugitives; he would be fluming for days, taking it out on any trooper who would unwisely be in striking distance of his displeasure—that being the understatement of the century—any century for that matter.

Hakonn eyed Juba improvingly but still wasn't quite sure how to judge him yet, "and what about the bounty that Urko put on the fugitives heads, does it mean we won't get any if we capture them?"

"You will, but I'll get a fifty percent cut, the rest will be divided amongst yourselves, providing you follow my orders and do as I say, and when I'll make my report to Magnus, I'll put in a good word or two, which could mean promotions all round; I mean Lieutenant Hakonn sounds better than Sergeant Hakonn, right?"

"I'll believe it when it happens Juba and not before, besides I'm due for a promotion anyway; and I know the rest of us...", looking at his friends for approval all around, as they too eyed him and then all turned their attention to Juba, "...want a better standing within the ranks, it's all been long overdue".

"I understand; I really do", voiced Juba with concern, "that's why this assignment is important to all of us, we must succeed if we are to claim our just reward, but if we fail, then Magnus will get the blame, leaving us where we are now, so we have nothing to lose, so let's do our jobs the best we can and see how this all plays out".

This seemed to appease the group, and Juba began to feel the tension slowly dissipate, good, he thought, these gorillas might make decent troopers yet under his command and influence.



**NATHAN BRIDGER**  
**SEAQUEST**

*I go to sleep  
Till I awaken  
My soul will be in the spiritual world  
And will there meet the higher being  
Who guides me through this earthly life  
Who hovers about my head  
My soul will meet  
And when I waken  
This meeting will have been*

*Rudolf Steiner*

—\*—\*

I hear voices.

I feel voices—no.

I hear a voice—distant. Serene. Ghostly?

*Naaaathaaan*

Shades of light. Tranquil. Peaceful—and yet?

There is a certain, soothing of restful self-possession.

Composed of placid flows of undisturbed silence.

*Naaaathaaan*

Who's there?

What do you want?

Where are you?

*Naaaathaaan*

Bridger opened his eyes slowly to focus that in which he could not see.

But alas, sight of sound, of voice...of the unknown.

I seek that which is.

*Nathan*

He was standing, surrounded in white, there was no up or down, left or right, just white, mist but no mist, fog but no fog and the light was everywhere—not blinding, but soft, warm and calm. There was even a certain stillness of silence—but. The flowing of water—fluid motion; he felt light—almost a translucence of soul—of spirit. He knew—and yet he didn't; there was freedom—of thought, of illumination, of...enlightenment? I am here but I am not here, I am there but I am not there. Into the womb, into the beginning...time...immortality...death?

*Nathan*

"Who's there?" Bridger called out, "where are you?"

*I'm right here Nathan*

Bridger turned around to see who it was, and couldn't believe his eyes—Carol, standing there smiling at him in all her beauty, "Carol?"

*Yes Nathan, it's me, how are you?*

"I don't understand", looking and feeling confused, trying to believe his eyes, "Carol, but you're dead?" although it wasn't what he really wanted to say, but it just came out.

*Only physically, never spiritually, listen Nathan, I don't have much time, it's so good to see you again, a little older, one or two more wrinkles, more grey around the temples, but you look well.*

"I missed you".

*I know*

"I broke my promise to you..."

*It doesn't matter, touching his lips lightly with the tips of her right fingers to silence him; all is well, for I understand*

"Carol", he said softly, was all he could say again, looking into her eyes, trying to search for meaning, trying to understand; why is this happening...to me? He thought, am I dead too, is this paradise, is this the end of all things, how did I die? It must have been quick, for I don't remember a thing; well at least it was painless—was it?

*Nathan, I have to go now, please don't worry about me anymore, I'm happy, and when the time is right, we will be together again*

"I need you now Carol, please don't go, please? I have questions that need answers".

*I am always with you, you know that, but you must find peace, find comfort, and you must let go*

"Robert?"

*He is alive, I know, you will find him, be well my love. I love you, I will be waiting*

"No, no, nooooo".

It was then that Bridger's vision became blurred for a second, a second in eternity; a second in forever. Shadows within shadows, within the shades of love, of life, of purpose, of the path to the end of time, where time is an illusion, a figment of the mind and imagination of the physical. For the soul weeps, as the tears count the seconds towards the final judgement, and there will be pain...pain for those who seek it...pleasure for those who want to deny it...and deliverance for those who want to know it.

*Naaaathaaan*

Darkness replaced light. Chaos replaced peace. Confusion replaced serenity.

*Naaaathaaan*

The voice, her voice.

*Naaaathaaan*

I hear you—must see.

*Nathan*

Let there be light.

—\*—\*—

“Nathan”.

“Wha...” Bridger opened his eyes as he tried simultaneously to sit up.

“Nathan...” Westphalen said calmly, as she gently restrained Bridger from getting up from the sick bed, “...easy now, you’ve had a nasty fall, and were knocked unconscious, I had to put a couple of stitches on your forehead, just relax”.

“Where...the ship?” Trying to recollect his thoughts, clearing head dazed mind.

“Don’t worry; everything’s fine, the ship’s all in one piece, thank God”, Westphalen said with reassurance, trying at the same time to make Bridger more comfortable.

“How long have I been out?” Bridger questioned, trying to still fathom his surroundings.

“A few hours, I thought we were going to lose you, but you pulled through”, Westphalen replied, with a somewhat worried look on her face.

Bridger, now calmed down and resting just the way Westphalen wanted, looked around the Infirmary and noticed he was not the only one recovering, “How’s the rest of the crew?” trying not to think or say the ‘D’ word.

“Well I don’t know how, but all the crew are alive, what you see here, are the most serious cases, the rest, minor cuts and bruises, and strangely all the crew had experienced some form of a headache while going through the Whirlhole, nothing serious, just annoying; Commander Ford is on the Bridge right now, putting the ship in order, I’ll tell him you’re awake”, Westphalen walked to the nearest intercom and paged Ford, and then came back trying again to restrain Bridger from getting up, “oh no Nathan, just stay and lie down, you need rest...”

"But..."

"No buts, that's an order, in here I'm in charge, understand?" trying to be firm.

"Alright", Bridger replied with a sigh, "but I need to be up soon".

"You will be, but not just right now".

At that moment Ford entered the Infirmary, he had his right arm in a sling and approached Bridger, Westphalen went away to attend to the others in her care, so that they could talk. "How you feeling Sir?" nodding slightly to indicate Bridger's bandaged forehead.

"You look better than me Commander", Bridger said slowly.

"Must be my black skin hiding all the bruises sir", saying it with a smile.

"Must be" smiling back, "your arm broken?"

"No it was just dislocated, although I don't remember doing it, but setting it back is an experience I won't forget in a hurry".

"I'll bet; okay, what's the damage? Just give me a preliminary; the full report can come later".

"Not as bad as you might think, considering what we had to experience, as you can see, eight serious cases here, including yourself..." Bridger had to smile at himself for Ford always had the knack of stating the obvious, "...twenty minor cases, and I'm glad to report no deaths..."

"Well that's definitely good news Commander, what about Dr. Chapman, is he okay and the ship?" Bridger added, very relieved to hear that no crewmember died on his watch.

"...Dr. Chapman is fine, a little shaken up which is an understatement considering and the seaQuest has sustained only minimal damage mainly on the stem and stern, but there were some breaches on the aft and port sides as well, nothing too serious, I've got the repair crews working on all damaged sections now; by my estimate we should be up and running within six hours".

"What about communications?"

"O'Neill's working on it now, but so far he hasn't reached the Marianas or the UEO".

"Okay, keep doing what you're doing, and let me know how things progress Commander", feeling tired.

"Will do sir", Ford gave a small nod and then returned to the Bridge to continue overseeing the repairs.

*Six hours; six hours til doomsday*, now why did I think that? Bridger wondered, must be my random thoughts again playing tricks on me, Carol, oh—Carol, was the last thought Bridger had before he went back to sleep.



**THE WARD ROOM  
SEAQUEST**

Against Westphalen's wishes Bridger after six hours of sleep in the Infirmary was ready to leave, he still had not quite fully recovered from his injury, and Kristen felt that Bridger may have a relapse for he still could experience a concussion; but he felt healthy enough to at least gather together his officers, including Chapman for a report on the seaQuest's current condition before Westphalen insisted that he retire to his quarters for further rest after the meeting. As Bridger waited for them in the Ward Room, he wanted to make an impression that he was well and capable of carrying on with his duties and to surprise them by being here to greet them first. His attention focused on the view-screen which was switched on, Bridger was watching the undersea world outside as if it was becalmed in serene silence—almost; he couldn't stop thinking about Carol, did she really appear to him; was it really her? It felt so real, I touched her, I know I did, and Robert, Carol said he was alive, I need to find him...I need to know the truth. *'The truth, you can't handle the truth'*, Bridger thought, as he remembered that famous line from a movie, but not its name.

Suddenly Bridger was knocked back into reality as Ford and the other officers entered the Ward Room, Ford seemed surprised, although he didn't show it, but his eyes did, which betrayed his feelings to see Bridger sitting at the table waiting for them. Following Ford were of course Westphalen, Chapman, Hitchcock, Crocker, Ortiz, and O'Neill. Krieg was on the Bridge keeping an eye on things while everyone else was here. The one person who was missing from the room was Lucas, because Bridger ordered him to stay behind on the Marianas along with Darwin, this was no place for a sixteen year old boy. Bridger could still remember Lucas' objections:

*"Captain, you need me", he said with frustration.*

*"Lucas, this is too dangerous, I don't know how it's going to turn out and I will not be responsible for your death, is that clear", Bridger said, with a stern voice, bordering with tones of anger.*

*"But, I'm old enough to make my own decisions about my life".*

*"Yes you are Lucas", responding softly, calming down a bit, "but this is different, this is about death, and you are too young to experience it, you may know about it, but you do not have the understanding, I being the Captain of this ship, am responsible for your welfare, and the UEO, including your father will not take kindly to the knowledge that you died through my ignorance of command".*

*After a short pause, Lucas looked at Bridger, showing concern, "It's just....I want to help—I can help..."*

*"I know you do, and I appreciate it, you did a great job with the computers, to maximize our efforts to survive the Whirlhole, now let me do my job, okay?"*

*"Alright", resigning to his fate, "just come back, besides...Darwin will miss you".*

*"I know you will..."*

"Captain", Ford said, as all who were presently seated awaited Bridger to begin the proceedings.

"Yes", taking a moment to come back to the present, "right, let's have it Commander".

"Doctor, if you would like to start please". Indicating to Westphalen to give her report.

"Well as you know already I have seven crewmembers remaining in the Infirmary requiring further treatment, I've done what I can, but the sooner we can get them back for proper hospitalization the sooner the better, but for the moment they're all stable, nothing critical, which is a relief, there are twenty crewmembers, with various cuts, bruising, minor fractures, sprains, including the Commander's dislocation, and all of us from what has been reported experienced headaches in one form or another, which I can't explain, although it is possible that the Whirlhole may have be responsible, other than that the rest of the crew are fine".

"Good, what about communications? O'Neill, have you had any luck re-establishing any links to the Marianas or the UEO?" Bridger questioned.

"None sir", was O'Neill's answer, which he knew Bridger wouldn't like, "for the past six hours, I have repaired and tried to contact the Marianas and the UEO without success, all I'm getting is static; but I have been able to make contact with the two probes that were sent through though, as their frequencies are loud and clear".

"Okay so where are they?"

"Our probe the Whirlie is actually near the Hawaiian Islands and the Marianas probe is somewhere off the west coast of the United States near San Francisco", this coming from Ortiz, "I will be able to pinpoint their exact location with the help of O'Neill, as soon as I fully complete my repairs".

Bridger continued, "Fine, but before we even go after the probes, I'd like to know where we are first, I assume we're still in the Mariana Trench, Ortiz?"

"As far as my sensor readings can confirm we are still in the trench sir".

"Good, that means we can head back to the station and let them know we're okay since our communications are still out".

"Possibly", this coming from Ford, "but indications are that the Marianas isn't there".

"What do you mean, isn't there?" Bridger questioned with a sudden anxiety in his voice, not really understanding what had been said.

"According to our unconfirmed readings, the station is physical not where it's supposed to be, it seems to be missing".

"Missing, how could a whole station *be* missing? I think you better recheck those readings Commander".

"Yes sir", replied Ford who had done so twice already, as he knew Bridger wouldn't believe him, so I guess it wouldn't hurt to do it just one more time, he thought.

"Okay, which brings us to the engines, Hitchcock, what's their condition?"

"Not too bad considering, I had to replace a few parts that were showing high levels of stress fractures and wear. But on the main the turbines are okay, just as long as we don't exceed 80 knots we should be fine until full repairs can be done".

Bridger nodded his approval and then turned his attention to Crocker, "Chief, how are our repairs to the rest of ship in general going?"

"The repair crews have reported that all damage and leakages have been dealt with, Captain", was Crocker's response, "there are some external areas near the engines that the bio-skin will take at least a week to cover, and in some places on the aft and port, about two to three days; I myself am surprised what little damage—structural we have, I was sure we were a gonna".

"Me too, Chief, but we made it, and that's what counts, we made it, and I for one don't want a repeat performance. Alright, first; Commander set a course for the Marianas or its last known location, if it's there we'll pick up our crew and then head back to the UEO so the injured can get proper treatment...", looking at Westphalen for approval, which she gave with a short nod, "...and secondly, since we are going to Hawaii, we'll pick up the first of the two probes, and if well goes well after we make repairs to the ship, we can then head for America to pick up the other remaining probe. As Dr. Chapman attests the information gathered by the two probes should put us in a better picture in understanding the Whirlhole and how it formed; that will be your job Lt. Commander to assist under the guidance of the doctor, to help him in any way possible", giving an approving eye to Hitchcock, who nodded in agreement and an "Aye sir".

"Excellent Nathan", said Chapman added appreciatively, "it is very important, more so than ever to get to the probes, their information about the Whirlhole will be vital, not only from the military point of view but on a scientific basis, we have crossed to the other side, as it were, Naturally once I have gathered and deciphered both of the probes data, we can be more prepared to meet the challenge that may be ahead of us..."

"...and what challenge is that doctor?" Ford questioned, not liking the sound of that.

"To possibly re-enter the Whirlhole, if necessary, of course".

"Not with this ship..." Ford responded, getting a little aggravated, what a typical scientist he thought, doesn't he know that there are lives at stake here—human lives, or perhaps Chapman doesn't believe that human life is worth something—anything.

"...okay, easy Commander", Bridger ordered trying to defuse a possible situation before it developed. "Doctor, I'm all for scientific knowledge, but not at the expense of others, whoever they might be".

"Sorry Nathan, it's the scientist in me, the Whirlhole is a unique phenomenon, a once in a lifetime opportunity", trying to calm things down a bit, knowing the tension in the room had risen a little—well more than a little.

"Well I think that's it for now, just continue with the rest of your duties as best you can, dismiss".

As everyone left the room, Commander Ford stayed behind to talk to Bridger.

“Captain, the Whirlhole is still out there according to Ortiz, we’ll have to go around it if we are to reach the station”.

“Understood Commander, do what you have to, to get us back there”, back to Lucas and Darwin, he thought, wondering why the station wasn’t where it was supposed to be, I just hope it’s a computer glitch, a whole undersea station just couldn’t have disappeared—impossible. Could the Whirlhole have destroyed it? But if that was the case why are we still alive?

“Just one thing sir; what if the station isn’t there?” showing concern.

“One thing at a time Commander, one thing at a time”.

—\*—\*—

Bridger was in his quarters resting, and decided to speak to Professor Morrison—in other words, the mainframe computer; so he turned the hologram on.

“Good evening Nathan, and what do I owe the pleasure of your company this time?”

“I think I experienced an out-of-body encounter with my wife Carol, or maybe a life-after-death experience, Doctor Westphalen said that I was under, but I was able to pull through, what is your explanation on this?”

“Many people over the centuries have experienced out-of-body encounters with the dead, with themselves either dying or dead for a short period of time; the light-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel syndrome or seeing friends and loved ones, having conversations with them or with angels—even God. Finally reawakening in the physical world telling those that they’d spoken with these individuals or spirits telling them that their time has not yet up and must return, or telling them about certain happenings that they will experience in the future. Such spiritual phenomenon is common place to those who believe, do you believe Nathan?”

“Oh I don’t know, perhaps, when I was talking to Carol, it felt so real, she even said the Robert was still alive”.

“Since there is no conclusive proof that your son is dead, perhaps your subconscious manifested your late wife to tell you that your son is alive because in reality you think he still is, and thus you must know the truth of it by searching for him”.

“That would explain a lot, especially in my condition, but I never experienced it before, so why now?”

“Perhaps to give you a sense of direction, a sense of purpose in your life, to seek a balance that you must achieve in order to move forward, in order to begin a new chapter, while closing the old. Only you Nathan know the true meaning of your experience, because it was for you and you alone. On the spiritual level, man has so much to accomplish within his short lifespan, and only he knows the directional path in which he must choose to follow, even if it is the wrong one”.

“And if he doesn’t?”

“Then he is a lost soul awaiting to be found”.

“Messages from the dead”, trying to contemplate and comprehend his experience.

“In some cases Nathan”, said the hologram, taking this as a sign to continue, “the person in question may still be living, thus a form of telepathy may have been established between the two people involved who were very close to each other to communicate their feelings, or even if one were lost, their location, so they could be found. Twins in some cases have been known especially to perform this feat, although rarely”.

“But I know that Carol is dead, in which case, it must have been her spirit that I experienced, so therefore I believe it wasn’t my imagination, or my subconscious that manifested her for my benefit”.

“I can only go by the information that has been downloaded into my memory Nathan to comment, thus I believe, weighing all available data; I have come to the conclusion that you have had an out-of-body experience of unknown origin that can not be explained to my satisfaction”.

“But in the end, perhaps it was for my satisfaction—mine alone”. *The spirit of the fallen angel, shall fly once more into the heavenly arms of peace, the shining light bathes the glorious in purity of thought and deliverance, for the faithful know their journey, the path to righteousness is paved with humility.*

“Yes”.

**CALIFORNIA  
SANTA CRUZ**

It took Alan and Pete all morning to carefully float the spherical object away from the rocks to the safety of the shoreline to beach it successfully so they could examine it. Naturally Galen wanted to help, but his fear of water prevented him from lending a hand, however he did brave the little ripples near the shore's edge to help the astronauts drag the object onto the sandy beach, and remove any seaweed still clinging to it.

"There, a job well done". Galen remarked as he eyed the strange metallic object.

Viridon and Burke looked at each other, and shook their heads in amusement and smiled, as if to say 'anytime pal, anytime'.

As the trio stood back to take a proper look, Alan cautiously moved around the object trying to find any identifying marks that could give its origin, then he saw what he thought was some kind of inscription just below the flashing orange light; and took a closer look.

"I may have found something", he said to the others as Pete and Galen came a little closer to their kneeling friend, as Alan gently but forcefully as he could wiped away some grim, "it reads 'Probe VI, Serial Number: 270663, Property of the Marianas Station. 2019AD'".

As Alan stood up to face his friends, Pete gave a little whistle, "2019, that's 39 years after we launched AI, is that possible considering what happened?"

Pete was referring to the nuclear holocaust that he and Alan surmised happened after they left earth, which had indications of it going to happen when he and Alan read about it in Farrow's book, along with other material found over the past year, which included finding that computer in Oakland<sup>1</sup>; when they both realized that they were back on earth. It seemed so long ago, but it was only last year that Farrow found them in their ship the Hyperion and carried their unconscious bodies off to the safety of his bomb shelter away from the apes. He could still remember the conversation about the book:

*"They'd kill me if they knew I had the story book". Farrow said to Viridon.*

*"What story book?"*

*Farrow glanced at Viridon and Burke, and then turned to the wall behind him, and started removing a couple of bricks to reveal a secret hiding place. "I found it in this cave, I found a lot of books, but I couldn't read what they say, so I used them for fire. But I kept this one because it has pictures, and I like to look at them", he reached in and pulled out a tattered book, "even if they are only stories".*

*Burke reaches for the book as Farrow gives it to him to look at, "Careful, it's very old".*

*"Don't worry I'll be..." Burke stopped in mid sentence as he looked at a particular picture, "My God! Alan, my God!"*

*"What is it?" Virdon said with a questioning stare at him.*

*Speechless now, Burke holds out the book. As Virdon takes it, and looks at the picture, then he stares at Burke, and then stares back once again at the picture, stunned at what he sees. What both Virdon and Burke see is a photograph showing the New York skyline which is entitled 'New York City' in the year 2503AD.*

*While Virdon was still gazing at the photograph, Burke looked helplessly at his friend and said, "We can't go home, Alan...", as Virdon glances back, "...we're on earth. We're there already".<sup>2</sup>*

It was a shock to the system, but after looking through the book which was entitled, 'A Future Tomorrow' more thoroughly, both Pete and Alan, realized that the photograph was an artist's impression of what New York City would have looked like in the future; 500 years from the published date of 2003. But not only that, the book which also had various articles, also told them about the apes and their part in human society, becoming a slave class, it seems that after Virdon, Burke and Jones left the earth to go to Alpha Centauri, a plague came from outer space and killed almost all the cats and dogs of the earth<sup>3</sup>, and it was then that a new pet for domestication had arisen—the ape; and then sometime in the future, which the two astronauts surmised, although the date was still unclear, it happened—nuclear war. In any case, Zaius had the book now which would be a gold mine for him. He would read it and confirm his worst fears about the past and the role the apes played in it, as well as various articles, demeaning the simian order, like apes being kept in zoos for human entertainment. Burke could visualize Zaius' face as he read with disgust about the 'supposed' injustices done by man, and how man treated the apes in their new guise as slaves for exploitation.

Burke came out of his little daydream as Galen asked the obvious question, "If it's not a bomb, what is it?"

"Well", said Virdon, "it's some kind of probe, probably for underwater research".

"Underwater?" Galen shuddered, "what's underwater anyway besides fish?"

"Lots of things Galen like, whales, minerals, oil, and even sunken ships?"

"Ships, like yours?" Galen questioned not believing his ears.

"No, not like ours Galen", put in Burke, "ships that float on the water, you know like the rafts<sup>4</sup> we made last year—you remember, but only bigger, much, much bigger, which can carry hundreds of people".

"Yes, I remember", Galen said, recalling that time he and his friends escaped the fishing village and that time, even from Carsia—yes Carsia, I almost fell in love with her—almost, until her real intentions were known, anyway that's all in the past now, and one must go forward regardless of the pain, any pain, if one is to find the truth and educate others of my kind to see the reality of our world, "so what do we do now?"

"Well looking at the probe, that orange light is flashing pretty consistently, which is interesting in itself", continued Virdon, "especially since it's over thousand years old, the battery life should've ceased long ago".

"Unless", put in Burke, "the probe was of recent manufacture, I mean Alan take another look at it, it's practically brand new; maybe it came from an undersea colony or base?"

"Humans living under the sea—impossible; how could they breathe?" Galen said mystified, trying to comprehend how humans could do such things.

"Galen", explained Virdon, "the humans of our world were able to build not only cities on land but they could build undersea structures to support them as well, not as grand of course, but buildings that could help them live and work to explore the ocean and the sea bed to advance knowledge, to better our understanding of the earth".

"I am truly amazed, I just can't believe it, humans going into space, humans living under the sea".

"Our world was a wondrous and beautiful place once", this was all Virdon could say, thinking about his family on this occasion, his wife Sally, trying to cope with the loss of myself in her life, it wouldn't surprise me if she found someone else, but that's alright, I'd do the same if I wanted to live a normal life again and get back on my feet. All I'd have would be memories, memories of the good times, and the bad—just to remember, and then there's Chris, he would be in his second year in High School by now, probably got himself a girlfriend too, I hope he's alright.

"...and then we stuffed it up, big time", Burke added solemnly, wondering how man could have allowed greed, power and self-aggrandizement rule his way of life, to dominant and eventually contribute to his own downfall—and an explosive one at that, to now be and animal, a slave to another species trying to assert its own will on a world full of leftovers, "with our hunger for power—political and social, trying to assert our will, our beliefs, and what did it get us—poverty, injustice, just so the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. The bubble burst and man became the victim of his own doing; now we're paying for it by being the slaves of the apes in this new world", Burke looked at Galen, who was showing some reaction to Pete's outpouring, "sorry Galen, if I upset you, it's just I'm glad your kind don't have to go through what we humans had to, in making this world a better place...for all of us".

"That's alright Pete, I understand, even my kind have to deal with what they can't recognize or comprehend in man and the world they left us to rebuild as it were from the ashes", then Galen quickly decided to change the subject before it got too serious, "but what are we going to do about that thing?" pointing to the probe.

As if on cue to his question, a strange noise could be heard behind the trio from the edge of the shoreline, as they turned to see what was happening, the sea began to froth up and gurgle. Then as they continued to watch a mini-type of submarine but bigger began to surface through the water just to the left of them, it was nothing like what Virdon and Burke had ever seen before. The sea launch now fully surfaced, made its way onto the beach, Virdon, Burke and Galen slowly began to move away, preparing to make a run for it, if need be. The fugitives over the past year have become quite expert in sensing danger, and this was no exception, the trio waited with baited breath to see what would happen next.

The door to the sea launch began to open up, and as it extended and touch the sand, a group of about half a dozen men in blue uniforms came out carrying various weapons, similar to the AK-47, and hand held guns that didn't look anything familiar to known weaponry. Three of the men stood on guard around the sea launch's entrance, while the other three approached the fugitives, one of them seemed to be the leader as this group of men came closer, Virdon, Burke and Galen stood their ground awaiting the next act to be played out.

A man of about fifty-five to sixty years old with shades of grey hair came forward and stopped just in front of Virdon, "Hello, please don't be alarmed, we are friendly and mean



you no harm”, holding up both his hands to show he was unarmed, “my name is Bridger, Captain Nathan Bridger, of the seaQuest”, with that said, Bridger put his hands down and extended his right hand in greeting, in which Virdon responded in kind.

<sup>1</sup> See the episode *'The Legacy'*.

<sup>2</sup> From the final script *'Escape From Tomorrow'* by Art Wallace, 25 June 1974.

<sup>3</sup> See the film *'Conquest of the Planet of the Apes'*.

<sup>4</sup> See the episodes *'Tomorrow's Tide'* & *'Up Above the World So High'*.

**CHAPEL OF OUR BLESSED GOD  
CENTRAL CITY**

*God hath not promised, skies always blue,  
Flower-strewn pathways, all our lives through;  
God hath not promised, sun without rain,  
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.*

*But God hath promised, strength for the day,  
Rest for the labour, light for the way,  
Grace for the trials, help from above,  
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.*

It was the day of rest and Julian the Lawgiver was going to give his weekly sermon to those of the faithful and to those who were unfaithful to the teachings of God and to the Lawgiver's words of wisdom. Julian waited in the little side room beside the dais where he was to deliver the Word from the Holy Scriptures, as he looked through his secret peep hole, he noticed to his surprise that Councillors' Zaius and Valentius were in today's group, plus as an added bonus General Urko of all gorillas' were present, including his wife Elta who always came on the day of rest to the Chapel; now I wonder what they are all doing here? Julian thought, as he knew that Zaius, Valentius and Urko were not always a common sight at the Lawgiver's communions. But be that as it may Julian knew something was up, but what? Probably something to do with political intrigue again, there was always something going on at the High Council. Perhaps Yalu and Anne might shed some light—as it were, when he will come to call on them later today—and yes, there they are, just arriving now, good, just a few more minutes then I can start.

—\*—\*—

When the room was filled with today's parishioners, Julian exited the side room and entered carrying several scrolls and walked onto the dais and stood behind the podium placing the scrolls down on the little side table, and selected one to place in front of him. There was silence as Julian looked around the room, and then he spoke, "It is good to see some familiar faces today that have been absent for awhile, and it is hoped that these simians will renew their faith and become regular attendees", replacing the word devotees instead for the benefit of certain apes in the room, which of course was directed towards Zaius, Valentius and Urko, and it was clear that Julian meant them as he eyed in their direction, "there are those of us who feel that the Holy Scriptures, are not worth the parchment they're written on, but let me make it clear, if we as a society do not know our origins, then how do we develop an understanding of ourselves as a species of intelligent beings? We are forever questioning ourselves, why I am I here? Where am I going? What is my purpose? What does life offer me? Is death a new beginning to understanding my place in the universe? Questions—questions, and more questions", a short pause, "it is through life that we must seek an understanding of ourselves and our thoughts. I myself can only guide the faithful and the Holy Scriptures gives us as a race, clues to our being; to this end I have

decided to read to you our beginning in the hope that you will find renewed beliefs that will help your troubled mind”, another short pause, “but first...let us pray”.

As Julian bowed his head, the rest of the congregation did the same as the room became silent, “Holy father of God, we who are here today in your presence to seek your wisdom and blessing, hope that you will forgive those who have not heeded your teachings and your guidance, for let today be their rebirth in the understanding of the Word as it is written by your very hand, amen”.

“Amen”. Responded in kind and in unison from all within the room, all was quiet again as Julian unfurled his scroll that was in front of him, I just hope, thought Julian, that whatever scheme Zaius, Valentius and Urko were up to it better be for the good, otherwise if worse comes to worse I will have to exercise my powers and if nothing can be resolved to my satisfaction, I will have no alternative but to ostracise those responsible, with this last thought Julian began his sermon:

## **Simisis I**

### **The Birth of the Beginning**

**In the beginning there was darkness, there was void, there was emptiness, but within this our blessed God lived and breathed and he took it upon himself and commanded the creation of the heavens and of the earth and all that was around him.**

**Now, as our blessed God viewed all that was before his presence, the earth was formless, bare, devoid of all life, thus the darkness that was a shadow over the surface of the earth and within its depths, and the spirit of our blessed God was floating over the waters of this new life.**

**And our blessed God said, “Let there be light”, and there was light eternal, and our blessed God saw that the light was good and holy and smiled, and he separated this light from the darkness eternal, and our blessed God called the light “day”, and the darkness he called “night” and behold there was nightfall, and behold there was sunrise—upon the first day of creation.**

**And our blessed God said, “Let there be a widening between the waters to separate water from water”. So our blessed God made the widening and separated the water under the widening from the water above it, and it was commanded so. Our blessed God called this widening “sky”, and behold there was nightfall, and behold there was sunrise—upon the second day of creation.**

**And our blessed God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry soil appear”, and thus it was commanded so. Our blessed God called the dry soil “land” and the gathered waters he called “sea” and our blessed God saw that which he had made and it was holy blessed by his presence.**

**And our blessed God said, “Let the land produce flora; seed-bearing plants and trees upon the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds”, and it was so commanded. The land produced flora; plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds, and our blessed God saw that which he had made and it was holy blessed by his presence, and behold there was nightfall, and behold there was sunrise—upon the fourth day of creation.**

And our blessed God said, “Let there be light within the breadth of the sky to separate the day from the night and the night from the day, and let them serve as signs to mark the passage of time, the passage of the seasons, the passage of the days and the passage of the years, and let there be illumination within the breadth of the sky to give light upon the earth”. Our blessed God made two great illuminations—the greater glow, the “sun” to govern the day and the lesser glow, the “moon” to govern the night. Our blessed God also made the stars, and set them in the breadth of the sky to give radiance upon the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from dark, and our blessed God saw that which he had made and it was holy blessed by his presence.

And our blessed God said, “Let the water flourish with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the breadth of the sky”. So our blessed God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water flourished, according to their different kinds, and every winged bird according to its different kinds, and our blessed God saw that which he had made and it was holy blessed by his presence. Our blessed God baptised them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas of the earth, and let the birds increase upon the sky of the earth”, and behold there was nightfall, and behold there was sunrise—upon the fifth day of creation.

And our blessed God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their different kinds; livestock, creatures that move along and beneath the soil, and wild animals, each according to its different kinds”, and it was commanded so. Our blessed God made the wild animals according to their different kinds, the livestock according to their different kinds, and all the creatures and beasts that move along the soil above and beneath, according to their different kinds, and our blessed God saw that which he had made and it was holy blessed by his presence.

And our blessed God said, “Let us make ape in our own image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures and beasts that move along above and beneath the soil”.

So our blessed God created ape in his own image, in the image of our blessed God he created him; male and female he created and baptised them with his holiest of kisses.

Our blessed God sanctified them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth with your seed and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature and beast that moves along above and beneath the soil”.

Then our blessed God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant upon the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it, they will be yours for food, and to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures and beasts that move along above and beneath the soil—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food”.

Our blessed God saw that which he had made and it was holy blessed by his presence, and behold there was nightfall, and behold there was sunrise—upon the sixth day of creation.

Julian paused from reading as if to allow the words to sink in with those present, as he looked up to take in the moment, Julian collected his thoughts and spoke, “What I have read to you was the words from the first chapter of the Holy Scriptures entitled ‘Simisis’ for

those of you who don't know the Word. It is fitting to know how the world began, and how we as apes began so long ago. Our birth is clear, and as I continue, you will know that our punishment is just and our responsibility is burdened; we have a duty of care upon this world of ours, for our blessed God bequeathed all that he had made to us in his divine wisdom. We as apes have a long way to go before we are forgiven by our blessed God for what we have done, but penance is at hand, the atonement for our sins will be forgiven if we choose the right path to wisdom and enlightenment. I for one am ashamed as I read what had befallen us, but if our soul and spirit are cleansed of evil and sin, we can return to the garden of Zion, and be one with our blessed God again", Julian paused to let his wisdom be absorbed by those who may feel a certain guilt, but he realised that the guilty never felt as such because they believed they were doing the right thing, and above all had no conscience in that respect, it was sad, but as the keeper of the divine faith Julian had to try and make simian society understand that for every action against the Word of God was an opposite and equal reaction multiplied ten-fold in punishment. If the unbelievers and the unfaithful did not heed the warnings; then again, there are those who consider themselves beyond punishment, beyond redemption, for they have always done the right thing, if only to please themselves, "now let me continue and you will understand what I have said so far".

## **Simisis II**

**Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array and variety.**

**Upon the seventh day of creation our blessed God had finished his work that he had begun; so on the seventh day of creation he rested from all his labours and our blessed God blessed the seventh day and made it the holy of holies—the day of rest.**

## **Adan and Eva**

**When our blessed God made the earth and the heavens, and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung, for our blessed God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no ape to work the soil, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the soil and our blessed God formed the ape from the dust of the ground whenst the soil came and breathed into his lungs the breath of life, and the ape became a living intelligent being.**

**Now our blessed God had planted a garden known as Zion; and there he put the ape he had formed, and our blessed God made all kinds of trees grow out of the soil—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden of Zion was the tree of life, the tree of enlightenment and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

**Our blessed God took the ape and put him in the garden of Zion to work it and to take care of it, and our blessed God commanded the ape, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden of Zion; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will be poisoned and you will surely die".<sup>1</sup>**

**Our blessed God said, "It is not good for the ape to be alone. I will make a companion suitable for him to help him within the garden of Zion and keep him company".**

**Now our blessed God had formed out of the soil all the creatures and beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the ape to see what he would name them; and whatever the ape called each living creature and beast, that was its**

**name. So the ape gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the creatures and beasts of the field.**

**But the ape had no name of his own, so our blessed God called him, “Adan”.**

**But for Adan no suitable companion was found, so our blessed God caused Adan to fall into a deep sleep; and while he slept, he took one of Adan’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then our blessed God made a female from the rib that he had taken out of Adan, and he brought her to Adan.**

**Then Adan said, “She is now bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh and soul of my soul and she shall be called “female”.**

**For this reason the ape will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh, one mind, one body, one soul.**

**But the female had no name of her own, so our blessed God called her, “Eva”.**

**Together the male and female were both naked, for they felt no shame, for they were at peace, with the garden of Zion, they were one with our blessed God, and our blessed God was pleased, and he sanctified them with his presence.**

Again Julian took his time and paused after his second reading to allow his listeners to fathom and understand the Word as it was written. After taking a small sip of cool water from his mug that was beside the podium, Julian spoke, “The garden of Zion, was bequeathed to us as our place of birth, our place of pleasure, and our place of peace; and yet, we unlike Adan and Eva are ashamed of our nakedness, but it is not only of the body that I speak, it is the nakedness of sin, the transgressions of the mind and of our soul, that condemn us. It is this nakedness which has clothed our thoughts that is transparent to our blessed God, for he weeps, for he knows your secrets, he knows your thoughts. When our blessed God gave us this earth, he did so out of kindness, without fear or favour; he wanted us to live and to be by his side, to be one with him. Now I ask you, is that too much to ask? If we are guilty of sin, we can repent our ways and find the path back to our blessed God. To be born anew, to be cleansed of our wrongs and be at peace again with our blessed God, it is never too late to seek salvation before his eyes—never too late”, Julian took another moment to prepare his final delivery by taking and opening another scroll, as his congregation sat in silence within the hollows of the sacred chapel, only when Julian has finished his sermon, will anyone be allowed to speak, “I will now read to you my final oration for today”.

### **Simisis III**

#### **The Fall of the Ape**

**Now the beast man was craftier and cunning than any of the wild animals that our blessed God had made for he was the devil in disguise with hatred in his soul. He said to Eva, “Did your God really command, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden of Zion?’”**

**Eva said to the beast man, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden of Zion, but our blessed God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden of Zion, and you must not touch or eat from it, or you will be poisoned and will surely die’”.**

**“You will not surely die”, the beast man said to Eva, “for your blessed God knows that when you eat of the fruit your eyes will be opened, and you will see the wonders of your world anew, and you will be like your blessed God, knowing good and evil, right and wrong, here take that which is sweet upon your lips, and know you will be a God”.**

**When Eva saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to her eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, and know all that our blessed God Knew, the beast man seduced her with his words of deceit and cunning and so she took some of the fruit that the beast man had offered her and ate it. Eva also gave some to Adan, who was with her, and he ate of the fruit also. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked, and as the beast man laughed at their folly; so they gathered fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves, for they were ashamed of their bodies.**

**Then Adan and Eva heard the sound of our blessed God as he was walking in the garden of Zion in the cool of the day, they hid from our blessed God among the trees of the garden, but our blessed God called to the ape, “Where are you Adan?”**

**He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked and ashamed; so I hid from thee”.**

**And our blessed God said, “Who told you that you were naked and ashamed? Have you eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that I commanded you not to eat from?”**

**Adan said, “The female you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it, because I trusted her”.**

**Then our blessed God said to the female, “What is this you have done Eva?”**

**She answered, “The beast man deceived me, it said I would not be poisoned and I would not die and I ate from the tree”.<sup>2</sup>**

**So our blessed God said to the beast man, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the creatures and all the wild animals! You will serve the ape for all eternity and know the pain of his will for the rest of your days of your life for as long as you are living on the earth; and I will put hatred between you and the female, and between your offspring and hers; she will punish you, and you will not strike back, and I will put hatred between you and the male, and between your offspring and his; he will punish you by enslavement, and you will never be set free”.**

**To the female our blessed God said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children; your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you”.**

**To the male our blessed God said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, about which I commanded, ‘You must not eat of it’, “Cursed is the soil because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the soil, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return”.**

**Our blessed God made garments of skin for Adan and Eva and clothed them, and our blessed God said, “The ape has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.**

**He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever and also the tree of enlightenment, and eat, and gain wisdom”.**

**So our blessed God banished the ape from the Garden of Zion to work the soil from which he had been taken. After our blessed God drove the ape out, he placed on the Garden of Zion a spirit and a fiery sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life and to the tree of enlightenment.**

Julian had finished, and looked up as he automatically refurled the scroll and put it on a little table with the other scrolls he had with him beside the podium; and then looked around the room, “We as apes have a long way to go before redemption my friends, when Eva was seduced by the beast man to partake the fruit, little did she know that it was a test—yes a test—to see if she would be able to obey the word of our blessed God. But she failed; she listened to the devil, not the beast man, but the devil inside herself—her subconscious, her ability to understand why she should take the fruit was too strong. The Word of our blessed God—the conscience versus the Word of the devil—the subconscious; why is it that we disobey, that which is forbidden to us? Even though we know it is wrong? Well I’ll tell you, it is because we can disobey, it is because we have the power to disobey, we have the freedom to do that which is right and wrong. We have—can make choices that determine our prosperity or our failure in life, we have the will to decide our path in life. That is the reason; we have the ability of choice, to choose our way, our destiny, our path in life. Every decision that we make determines our actions and our thoughts; as I have said before, our punishment is just and our responsibility is burdened. The punishment was banishment from the garden of Zion, to never know peace, serenity, the love of our blessed God; the responsibility was duty-of-care to this earth and to—you may be surprised—to the beast man, even if he is an animal, because he along with the other creatures and birds we are liable for. You see my friends it is a test, a test of faith, to cleanse our souls before the eyes of our blessed God, to see if we are worthy to re-enter the garden of Zion, to be one with him again”.

“Now, you may ask, how can we seek his love, his trust, his wisdom again? It is simple, repentance, show to him, through me your willingness to confess your sins, cleanse your mind and release your desires—your devil, that plagues your thoughts in doing the wrong. We have the gift, to do what is right, do not stray from the path to our blessed God, he is there waiting, waiting for you to come to him, so that he may embrace you with his love, so that you can again walk with him, and be filled with enlightenment and joy. Be the wise ape and confess your sins, for only through confession can you be released from your burdens and begin anew. For some of you this may be hard, but believe me, the sooner you do, the better, but don’t be afraid because I will help you, I will guide you, I will be there every step of the way, so you won’t be alone—no never alone; the Holy Scriptures that I impart every week, is but a guide to our past, present and future, it is up to us to make use of them, to learn from them, if you care to open your mind to their meaning”.

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“Interesting Sermon today Julian”, said Zaius, as he greeted Julian outside the chapel doorway going out, “I must say, you were quite convincing in your—shall we say delivery”.

“Thank you Zaius, I hope that my meaning didn’t fall onto deaf ears?”

“Knowing how Zaius feels these days, he does have trouble hearing the important things in life”, this coming from Valentius who was following behind Zaius, and stood beside Julian to continue, “then again, the importance of self-worth can cloud even the holiest of judgements”.



“We will all be judged in one way or another Valentius, it’s what we do in our lifetime that will determine our innocence or guilt”, Julian added.

“I for one agree”, Zaius added, “We have much to learn about ourselves, and it is through our actions that we learn the true meaning of life and its consequences”.

“Yes, but can we as intelligent simians live with those consequences once our true meaning is put into action?”

“That depends”, Julian responded as tactfully as he could, “upon what kind and type of action one hopes to achieve or even gain at the expense of others; remember it is the individual that determines his path through life, and influences those around him that will decide the outcome in the end, it just depends on whether it is to his satisfaction or not”.

*‘What God hath promised’ a card from Keswick Inspirational, Hello Notes, A42/3 printed in England.*

<sup>1</sup> *Interesting to note is why God planted a poisonous tree in the garden in the first place; consequently it is assumed that God wanted Adan to eat the fruit from it, in which case God knew he would, and be cast out of Zion. Therefore in the Bible, we have to accept that God never intended for Adam and Eve to live in Paradise.*

<sup>2</sup> *It seems that God too can deceive and lie to those he wishes; I guess religious perfection has a price, or more to the point...religious imperfection.*



## SEAQUEST THE PACIFIC OCEAN

It was a real shock—and that was an under-understatement, if ever there was one, Bridger just couldn't believe it when the seaQuest made its way back to the Marianas Station—well what should have been; but instead all he could find was nothing. After an intensive search around the area, there was no sign of the research facility in its original or in any other location within the trench, it just wasn't there, no station, no debris, not even a drill hole, it was like the Marianas never even existed, just no sign of it; all there was, was just rock—rock, fish and the surrounding sea in the deep depths of the inner world that the trench occupied with devilish mystery. *'For Hades had saw the world in all its fiery glory and condemned to perpetual death the souls of those who defied his will and banished them to the realms of Hell for all eternity'*, this coming from Bridger's mind remembering a line from a book he read a few years ago as he tried to think of what to do next as he gave the order to cancel any further search, and if that wasn't bad enough when the seaQuest entered Hawaiian waters to pick up the 'Whirlie' christened by Lucas; the seaQuest resurfaced after and headed for the UEO Headquarters after failing to establish any communication or what was supposed to be the UEO Headquarters, but what they found was nothing—no UEO, just ruined, dilapidated buildings, which weren't even of UEO design.

But what really was a shock were the humans that inhabited the main island, they were sub-intelligent by current human standards, but what little contact was made, the seaQuest crew found out that the world was dominated by apes and the humans were their slaves and were considered animals by these apes who were their masters for as long as the humans could remember—maybe hundreds or even thousands of years? Bridger and his away party kept a respectful distance when it came to the ape population also living on the island with the humans, their technology was superior to the humans but not by much, they had a government and a well organised social structure and thus an advanced society of their own; it was like nothing Bridger had ever seen or experienced, it was like another world, another time, another place. Could this really be earth in the future...was it our future?

Bridger decided not to have any contact with the apes until he knew more about them and their own situation, Bridger got as much information out of the humans when he first arrived, and just by luck he befriended a man by the name of Ahren and his family before he knew of the apes existence, which in the end proved quite serendipitous, otherwise he and his away party might be dead. In any case Bridger learned what he could from Ahren, and his family who were friendly but submissive to their way of life, but Ahren was quite helpful to Bridger when it came to the apes, and wanted a chance to help a fellow human against the oppressive simian regime. Ahren's community didn't have the courage or intellect to go against the apes, because death awaited them if any attempt was made and besides they were just too powerful, but Ahren made sure that Bridger's party was not seen by any gorilla patrols and by other apes in general, while Bridger and his party explored the ape controlled human community and tried to piece together the history of this world—this earth, this future—gone somehow mad? A future earth in which they—the seaQuest, had come into.

Questions arose in Bridger's mind, what year was this, as the seaQuest's chronometer only showed the current date of 2019, but if it was the correct date—but highly unlikely, then perhaps it's not earth at all, but another earth? No impossible, it just didn't make any sense, but then again what does? Where did the apes come from, how did they become the dominate species of the planet, how did they learn to talk, are they a mutation, what happened to the world in general, was there ever a UEO, was there a war—a nuclear war, as indicated by the devastating remains of the major towns, cities and buildings, how did the humans of this world become so servile, and when and where did it all go wrong? and if worse comes to worse, can Bridger communicate with the apes peaceably without getting himself or his crew shot to find out more about this world and the role they and the humans play in it?

These were questions that at the moment had no answers and Bridger was looking—looking for answers to questions that were probably out of his league, but his scientific mind was working in overdrive, trying to piece together a reasonable understanding of the situation his ship and his crew were in. All he could do to formulate a plan was go on a day to day basis for now, and the first on the to-do list was to retrieve the second probe for Dr. Chapman on the west coast of the United States. At least that was a start, and maybe just maybe there could be answers waiting for them in America, perhaps Hawaii was an isolated case and there were no apes living in the United States. Who knows?

Just before the seaQuest left, Bridger visited Ahren and his family one last time telling them how grateful they were in helping him and his crew in understanding the current world politics, or predicament—depending on how you look at it, and promised if he ever could return here again, he would, but otherwise he wished them well, and as a thank you, gave Ahren a couple of bags of food from the seaQuest's food storage bay and then left.

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Bridger went to the Infirmary to get a couple of pills for his headache, the cut on his forehead, which was healing quite nicely and subsequent concussion from it was playing on him, he needed rest and sleep, and knew he wasn't going to get any if he had headaches through the night; and besides he wanted to see and speak to Kristin, perhaps she could add some female perspective in all this—about the apes especially and maybe their current situation.

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In the Infirmary Dr. Westphalen was sitting by a bench just going over the current medical reports, she decided that she'd rather take them with her to her cabin and read them in comfort, so she was just about to gather them up when Bridger came in.

"Hi".

"Hi yourself, how are you feeling?" Westphalen asked, her feminine intuition kicking in, but it was more likely her experience as a doctor that she felt Bridger wanted or needed something; but then again who could tell, the female mind was a strange place, and in reality their thought patterns were different to the males, in the end, the universal balance still had to be maintained, even if on the surface at least.

"I need something for my headaches, if I'm going to get any sleep tonight".

"Sure, I'll get you a bottle from the cabinet", Westphalen got up from her chair and walked to the medical cabinet where the standard medications were kept, then she got out a

small bottle and walked back to Bridger and gave it to him, "take two of these before you go to bed, and two in the morning with some breakfast".

"Thanks", taking the bottle and putting it in his pocket, "how have you been?"

"Oh so-so", sitting down again, "I was just going over some medical reports, that's all".

"Kristin, I'd like to ask you something..."

"About Lucas?"

"Well, that too", come to think about it, I hope he's alright, "I'm just worried, I mean, where could he be—and Darwin, it just doesn't add up".

"Yes I'm worried myself, but Lucas is a bright boy and very intelligent, if something happened, I'm sure he would try to contact us if possible, and besides he wouldn't leave Darwin behind, so I'm sure they are together, somewhere".

"I've got O'Neill trying to establish any kind of communication with Lucas if he's out there, but so far no response".

"We can only hope he's safe, and I'm sure he'll be alright, wherever he and Darwin are".

"I hope so too; Kristin, what do you think about our situation, especially these apes, any thoughts about them, I mean is it possible that we somehow went into the future missing a catastrophic event and the primates took over what was left of the human race?"

"Well, it could be possible, I mean, no one had ever heard of dinosaurs before until the first fossils were found, and then finding out that they ruled the earth for millions of years before man ever walked the earth was somewhat of a shock, but we accept it now as fact".

"Yes, but how could the primate develop so rapidly and even learn how to talk; even if; let's suppose we went into the future say three thousand years, what would cause such an acceleration?"

"As I understand it you reported low levels of radiation in various areas in Hawaii, which led to the conclusion of nuclear war, albeit a limited one, correct?"

"Yes, some of the ruins I was able to visit covertly proved that radiation was present, but as yet, this does not confirm that it happened globally; also as you know, there's no satellite linkup, so O'Neill is using our onboard electrical supply to power up our antenna, but he still can't rise anyone anywhere", including Lucas, "which still leaves the apes?"

"Perhaps the radiation effected the primates in a way to accelerate their growth, not just physically, but mentally as well, to a point where they learned how to survive, possibly learning from man himself in how to live; you need to remember that man has been experimenting with chimpanzees and other primates to find out how intelligent they are; this could have led to them remembering their experiences and thus were able to condition themselves for post-war survival, to eventual dominance of the planet".

"Sure, but that doesn't explain the humans, I mean they seem intelligent enough, why didn't they re-establish themselves?"

"Maybe they couldn't, maybe the war killed off more humans than animals, thus there was an imbalance of the species".

"Well, the facts are, this is earth, that's for certain, we have talking apes, dominating the human populace, there was a nuclear war—that was maybe limited, the year is 2019 ship time, but the actually year is unknown...'

"Didn't Ahren know the year?" Westphalen asked, as she was one of the few crew not permitted to go topside, as Bridger considered her too important to lose if anything were to go wrong; so Kristin only had Nathan's reports to go by in making her judgements about their current predicament.

"No; that was one of the first questions I'd asked him, but he couldn't remember, actually none of the humans I came into contact with knew the year, or even how long a year was. The apes were the ones that told them when the seasons started, and ended, and when to sow and plant crops for the next year's harvest. Arhen couldn't even tell me his age, but my guess is that he looked about forty-five".

"It seems to me that the apes were more in control than what is on the surface, keeping the humans ignorant, as much as possible; I hate to say this, but I think we need to talk to an ape to find any truths, but even so, would an ape talk to us?"

"That's the sixty-four dollar question; but if we do that, then this ape would surely report back to his superiors about intelligent humans, more superior than them".

"If we let him go back".

"I don't relish keeping an ape prisoner on this ship".

"Well I could knock-up some medication to make him forget well enough, to question his own experience and well-being and thus put it down to a bad dream".

"Yeah, that might work, because if we're going to find out more about this world we need information, lots of it".

"Good, I'll start tomorrow, and let you know how I go".

"Thanks".

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Well, it's a beginning thought Bridger, as he made his way back to his cabin, for hopefully a good night's sleep; Lord knows how we're going to survive in this world, but the answers were here, you just need to ask the right people—or ape as the case maybe. And once we have retrieved the probe and explored the western half of the United States—well part of it anyway, then the next priority will be to find Lucas and Darwin. I'll have to head back to the Marianas and begin the search again, this time search the surrounding islands and perhaps head for the Philippines, Japan and even down to New Guinea. The only conclusion that I can make is that Lucas is topside somewhere, I just hope he's safe, away from any apes, if he's smart, he'll have to act dumb, which for Lucas would be very hard indeed, because he likes to show off now and again, but if he's careful and has any contact with the apes, they won't notice he's better than the rest of the humans of this world, otherwise, he might just end up dead; and what about the rest of his crew and the scientists from the station? Where are they, would Lucas be with them? I just don't know, take it one day at a time old boy, just one day at a time, that's all I can do for now.

Perhaps tomorrow will be better, *for a better tomorrow, there had to be a better today.*



OAKLAND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE  
THE CITY OF OAKLAND

Magnus stared at the computer that once held the secret of man's past; it was here that the fugitives, Virdon, Burke and Galen were able to get it to work that showed them where the 'sum of all human knowledge' of man was kept and stored. Pity that the computer doesn't work now, for Magnus would have liked to see the human on the wall; a projection Zaius called it, but Zaius had it destroyed. What was it he said, Magnus tried to remember, arh yes, *'This machine is evil, it could contaminate our society and our thoughts, if our humans knew that humans in the past were capable of such technology, they would rebel and think that they were as intelligent as we are'*. Magnus laughed at himself as he slowly walked around the computer, eyeing it thinking how the humans of the past were able to build such a thing, he already visited the underground storage room where the 'secret knowledge' was kept, and naturally he didn't find anything because the room was totally destroyed by Zaius and Urko, but he had to see for himself; curiosity—just plain curiosity. Could technology be a blessing or a curse? Magnus wondered; it all depends on how it is used and more importantly by whom? If we as a species must progress from the womb to the tomb in life's journey, how are we to comprehend that journey, if man's technology is evil? Is ours any better, simpler yes, but better? No, but it could be if the technological progress were controlled. The simian order would be a species worthy of man who once was...but never will again.

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Magnus was making good time as he was travelling alone, he would join up with Juba in a day or so, but failing that, they would meet up in Khanoch; this town would be his base of operations, as Magnus believed the fugitives were heading in that direction and possibly beyond it as well. The best way to lose oneself if being hunted, was to move away as far as possible from Central City and the main towns and villages. Khanoch was the last major fishing town in the region, one of the main exports for fertiliser, as well as fish for food, and then there were the farming villages of Santas and Zharnn after it way down south just before that big city of ruins reportedly built by apes, but destroyed by humans; and in-between them were various small human settlements under Prefect and gorilla control. It will be these settlements that the fugitives will undoubtable go for. Already Magnus had made plans by sending riders out east to other ape towns and villages, then instructing them to circle downwards in an arch to inform other settlements and to pick up some extra troopers to tighten the net. Eventually the fugitives will be forced to move downwards, hopefully towards Khanoch where I will be waiting to capture them. The only hole in the net was the ruined city, for it was too big and full of places to hide, it would take weeks and even months to try and search it, but if I can get them before they enter the ruins of the city then I can almost guarantee their capture.

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*The circle of death will enclose, the rope around your neck will tighten, pulling harder and harder, eventually the air will lessen from your lungs and you will begin to choke, trying to breathe, trying to live, but only death will have you, life will cease to exist, then your limp*

*body will dangle, swaying gently from side to side from the wind, your lifeless carcass slowly decomposing, and then only the bones will be left, bleached white from the hot glaring sun, until your skeleton becomes a natural wind chime for nature's pleasure, slowly making sounds, sounds that only it can hear, soft, translucent, mysterious, hauntingly beautiful to the ear, only to be forgotten, never to be heard again.*

Magnus smile to himself as he visualized Urko hanging from a tree, as he continued on his way to Khanoch.

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Zaius was in his office sitting by his desk reading some reports from the outer provinces when he heard a knock at the door, "Yes", was his reply, as his male servant Ullman came in obediently; "yes", looking up from his desk, "Ullman, what is it?"

"Sir, Councillor Yalu is here to see you as you requested".

"Good, send him in".

"Yes sir", Ullman answered and walked back out into the main hallway to allow Yalu to see Zaius; as he did so, Zaius stood up and greeted his guest and old friend.

"Welcome Yalu, please sit down", indicating a chair by the desk.

"Thank you Zaius". Making himself comfortable, "I came as soon as I could once I got your message".

"Good", sitting down again, "has Urko been to see you?"

"Yes, he told me all about it, I must confess that it was surprised to see Urko, considering his dislike of me, and more so to the point of what he had to say".

"These are unknown times Yalu, to put it lightly, and regardless of what has happened in the past, one must deal with the future; Urko and I know that, that is why I felt it prudent that he visit you himself, so that you know the seriousness of the situation at hand".

"Yes, I agree; Valentius is gaining support from various prominent simians within the community, and trying his hand at attempting to sway some of the council members as well; he doesn't like you Zaius that's for sure".

"I'm well aware of that, that's why I would like you to support me, indirectly of course until the right moment for action presents itself, but Valentius will not be a problem for me in the end as I have Urko's support".

"Militarily speaking", Yalu said with a smile.

"That too, but even so, I would like you to keep an ear open for any...information, that might come your way regarding Valentius' plans; has he approached you yet?"

"No, but he might, then again, as I being your friend, it could be impossible or improbably for him to do so".

"Quite, but I think he will try, attentively at least, just to see where you stand, so be aware; even now, his son Magnus is heading west towards the sea, as he believes the fugitives are going that way, Valentius in the meantime may make his move".



"If that is the case, what of my son, will Magnus if successful bring him in too, alive?" Yalu asking cautiously, knowing that a death sentence awaited Galen.

"As it is within my power, I will pardon your son, if things go according to plan; off the record, I believe Galen can still be re-educated back into our society, naturally with your help, and perhaps he could then re-apply for the position as my Personal Assistant as originally proposed by you".

"That is good to hear, my wife Ann will be very pleased; she does worry so, but...on the record?"

"It may become necessary to make an example of Galen, if things get out of hand, the best I could do outside of execution, would be life imprisonment with parole as an option for good behaviour, which I'm sure Galen will excel at..."

"...and all I have to do is side with you when the time comes?" not liking the tone of this conversation, but a necessary one at that.

"Loyalties will be tested my friend, the question is, how loyal are you?"

"As loyal as the next ape, Zaius, old friend, but I do owe you, since you were instrumental in my appointment to the High Council after it was known that Galen became a fugitive".

"True, but your son, should not have been the reason for your rejection, if that were the case, your tireless efforts and beliefs for a better community and your good nature would be wasted, as it is I just made sure that the other Councillors were made aware of your hard work and devotion—even Urko, and you know how stubborn he can be—so as not to be clouded by your son's...rebellious actions at the time".

"For that I thank you".

"My pleasure, so; can I count on you when the time comes?"

"Yes, Zaius, I will stand by you; I must admit you have softened your ways of late, could it be old age or just your conscience?"

"Ha-ha", having a giggle, "none whatsoever, I just want to protect the interests of this society and community at large, I fear that Valentius may or might change the direction to suit his needs than the public's, regardless of any disfavour..."

"...or maybe to change your perceptions and influence on this society, would be a better description, wouldn't you say?" cunningly, pressing the point across.

"Yes, you could say that, but at least I don't hide my feelings or concerns, you must realise that the only way our simian lifestyle is to progress, is to ensure that we as a species must be—shall we say—selective in our approach to new ideas, new advancements to better not only ourselves but to better the world and its environment for the future; if we are to succeed, we must do so cautiously, but firmly, if we are to survive".

"And the humans?"

"They too will benefit from our lifestyle and progress, albeit only in a small way, but as long as they know their place, all will be well, and they will be treated fairly, even if it is under ape law".

“As long as Virdon and Burke don’t interfere?”

“If! They are still alive”, responded Zaius, his voice raised with disgust, “but once they are captured and interrogated, they will be killed, have no fear of that”.

“At least you and Valentius have something in common in regards to the lives of these astronauts, but in the end, the question will be, who will benefit most?”

“True, and it is hoped that I will be the one still standing when the smoke clears, I don’t exactly know what Valentius is up to—yet, but I do know it has something to do with the fugitives capture, and his son Magnus will see to that”.

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Juba and his troopers were making good time after two days of travelling while heading for Khanoch using the main road which paralleled the sea, in a couple of hours they’ll be at the fishing seaside town to establish a base of operations for Magnus when he arrives. All was going well—so far, at this stage there was no sign of the fugitives, but that was to be expected as Juba didn’t really anticipate to see them travelling the main road anyway; but if what Magnus had told him was true, various scouts were sent out to the east to the other villages, to inform and gather extra troops to encircle the fugitives and hopefully cut them off in that direction, which would force them down towards Khanoch. Time was of the essence, once Juba had established headquarters in Khanoch, he was to proceed further south towards Santas and then onto Zharnn to secure them and then around the east back towards Khanoch, creating an arch or wall of resistance to ensure that the fugitives would not go through. Magnus stressed to Juba that the fugitives must not make it to the ruined city further south, as it would be impossible to capture them there.

Juba also had a personal task to perform if he could manage it, by way of trying to persuade and turn various gorillas against Urko, to side with him, in a military coup that may or may not happen depending on the future outcome of the fugitives capture. In confidence Magnus explained that if Juba could gather enough troops to make a small army loyal to him, it would be possible to force if necessary, Urko’s resignation from office, thus making Juba the next Deputy Chief of Security after Magnus and eventually Chief of Security and General to all gorilla troopers and garrisons throughout the country once Magnus retires to take over from his father as President of the High Council, Juba smile to himself at the thought, for he already had the loyalty of Sergeant Hakonn and the rest of his company, plus Hakonn informed him that, there were other gorillas willing to side with Magnus if Juba was their military leader, on the promise of better lifestyle and fair promotion for all—yes Urko a fair promotion for all...I’ll promote you...as dog meat...dog eat dog as they say.<sup>1</sup>

“How many troopers are we looking at Hakonn?” Juba questioned him, as they stopped for a short break to eat and rest.

“Fifteen to twenty gorillas from Central City itself and possibly a further twenty to forty from the surrounding villages”, he said with confidence.

“Good that’s, three complete garrisons, that’ll leave one garrison loyal to Urko in Central City”, for Juba knew that there were two city garrisons station there, “and the rest could keep any reinforcements for Urko off our backs if need be”.

“But I think once word gets out that Urko has resigned his post, the other garrisons will fall behind you and Magnus; Urko has been too long our supreme General and a change would do us good, just as long you and Magnus keep up your side of the bargain”.

"Don't worry my friend, once the fugitives are captured and Urko and Zaius are out of the way, things will be different according to Valentius once he becomes the head of the High Council, with Magnus by his side and me to lead you as your General once Magnus passes the command onto me".

"I hope so Juba, because if this scheme of Magnus' fail, I know where I'll be spending the rest of my days", Hakonn realised, as he thought of being ostracised to the Forbidden Zone; yes, the 'Zone' as it was also known as, where the High Council of late had decided to banish so-called discontented apes who went against conventional thinking, or more to the point Zaius' and Urko's. Yes the 'Zone', Hakonn remembered the day the decision was handed down by Zaius and the High Council to appease Julian the Lawgiver, because he complained that the first law 'Ape shall not kill ape' was not being obeyed and taken seriously, so a compromise was given. If any ape committed treason, heresy, murder, that ape, instead of being executed, was sent to the 'Zone' never to return. It was a fate worse than death, but at least there was a chance to live a sub-normal life, albeit a barbaric, isolated one, and if you were lucky, very lucky, you might die from the 'burning sickness' as it was called. This sickness, was only contracted within the 'Zone', but only if you were living there for years, then a fever would begin to take you, and then you would burn from inside, slowly at first, coughing up bits of blood, vomiting, eventually you became bedridden, not able to eat or drink, and all the while, the fever would burn you inside and out, until one day you just died from the pain and the agony. It was a horrible way to go, if you were lucky, some would last longer than others, go for years without being affected by the 'burning sickness'.

Hakonn remembered a story from the 'Zone' about an orang-utan by the name of Old Zeb, he was considered a legend in the 'Zone', him and his faithful donkey called, One-eyed Jack with a bell around its neck. Why a donkey was called that was anyone's guess—and it wasn't because the donkey had one eye, because the animal still had its two. Yes, Old Zeb the story goes, would roam the 'Zone' with One-eyed Jack preaching the word of the Lawgiver to anyone who was willing to listen, and if you saw him come to you to stay for the night, chances are you or anyone with you would be dead the next morning. They say Old Zeb could smell death, could sense it coming, he seemed to have the ability to know when your time was up; and if he came early enough, would start digging a grave awaiting its owner or victim—depending how you look at it. Some say he was a devil, others say a saint; no one knows how old or how long Old Zeb has been around. He would come and go like the wind; just listen, listen for the bell, and you will know that Old Zeb was on his way—to you, coming to collect your soul, to release you from your torment of pain, of life, of punishment. Take it as you will, but Old Zeb will be waiting, waiting for you in the 'Zone'; even the zephyr they say calls out his name, and if you see him, don't run, for you can never run away from death.

Hakonn was awakened from his thoughts when Juba informed him that one of his troopers who galloped ahead to scout around, reported that he noticed there was a strange human wearing strange clothing and a strange looking structure on the beach just up ahead. So Juba gave the order to move quietly and investigate. As they approached not making a sound, Juba from the cover of the road and trees noticed this human who was not Virdon or Burke was looking around and putting some kind of small object towards his face every now and again. As this human was not carrying any weapons—well none that Juba could see, he decided that this human should be captured and interrogated. Juba ordered two troopers each to flank the human to the left and right while he and Hakonn with the remaining gorilla charged for a frontal assault.

Then when every gorilla was in position, Juba called out the order to charge, within a few seconds upon seeing apes on horseback the human began to run back towards the

strange looking structure, but just before he could get to it, he was cut off to his left and right and then before he could do anything else was facing Juba in front of him, rifles aimed.

“Stay where you are human!” called out Juba, “or I will order my troopers to shoot you where you stand, do you understand?”

“Sure—sure, anything you say pal, you know me I’m easy”, with a quivering voice and arms raised in surrender.

“Do you have a name human?” asked Juba.

“Name, sure I have a name, its right here on my uniform, see”, trying to indicate his nametag on his right upper chest with his head.

“Don’t play games with me, stupid human! Name! What is your name?”

“Lieutenant Benjamin Krieg”.

<sup>1</sup> In ‘Escape From Tomorrow’ we see Arno and his pet dog, so it is assumed that not all the dogs and maybe cats perished in the plague of 1983 described by Armando in the film ‘Conquest of the Planet of the Apes’. It may be that some dogs and possibly the cats as well survived by having some resistance to the plague and developed a natural immunity to it and thus passed it on to their offspring.

**SEAQUEST  
SANTA CRUZ**

It had been an interesting couple of days onboard the seaQuest as Virдон, Burke and Galen were welcomed by Bridger and his crew, especially Galen as he, by request from Bridger, outlined the known history of his kind, as far back as he could remember; this information became disturbing to say the least, because, Bridger had no record of apes becoming servants and or slaves to the human race. Not only that, but when Virдон explained his predicament, Bridger couldn't believe his ears, as he told the astronauts, when they were in the Mess Hall having coffee after lunch.

"It's just incredible!" he exclaimed, with him were Ford, Westphalen and Chapman whom were also eager to hear what the two men had to say, as Galen was with Crocker taking a guided tour of the seaQuest. The chimp was very excited and very curious, as to the function and technology of the vessel. As he couldn't believe how man had made such a thing to travel underwater, it really was beyond his understanding but Galen was enjoying himself, looking around, eyes wide open, asking questions—what's this? What's that? How does it work? What does it do? Crocker really had his hands full, and in reality put his memory to the test as he tried to remember what functions with what, and name that device—what was it again? After the astronauts came aboard and had cleaned up including well deserved hot showers, which Virдон and Burke appreciated and cherished every minute, they also had a short tour themselves, which would continue later, "I truly can't believe it", continued Bridger, still amazed, "what you've told us so far, is really astonishing; so, let me get this straight, you are members of ANSA, a division of NASA; in 1980 you left earth to go to Alpha Centauri; and crash-landed back here again last year..."

"...that's right", Virдон agreed.

"...and you got captured soon after by a gorilla, named Urko, who is a General of all the armed forces here, as well as the Head of Security in Central City..."

"...and wants us dead", Burke put in sarcastically.

"...and this Zaius, an orang-utan is the Chief Head Councillor of the High Council, a political body in Central City, who wants to interrogate you for information, and *then* wants to kill you..."

"...it's a lovely world you came to visit, isn't it?" Burke added, with a little contempt in his voice.

"Not only that Nathan", Virдон explained, "but if Urko and Zaius ever found out about you, you can bet your bottom dollar, you'll be added to the hit list".

"Well that's just great"; Ford said feeling annoyed, but calm, "I guess that means we have to stay out of sight, and only go on shore, when absolutely necessary?"

"It looks that way", Bridger said.

"I know I shouldn't say this but, we do have armaments that are far more superior to that of the gorillas, surely we can defend ourselves better if need be as our food stocks will eventually be depleted", this coming from Westphalen who was quite taken by Galen's attitude and friendliness when he came aboard.

"I agree", Chapman concurred, "but at this stage, the less contact we have with the native ape population the better, until we know exactly what we are up against and how to deal with this world's developed social and political order; I find it fascinating, that out of the ashes of man's ignorance, the world came to be dominated by a species of primate that not only can talk, but was able to takeover and gain control of the earth. But I think it wise when we do go on shore that we do not to carry any of our weapons, this maybe alarming, but think what would happen if the gorillas got a hold of them, the balance of technological power may be in our hands now, but if the apes ever get our weapons, it could change everything".

"There is truth in what you say Hurl, it will be important not to give the apes of this world an advantage over us, if push comes to shove, they may be primitive in our eyes, but they do have the intelligence, and we aren't exactly the majority, no matter how technologically advanced we are; over hundreds of years these apes have developed this world to their cultural forbearance and thus succeeded in many areas to broaden their society, we must not underestimate them", Bridger advised the group.

"What about the nuclear war Alan?" asked Ford, changing the subject, "I mean do you have any indication of when it started?"

"As far as Pete and I can surmise it happened obviously after we left earth, when we came here and started our life on the run, there were many indications and evidence which led to the conclusion that nuclear war had occurred, how it started, I don't know, but one thing is clear, it happened and perhaps after 2019, by your ship's clock".

"But even so", Bridger put in, "there's one thing that puzzles me, and I know you won't understand this but, I checked our history, and there is no mention of ANSA, or anything about the Icarus Program, or about interstellar flight to Alpha Centauri to explore for colonization, and add to the fact that I put your names into the main computer, and came out with nothing, you don't exist, you just don't".

—\*—\*—

It had been an interesting if not informative couple of days as Virдон, Burke and Galen stayed on board the seaQuest, considering the revelation that plagued Bridger, No ANSA, no Icarus Program, no interstellar flights to Alpha Centauri, no nothing. Virдон and Burke came from earth, there was no doubt about that, the flight disc that Virдон carried with him was proof of that. I know they're telling me the truth, Bridger thought, but I can't believe it, there has to be another explanation, there just has to be. Bridger was in his cabin trying to think things through; the only thing he came up with was the Whirlhole that was the only rationalization. The Whirlhole and the answers—he hoped—were in the probes that Hurl was looking over, downloading the information for study, perhaps the information gathered may shed some light on their current quandary to this situation. Bridger had to find out, so he left his cabin to seek answers to questions that may not have answers at all—only more questions—more headaches. Bridger had told Virдон and Burke his experiences in Hawaii, and about the humans there, it seemed the human population here was much better off than those in Hawaii, perhaps being an island, being isolated, there was no knowledge of other humans and or apes surviving in other parts of the world. The answer has to be here, it has to be.

The fugitives were in Virdon's cabin, as each them were assigned his own, as there was more than enough room to accommodate them. They were sitting down discussing their day and assessing for themselves the recent circumstances they were in and trying to make sense about the information that Bridger told them concerning being non-existent from the seaQuest's computers, pertaining to the history of the planet, even Virdon tried to get some information from the main frame, to see if there was anything, anything at all about the space program via ANSA and Alpha Centauri, but there was nothing, even personnel records from the era didn't reveal any clues, there was just no mention of Virdon, Burke, Jones or any of the other astronauts from the Icarus Program.

"What do you think Al, what's your take on this?" Burke asked trying to come to terms with their current situation.

"I don't know Pete, it's as though we don't exist, I mean there was a NASA, and the rest of its space program checks out, but not us".

"I know I'm only a chimpanzee", said Galen feeling concern for his friends, "but this may sound like a stupid question..." pausing for their reaction.

"Go on buddy, you can spill the beans, its okay".

"...well, could Bridger be telling you the truth? I mean, maybe he's hiding something? He seems to be a very intelligent and a kind soul, but perhaps there's something else amiss, a piece of the puzzle not quite fitting...oh I don't know, if he is telling the truth and if he is from your past, why aren't you there?"

"Galen", responded Virdon in a quiet sympathetic tone, "I believe Bridger *is* telling the truth, I see no reason why he should lie to us, there's nothing to gain; he's just as confused as we are, all we can do now is pool our resources and work together to find the answer, that's all that we can do...for now".

"Well I don't know about you two, but I don't mind staying here for awhile away from Urko and Zaius and the gorilla patrols and hunting parties; it will be good to rest and relax without keeping one eye open all night, and since the ape population can't swim, I don't think they will find us anytime soon".

"Especially underwater", Virdon replied with a grin.

"Underwater!" Galen said alarmingly, looking up and around the cabin, thinking that the sea would come in at any moment, "are we underwater?"

"Relax Galen; you're safe, nothing going to happen".

"But we are underwater", Galen still couldn't believe his ears.

"Just think pal, you're the first chimpanzee ever to live and breath under the sea without getting wet", smiling from ear to ear at his simian friend.

"Ohhh...I'm glad you find it amusing, both of you, it's just...so unnatural, and besides, we could sink you know...perhaps there's a leak that we don't know about...and we are slowly sinking to the bottom...never to rise to the surface again".

"Relax Galen; we'll just swim to the surface", both astronauts smiling at him.

“But...I...can’t...swim”, looking at both men with a fearful expression on his face.





### DIRECTOR'S LOUNGE CAPE KENNEDY 1971

*"I can't help thinking somewhere in the universe  
there has to be something better than man; has to be"*

*Taylor*

\_\_\*\_\_\*

Captain Alan Viridon was looking around the room full of people—the top brass, politicians and other VIP's, glass of champagne in hand, his wife Sally over in the far corner near the bar talking to Dr. Hasslein the Director of ANSA. He was really excited being here as he was one of the few to be invited to this Christmas—cocktail party. This being the last for the four astronauts of the Astræa, they were all here for the final goodbye, their last Christmas before the February launch date next year—Landon, Dodge, Stewart and Taylor, who was standing alone on the balcony, watching the final rays of the golden sun disappear under the deep dark blue horizon which was the sea, a tranquil visage of serene beauty, awaiting a new birth of tomorrow's appraisal of a dawn yet to be; with glass in his left hand, cigar in his right, he seemed to be in a contemplative mood, perhaps wondering what lay ahead as he and his crew journey to Alpha Centauri. Viridon decided to walk over and wish the Colonel good luck for the launch.

"Beautiful isn't it?" giving a relaxed salute as well as feeling a bit nervous, when Taylor turned around to see who it was.

"Yes it is that; Captain, Alan Viridon isn't it? nice to see you again", not bothering returning the salute himself, "no need to salutations Alan", glancing past Viridon's shoulder into the room full of dignitaries, "no one's going to worry about protocol tonight, besides...it would seem out of place".

"That's training for you I guess", trying to relax, "I just want to wish you luck for the launch..."

"Thanks", taking a puff from his cigar, "you are an admirer of beauty Alan?" pointing with his cigar at the seascape before them, "not many of those left...for me".

"I have a keen eye, nature is a wonderful thing".

"I hear you want to join the space program yourself?" changing the subject.

"Yes that's right, I've got two more years of tour duty, then I'll enrol at Edwards, if all goes well, I may follow in your footsteps", indicating to Taylor with a glance of his eyes towards the now approaching night sky as a couple of stars began to show their appearance.

"Do you think you're made of the right stuff Alan?", turning back to view the scenery before him, he wasn't being rude, but Taylor wanted a last look of the day before it disappeared...forever, "do you think you can leave earth, your wife, your son--this civilization--to pursue a dream for humanity and Mankind, to better its place in the universe?" sounding cynical.

"I'd like to think so; I'd give it a damn good try".

"Good for you; *'the dreams of many; are the dreams of the few, who venture forth for the betterment of the individual'*, ever hear that?"

"No...I can't say that I have", trying figure out what Taylor was attempting to say.

"A twelfth century poet wrote that, trying to understand his place in his society, trying to comprehend his meaning--his life's purpose--to himself and to others; he didn't live long enough to find out", turning around again to face Virdon and looked at the people of the party with a critical eye, observing them with almost suspicion, "poor bastards, look at them, like lambs to the slaughter", taking a small gulp of his champagne, then tuning his attention back to Virdon, "listen, let me ask you a question, how do you view your life Virdon, what does it mean to you, what do you hope to achieve within your lifespan that could make a difference to Mankind, what do you hope to gain?" eyeing the Captain with an almost penetrating stare, trying to reach within his soul...his humanity.

"I want to make this world a better place for our children, to let them dream of better days to come, so they can grow up with a bright future, and advance our standing within the eyes of the universe. As for myself I want to help make that happen, I want our children to be free to make their own decisions about their life and to fulfil their dreams and expectations without prejudice from others. If I can achieve my goals I can help others achieve theirs".

"Good answer, but is it the right one; do we have the right to a better, brighter future? Out there in space, man escapes his demons, by leaving his home, this planet--the womb of his making; do we have the right to rape another world and to contaminate it with our desire for exploration and exploitation? Why do we do the things we do in order to satisfy our curiosity? Is it a birthright, a blessing, a legacy of man to reach Godhood in the eyes of himself? Do you Virdon feel blessed that one day, you to will follow me into the stars and rape its innocence, knowing that you have condemned man to seek out other intelligent life than his own?"

"I don't know about being condemned, we as men must find peace within ourselves, we are the sons of the universe, we are made of star stuff, it is within our soul, our spirit; the heavens call to us to answer our prayers, our questions about our place within it; to seek out the unknown, so it can *be* known, to enrich our knowledge and our being. I don't know what's out there Taylor, no one does, but I want to know, I want to find out and if I can make it happen, I will. Man has reached the moon, and has begun to explore his surroundings; you will be going further than any man or machine has ever been, you are the privileged, the messenger of man, you carry the flag of hope, of dreams to be upon your back".

"Atlas had a hard time keeping the world on his shoulders, the balance of life and death..."

"...or the upholder of the human race, so we as a people will survive".

"Maybe...but you're wrong about one thing though; man does know what's out there, beyond the stars...his destiny; the destiny of Mankind, the destiny of his spirit, his will; to go

forth and find his true self, his inner self. *'For I am but a child of the mind, let no thought cloud thy vision, to see beyond thyself as others truly see thee, as I am'*”

“The poet?” Virdon asked, feeling more confident with himself conversing with Taylor, who he found had a presence about him; he felt that this man had to ask—no find questions, so the answers could be understood, not just for himself but strangely for others. The world had become too small; Taylor needed to get out—get away, to see the bigger picture, he needed to know the ‘why’ and more importantly the ‘where’ so his own life could be understood.

“Giovanni Luca Raffaello, an obscure Italian poet, born 1163, died 1193; he wrote a manuscript entitled, *“The Inner thoughts of Man’s Soul”*. Sometimes, I believe that it is the unknown writer who knows more about the world, than the famous; they seem to have an unclouded view of the world in which we live, as they do not have to prove themselves to anyone, thus their judgement of how things are is more truer to the nature of man, than otherwise stated by doctrine by the powerful, who only think of themselves as God’s gift to man himself in his pursuit of knowledge—mainly greed and self-appeasement to elevate himself above his peers for his own pleasurable sins”.

“For a man who seems pessimistic about life and man, you show your optimism for it through man’s achievements by going into interstellar space, announcing his arrival”.

“I want to make sure we do it right, destiny has a way of surprising us with its cunning and subterfuge of the unknown by giving us what we want...for a price; the question is will we pay...can we pay; the price for life and death cannot be measured by money alone, the soul of man is what it feeds on...*“I want more”* it asks, and we give—and give; for it calls to us in a soft alluring voice, a voice sweet and perfumed, it intoxicates our senses, we are mesmerized by her sound....until it is too late...we have sold our soul...to the devil”, Taylor looked up at the now night sky, glazing, seeing the twinkling of the stars, “the eyes of the devil Virdon, each one a Hell in its own right, but there is salvation, a heavenly body, pure and untouched, awaiting—out there”, taking a last swig of his champagne and putting the empty glass on a small table beside him, and then having a puff of his cigar, “Alpha Centauri, could be the heavenly gate that opens up man’s dreams of interstellar exploration Virdon, but are we ready—are we truly ready?”

“Yes, I think we are, the moon was our first stepping stone; we have a drive of endless energy to explore, to experience, to enrich our knowledge and ourselves, to better man and his life; we are the curious, we have the instinct to seek out a better way of living; we owe it to ourselves and to future generations. You say, we have to find our destiny, so let’s fulfil it, let us find ourselves by reaching out and seeing what there is to see, you are the vanguard, the seeker of Mankind paving the way for others—like me to follow. The universe is a vast and mysterious place, full of the unknown, waiting for man to find his way—and yes there have been setbacks along the way, but we must keep trying, we cannot live in ignorance, we cannot live with our eyes shut closed to the world around us. We are on the verge of a golden age of space exploration, the door must open Taylor, if not by you, then it will be by others; the question you have to ask yourself is, do I want to be the first, the first to see, the first to experience, the first to know...”

“...the first to die?”

—\*—\*—

Virdon was in his cabin, lying on his bunk, thinking about that conversation he had with Taylor that fateful evening; it was the last time he saw him personally before the lift-off in February. I wonder whatever happened to them, Jones was right in one way—about the apes, they do exist, and that was Taylor’s ship that returned, I know that now—no hoax. Just

think somewhere in the future Taylor, Landon, Dodge and Stewart are on this earth, trapped in a nightmare world dominated by apes. I know one thing, Taylor will certainly keep them alive, it's in his blood, by helping his crew, he's helping himself, not just staying alive, but helping to keep his humanity, his soul; his destiny alive. I know one thing, when I return home, I will reveal and tell the truth—no matter what, the people have to know, to know the truth, is to know and deliver justice—before the nightmare, before that fatal, historic day, before the devil claimed the world.

**SEAQUEST  
SANTA CRUZ**

O'Neill was lucky, very lucky in deed; he had just finished collecting some samples of sand, seaweed, a couple of shells and a vial of seawater for Dr. Westphalen to examine on the seaQuest and was making his way back to the sea launch when he noticed the gorillas on horseback surrounding Krieg who was trying to make a run for it, but couldn't; too late to help him, O'Neill quickly took cover near the rocks hoping he wasn't detected by them as he watched Krieg surrender. A couple of gorillas got a bit curious and started to inspect the sea launch, but a gorilla, possibly their leader, ordered them to stop and to tie up the Lieutenant. As O'Neill continued to observe, he couldn't help thinking what Captain Bridger and Commander Ford were going to say about this stuff up—and that was putting it lightly; at the moment all he could do was watch the gorillas take Krieg away and wait until the coast was clear for him to report back to the ship.

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Bridger went to the moon pool to see how Chapman was doing with the probes; as he entered the area he could see the two probes stationed and secured near the work area set aside for Chapman's purposes with wires connected to them running along the floor towards a table which became the doctor's workstation, which had a couple of computers on it, and there sitting quietly absorbed in his work was Dr. Chapman, typing away, stopping to read, then picking up a sheaf of papers, seemingly going over various information.

"How's goes it, Hurl?" having a quick look at the probes and then turning his attention to the doctor.

"Well..." he stopped reading the papers he had in his hand by putting them back down to address Bridger, "...all goes fine, at the moment anyway Nathan, I've been going through your probe's data and comparing it with ours, to see if there are any anomalies at all, even if minor; but sad to say there isn't much, oh, there are a few fluctuations, but nothing to outstanding to offer any alteration of my analysis so far..."

"Can you give me what you have?" not liking what he heard.

"Nothing concrete, but there are some very interesting data on the Whirlhole itself which may help in my investigation, firstly, it is not composed from its surroundings, where we found it, it is not a natural occurring phenomenon of the Mariana Trench; how it got there is still a mystery and why it is there even more so, I haven't seen anything like it in all my years as a scientist, the information will keep me and my team busy for years. Its existence is beyond belief, and if I may be so bold, I hesitate to say extraterrestrial in origin, and that's just my own theory, naturally there's no evidence to suggest otherwise of course, but I must keep an open mind..."

"Are you trying to say that the Whirlhole is of alien origin?" trying to believe the doctor, but was having trouble doing so, sure Hurl was at the top of his field, but maybe, just maybe he wasn't all there, "how can that be, can you be sure?"

"I don't know Nathan, how can I be sure of anything, I can only go by the data presented to me via the probes...we know so little of the universe and its mysteries, and considering the predicament we're in, in order to understand the information collected if we are to return".

"Return?" as much as Bridger had had his hands full, he didn't realise that perhaps where the seaQuest was, considering that where they were now was their final destination, it never occurred to him to plan a return, I mean he thought, we are on earth, okay, in the future, but I wasn't thinking of going back...going back to where? "I don't understand Hurl, return; return where?"

"Back to our time, of course, if my preliminary conclusions are correct, and if they are Nathan, you're not going to like what I have in mind to achieve it".

"Exactly, what do you have in mind", not wanting to hear what he thought he was going to hear, so Bridger mentally braced himself for what was to come, "please don't tell me", shaking his head slowly.

"I'm sorry Nathan, but if we are to leave this world, this earth behind, and return to ours, we must re-enter the Whirlhole, it's our only hope and salvation, and possibly the only conclusion".

Well there it was, the mental revelation that had to be, and didn't Hurl just say this earth, what did he mean by that? "Are you sure, I mean perhaps your information is incorrect..." being a little confused.

"At this stage, there's no mistake, but I will recheck my findings, and here's another shocker; this earth may not be our earth, but an alternate one; have you ever heard of the television series called "Sliders" by any chance?"

"Yes, it's about a group of people travelling to alternate earths with subtle differences trying to get back to their original earth".

"That's right, by using some kind of portal to travel through, the changes may vary and are unique to each earth they visit trying to find their way home; and that's the case we may have here Nathan, this is not our earth, but another alternate one. Why do you think your data-library has no information about Viridon's ANSA and the Interstellar Space Program, add to that, the astronauts Viridon and Burke themselves, are not mentioned anywhere, they just don't exist, didn't you think that strange?"

"I have to admit it sure was, our data-library is always up to date; okay doctor", giving himself a mental sigh, "I'm keeping an open mind about this so far--well my scientific mind at least, as the case may be, but it's really wild; and you got all that from them", pointing to the two probes, "are there any more surprises up your sleeve?"

"Not yet I'm afraid, but I'm working on it", giving a slight smile, "in any case, I still need time to verify my findings, as far as the probes data are concerned; as with the alternate earth theory, the ship's data-library supplied that information as you know, along with what Viridon has said--if that can be proven, and at this stage we can only surmise that we have, you have some thinking to do about our situation and our future Nathan", pausing to allow Bridger to take this all in before continuing, "I'll know more in the next couple of days concerning the Whirlhole but I think you should get someone to check Viridon's story and correlate it with the information you have in your ship's data-library, I myself did just a casual scan, but perhaps you should look into it more thoroughly, to help put things in perspective and thus help you make a more decisive decision".

"Yes, I see what you mean; deal with the unknown, that is known, to verify that which is true to be untrue, I can at least do that", feeling a bit overwhelmed, "look; let's just keep this to ourselves for the moment, until you have more information, okay?"

"Sure, no need to alarm anyone, not just yet, that's your job".

"Thanks for your vote of confidence", *to return from Gæa's embrace, is but a moment of solitude, a finding of the way...reborn...a rebirth, back into the arms of self, back into the arms of forever.*

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Bridger was on his way to the Bridge when he met up with Ford on the main corridor, who approached him hesitantly; there was a worried look on his face, which was out of place on the young officer, but nevertheless it was there.

"Something on your mind Commander?" hoping the news wasn't that bad.

"Sir, we have a problem", not liking what he was about to inform the Captain.

"Take it slow Commander", in Bridger's experience, it paid to be patient, at times such as this.

"Yes sir", here it goes, "I gave permission for Krieg and O'Neill to go topside for one hour; Krieg wanted to take some pictures of the beach area where we found Viridon, Burke and Galen, to add to our collection, as O'Neill hadn't been with us on Hawaii, I let him go to accompany Krieg to give him a break in his duties. Dr. Westphalen heard about the departure and asked O'Neill to collect some samples of the local area for her to study and examine..."

"Well considering Krieg's excellent work in photography on Hawaii, I guess he's got the shutterbug, the pictures he's taken will become invaluable", it certainly was Bridger thought, Krieg had the gift, and a fine eye for detail, his photographs of the human and ape settlement prove that, and considering what Chapman had told him about this being an alternate earth, if being true, could prove priceless to those in the UEO, "and I can understand the doctor's curiosity, as a fellow scientist myself, the earth may have had some changes this past one thousand years and it would be interesting to see what turns up..."

"...in any case O'Neil has returned...but without Krieg; it seems while the Lieutenant was taking some shots, a bunch of gorillas on horseback captured him and took him away, O'Neill waited in hiding for them to leave, before returning safely. I take full responsibility for my actions in regard to this sir without informing you first", there it was done, Ford now stood at attention and waited for Bridger's reply, but he seemed quite calm.

"Alright Commander at ease, the damage is done; part of being responsible is allocating that responsibility, if you felt it was safe for the pair of them to go topside, then the order was given; don't start second guessing your decisions Commander, if it was right, it was, if not, I'll be the judge of that, okay?"

"Yes sir", feeling the tension ease a bit within himself.

"Good, head back to the Bridge, while I'll go and find Galen, perhaps he'll know where those gorillas have taken Krieg, and then we'll formulate a plan of rescue and organise a team to go topside".

“Understood sir”, relieved that his actions met with approval, but Ford was still uneasy, he still felt negligent in some way and responsible. As a senior officer on this ship he had a duty to himself to make correct decisions. Decisions that not only affect him but the crew as well; I must be able to stand up for my actions, Ford thought, mistakes are costly, and I can’t allow myself those. Luckily I have an excellent teacher...Captain Nathan Bridger, to help me steer the right course and hopefully when I’m experienced enough, replace him in the future as the next Captain of the seaQuest.





**POLICE HEADQUARTERS  
KHANOCH**

*"Never let it be said that I do not come in your hour of need,  
for who else will dig your grave and pray for your sins,  
as I clothe you in earth that soils your body for all eternity"*

*Old Zeb*

\_\_ \* \_\_ \*

How the hell did I get myself into this, thought Kreig as he sat on the floor leaning against the wall of his cell. He remembered—it was early yesterday evening when he arrived totally exhausted, being forced to jog with his hands tied in front of him, while his captors—the gorillas were on their horses, trying to spur him on so they could make for a town before nightfall, but to no avail as he slowed them down trying to keep up—even with rope tied around his waist to force him on, Kreig felt that if he fell he would've been dragged along the ground, which would definitely have pleased the gorillas—but he didn't give them the pleasure, so it wasn't until just after dark that they arrived; and their leader ordered that he be locked up and thus was hastily put in a holding cell. Now it was morning and Kreig who hadn't eaten since yesterday was hungry and ached all over, he didn't sleep well either; he was wondering what was going to happen to him next when the cell door opened and a gorilla pushed a tray of food along the floor towards Kreig and left a cup of water near the inside entrance.

"Here! Eat you stinting human, and don't cause me any trouble, do you understand human?"

"Yes..." was all Kreig could really say, "I understand".

"You'd better, if you know what's good for you human".

The gorilla seemingly satisfied gave a little grunt and relocked the cell door, as he walked away Kreig could hear the gorilla talking to himself, he caught the words 'stupid stinting human' and then was alone again. Kreig slowly reached for the tray of food which was only a bowl of what looked like soup with vegetables and some bread, probably stale—he was right. Kreig tried the soup and made a face, it didn't taste at all appetising; must've been last week's special on the cell menu. Kreig tried dunking the stale bread in the soup so he could at least get some food into him. Slowly he got up and took the cup of water, he gave it a smell and sipped a little of it, at least the water was fresh and clean—be thankful for small—very small mercies. Kreig slowly sat down again near the tray of food and wondered how the seaQuest was going to find him? He knew that O'Neill was probably hiding when he got captured so there was no doubt that O'Neill would return and report what had happened. It was now only a matter of time before a rescue party would come and get him—if they knew where to find him that is? Kreig was also thinking about the digital camera he had with him, naturally the head gorilla took it when he got captured; it had a lot of great shots stored in its memory, so hopefully they won't be lost, or even worse—the camera destroyed. Well it was a strong possibility considering that a human had it and was of human design, it may be

deemed evil by the apes, but then again they don't know it's a camera or know how it functions, a little smile came on Kreig's face; there was still hope.

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Juba was sitting at the desk in the Chief of Police's office, which he decided to appropriate for his own use, while studying the strange device he took from the human yesterday, naturally the Chief, a gorilla by the name of Demas wasn't too pleased—but was persuaded, since Juba had the authority under Magnus' orders. Early this morning, Juba ordered Hakonn to make arrangements for him to see Khanoch's Prefect Remus, to help organise the fugitives' eventual capture. Juba himself will talk with Demas later today about his security forces. All was going well—at this stage, Magnus will arrive in a day or two and by then the net will tighten and the fugitives Viridon, Burke and Galen will be within our grasp. Perhaps this human, what was the name he called himself—Lieutenant Benjamin Krieg, a Lieutenant, in a human army impossible? Maybe Magnus can shed some light on the situation when he comes, in any case this Kreig won't be any trouble, he may even know where the fugitives are—I'll make him talk and then I'll have him shot. Juba was studying the device by turning it this way and that, it was black and made of some kind of metal he didn't recognise when he heard a knock at the door.

“Enter”, as he put the device down.

Hakonn entered the office, “Juba, the Prefect has invited you to lunch so that you can discuss with him what is required to apprehend the fugitives”.

“Excellent, well done Hakonn; in a couple of days Magnus will be here and then the fun will *really* begin, I can taste the blood of those humans already...” showing a smile.

“...what about the human we have in the cells, what do we do with him?”

“I think it's about time we have a little chat with our friend Kreig and see if he knows anything, especially about where Viridon, Burke and Galen are, I'm sure he knows something, his strange clothing suggests that much at least...”

“...could he be another ass-tro-naut from the stars?” Hakonn questioned, as it was now common knowledge that Viridon and Burke were humans not of this earth, but from another earth, a different earth, a past earth, where the human was the master, and the ape was the animal. They were a threat...a serious threat to simian civilization according to the High Council and from Urko himself.

“It's possible, and what of that strange craft we saw on the beach? This human Kreig will definitely know what it is and this too...” indicating with his hand the device resting on the desk, “he had it with him and he seemed to be using it before we captured him so I think it more than likely he has the information required to answer all our questions. Go and prepare our guest for interrogation; I will be there soon; I need to speak with Demas first and make further security arrangements pertaining to this area as ordered by Magnus”.

“Very well Juba, it'll be good to have some fun with this human, he doesn't seem too bright or strong of body, he'll break—they all do”.

“Don't be too ruff on him, not yet anyway, this Kreig is still worth something alive, but when Magnus and I have finished with him, I'm sure you could devise a suitable...end to this human's life...say, target practise for instance?”

“My troopers would be glad of the sport; it’s been awhile since we had some fun with a human to shoot at...yes, awhile indeed”.

—\*—\*—

Hakonn made his way to the cell containing the human Kreig, he was accompanied by two other gorillas from his company, as he made his way across the compound to the holding cells he was thinking about how he would interrogate the human. Not too ruff but just enough to soften him up a little so he could talk and answer questions, it was going to be a pleasure, Hakonn hadn’t interrogated a human in a long time—but he still knew how, I’ll soon make his tongue wag, he won’t be able to stop his babbling, and then he’ll beg me to stop.

—\*—\*—

Juba left soon after Hakonn; he made his way to the stables to collect his horse and to meet with Demas. Accompanying him on the trip will be one of Demas’ troopers—Lunn who had come as ordered the night before to escort Juba to the local garrison where Demas was making his final preparations for Juba’s inspection, according to Lunn there were thirty troopers stationed here at Khanoch with a dozen or so making their rounds in the surrounding areas, that was a total of forty-two gorillas at Juba’s disposal to disperse throughout the region; especially on the main road leading to the ruined city further south. As Magnus said, if the fugitives make it there it will take months to find them, if I’m worth anything, Juba thought, I have to make sure Viridon, Burke and Galen don’t get that far. I’ll have to station extra troopers at Santas and Zharnn to secure those villages, so the fugitives won’t be able to get through, it’ll force them to head back here, and we’ll be waiting for them, besides I’d like to see their faces when they realise it was me that helped capture them—they probably have forgotten about me anyway, but I’ll make them remember—because I do.

“Lunn!” Juba called out as he entered the stables.

“Here sir!” was the reply.

Juba saw Lunn standing by with two horses already bridled awaiting their riders. “Good, now let’s be on our way, I’ve got plans—plans that may bring excitement into your dull life here in Khanoch”.

—\*—\*—

Kreig was lightly dozing where he sat by the wall finally being able to get some shut eye for once, when suddenly the cell door opened with a bang and he was frightfully awakened by a gorilla’s voice which included a kick on the side to rouse him.

“Get up! You stinking human, time for us to have a little chat!” Hakonn announced. “You two help him up”, ordering the two gorillas, who picked Kreig up and were holding him in-between them, “where are the fugitives?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about”, Kreig replied feeling groggy and slightly unsteady on his feet.

“Liar!”

Kreig felt a sudden pain in the stomach as Hakonn punched him, while his simian cohorts gave a smirk of satisfaction.

“Where are you hiding the fugitives?”

"My name is Lieutenant Ben..." was all Krieg could say before Hakonn gave him another punch and a couple of slaps in the face.

"Liar!" Hakonn shouted, grabbing Krieg by his blue collared uniform and looking him straight in the eyes, "listen human, you better tell me what I need to know, because my Commander won't be as lenient with you as I am, do you understand?"

"Sure pal, anything you say", Krieg said, feeling his lips beginning to numb, with a trickle of blood running down from his mouth.

"Good", letting Krieg go, "now, where are the fugitives Viridon Burke and Galen?"

"Under the ocean".

"Liar!" Hakonn shouted again as he gave Krieg another belting. "Tell me where the fugitives are and I'll let you live, do you understand that, human!?"

"I told you...I don't know...where...they...are".

"Liar!" Giving Krieg another couple of punches, "listen human", Hakonn said in a much softer tone, "do you think I enjoy hitting you? Well I don't, but I have to have certain answers to certain questions, and the sooner you tell me, the sooner you can rest...do you understand?"

"Sure", feeling dazed and disoriented, "I...understand".

"Good, that's better, now where are Viridon, Burke and Galen?"

"Who's...Viridon...Burke...and Galen?"

"Wrong answer, stupid human!" Hakonn shouted in Krieg's blood stained face.

—\*—\*—

By the time Hakonn had finished with Krieg, the Lieutenant was a bundle of blood and flesh held together by bones the gorilla didn't think he'd have. Krieg fell to the floor as the two gorillas let him go, as they along with Hakonn left the cell and the human to his misery.

**SEAQUEST  
SANTA CRUZ**

Bridger was lying on his bunk resting in his cabin thinking about what Hurl had said to him about his theories of there being perhaps another earth in which the seaQuest had entered via the Whirlhole; it all sounded ridiculous but the scientist in him thought otherwise, besides he himself hadn't put forward any ideas of his own to help in the seaQuest's predicament, he was still trying to cope with how the crew will survive in this nightmare world; and then there was Virdon and Burke to consider. Bridger got up and sat on the edge of his bunk and looked at the holographic mainframe, maybe Professor Morrison has some ideas about this being an alternate earth? So Bridger got the remote resting on the topside drawer cabinet beside his bunk and turned the hologram on.

"Hello Nathan, how are you?"

"I could be better...listen I want you to search your library databanks".

"My extensive library is as always ready to help in anyway possible, it has been regularly updated on a weekly basis with the exception of our current dilemma, in which case I have had no new input, but please remember Nathan the information is only as accurate as what has been downloaded by human resources".

"Oh I think what I have to ask you won't be too difficult to recover; can you find any reference to ANSA the American National Space Administration? Use any NASA references to correlate the information".

"I have found no such reference Nathan".

"That was quick", but stopped Professor Morrison from making any further comment to his reaction with an outward hand gesture, "okay, how about any references to Colonel Alan John Virdon and Major Peter James Burke; use any NASA, astronaut and military references".

"I have found no such references Nathan".

"None at all?" being amazed, surly there had to be something, anything, "please double check..."

"...Nathan, I already have, I have found no further references".

Wait a minute Bridger thought, no further references, what about non-military, "okay, try civilian references".

"I have twenty-five Alan John Virdons and three hundred and fifty Peter James Burkes listed within the American continent".

"Right, now we may be getting somewhere", Bridger told the hologram, his hopes a little up, and then proceeded with the description of both astronauts to see if there were any matches, "do we have any luck?"

"Sorry to inform you Nathan, but the information is non-conclusive because I referenced the American continent's telephone directories, which of course do not supply descriptions, and just before you ask, I also took the liberty of accessing all known police, state and federal databases without success".

Bridger had another idea and tried one more time, "of those twenty-five Alan John Virdons and three hundred and fifty Peter James Burkes listed, does any of them live or was born in Texas, Houston and or New York, Jersey City?"

"No", Professor Morrison replied.

Well that was that Bridger thought, but that doesn't mean Viridon and Burke don't exist, they may have been born somewhere else, the evidence is still inconclusive. In any case, it's a pretty safe bet that this is their earth and not ours. I'll just have to leave it...for now. Okay, onto the next topic which was irritating him, "there's something else I want to put to you...perhaps you could give me some insight in this area to help me understand, which could be related to our current situation".

"I will do my best Nathan, what is it that you wish to know?"

"Have you information on the TV series called 'Sliders', more specifically the idea behind it?"

"Yes, as I recall it was about a student by the name of Quinn Mallory who developed an anti-gravity device, which when activated, created and opened up a portal to a parallel universe, to be more accurate, a parallel alternative earth with slight changes to its reality..."

"Right, so what are your thoughts on alternate, parallel universes, worlds or earths?"

"Over the centuries there have been many scientific papers, theories and discussions on parallel universes, worlds and earths; one popular theory suggests that Black Holes are actual doorways into a universe which is the exact opposite to our own, put simply instead of white stars and black space, we have black stars and white space. This would be considered an opposite universe in which our earth would have its opposite spinning backwards and the sun rising in the west and setting in the east on a daily basis. As far as parallel worlds and earths are concerned another popular theory that can be easily explained is through man made time, since actual time does not exist within the laws of the universe, because time was never created when the universe was born from the Big Bang—but, I digress from my original thoughts from the subject at hand, sorry Nathan—but, man made time does play a part. Now, think of a seven day week as seven frames of film taken from a camera, each frame represents one day of the week, thus one earth day captured for your perusal to view anytime you wish; now think of having seven Mondays on seven different frames, but taken at the same time, what you finally have Nathan are seven separate windows, seven parallel Mondays which you could theoretically visit. Each Monday is different because of the events that Monday experiences at the time of exposure and capture, you could alter one without affecting changes to the other Mondays, thus affecting and varying that Monday's daily events from the norm which you know to be true".

"Like preventing the assassination of John F. Kennedy by asking him to wear a bullet proof vest?"

"Exactly, on one parallel earth he would be alive, and in another be wounded, or in another never be elected President or in another still never be born. The possibilities are endless, if one is in a parallel earth, and wanting to return to the original earth whenst you originally came, you would need to have some connection and or device like Quinn Mallory's to help you, otherwise you'd be wandering lost in-between worlds forever, and trying to find your way back".

Bridger sat quietly thinking trying to understand—to a certain degree, it made some sense considering the Marianas Station being gone, having no trace whatsoever of ever being there in the trench. "I think the seaQuest maybe in a parallel earth", he said slowly to Professor Morrison, "there have been...indications".

"Then you must find the way back through the portal that you entered to return".

Bridger knew straight away which portal Professor Morrison meant...the Whirlhole.

—\*—\*—

Bridger was in the Ward Room seated with him around the table were Ford, Hitchcock, Westphalen, Crocker, O'Neill, Virdon, Burke and Galen. Bridger already had a talk with Galen about the possible whereabouts of Lieutenant Krieg and where the gorillas may have taken him. Chapman was not present as he was still working on the probes analysing their data, but Bridger went back to see him to confirm and concur with Hurl's initial theories and to help now proceed with working out how the seaQuest can return to their own earth. Chapman agreed, but it wasn't a matter of how, it was a matter of when, because according to the doctor's calculations from the probes databases the Whirlhole seems to be losing power to sustain itself:

*"The longer we wait the weaker the Whirlhole's integral forces will become, and eventually it will or may disappear", Chapman informed Bridger; "we must act soon".*

*"How long do we have before the Whirlhole's structural integrity ceases to exist and its power or life force goes altogether?"*

*"At the rate of current loss, perhaps a week, ten days at the most, but the sooner we go, the more successful our return will be, otherwise..."*

*"...we're stuck here", Bridger finished Chapman's sentence, "great...just great, that doesn't give us much time to find Krieg, and return to the Mariana, it'll be tight all the way".*

*"I'd say two days to find him, if possible, otherwise leave him behind".*

*"I can't do that", thinking of the consequences.*

*"You must do what you think is best Nathan...but remember...ten days".*

—\*—\*—

*Time shall be a brother to me,  
for I shall count the ways,  
the sun, the moon, the stars to see,  
in remembrance of days*

—\*—\*—

"Galen", Bridger addressed as he came out of his thoughts into the present, "have you had any ideas where the gorillas may have taken Krieg?"

"Well considering where we are at present, the nearest town is Khanoch, which is the last major fishing town in this region, so that would be my best guess; gorillas even on horseback don't like riding far from their homes or their assigned duties".

"Right Khanoch it is then, if it is agreed, I along with Galen, Virdon and Burke will go and find Krieg, with one more to our party, O'Neill".

All eyes seemed to gaze at the young Lieutenant, "me sir?" now knowing why he was ordered to the Ward Room.

"Yes Lieutenant, you know what the gorillas look like..."

"I wasn't that close..."

"...but you would be able to recognise the head gorilla at least?"

"I think so sir".

"Good, then it's settled, Virdon and Burke have some spare clothes we can wear..."

"Captain with all due respect", this coming from Ford, "I think I should be the one going..."

"Commander, you're needed here, and your arm isn't fully healed yet".

"But..."

"No buts, that's an order".

"Sir", spoke up Hitchcock, "I would like to be part of the rescue party?" showing some concern and worry as she was once married to Krieg, even now after their divorce and serving together on the seaQuest, they had remained the best of friends, which considering the current trends with ex-married couples was very good; even though she wouldn't tell him, Katherine still has some feelings for Ben, deep down he's still the best mistake she ever made, and when it came to the crunch, he was there waiting to lend a hand if she needed him, good ol' reliable Ben.

"I understand your feelings Katherine", Bridger replied softly, as he rarely used Hitchcock's first name, but in this instance, it was warranted, "but you're needed here to support the Commander, even if Krieg is my responsibility, the seaQuest is more so, and I need you and Ford to maintain it; besides if anything were to happen to me or O'Neill, then I'm sure you'll be on the next party rescuing us".

"Yes sir", not really happy with the situation, but she had to accept it.

"Alan and Pete, I hope you don't mind coming along, since we won't be carrying any weapons, O'Neill and I will need as much physical backup as we can get".

"Don't you worry about it Nathan", said Virdon, already mentally trying to formulate a plan, "we have all the experience you'll need, chances are the gorillas will be keeping Krieg in one of two places, either at the police station or the local garrison".



“Yeah, we’re practically experts when comes to getting in and out of ape holding cells”, Burke added, thinking about his and Al’s time at Kaymak<sup>1</sup> and when they were first captured by Urko when they crash-landed here back on earth, with its dark past clouded with mystery of what happen after the Hyperion left earth<sup>2</sup>, it seemed like only yesterday, but in reality about two thousand years had gone by before it was realized that the astronauts had actually returned to an earth dominated and controlled by apes...how did it happen, God only knows.

“Galen, are you okay with coming with us and showing where Khanock is?” Bridger asked, as he assumed that Galen would accompany the four men.

“Oh I’m fine, I’ll be glad to help in anyway I can; besides you may need me just in case, as my friends here will testify”.

“Amen to that buddy”, Burke said with a cheeky grin.

“Without you, where would we be?” Virdon said with an added sarcastic smile.

“Oh I don’t know, I just don’t know”, Galen said ironically rolling his eyes.

<sup>1</sup> See the episode *“The Gladiators”*.

<sup>2</sup> See the episode *“Escape From Tomorrow”*.

**PREFECT REMUS' GARDEN  
KHANOCH**

Magnus was strolling with Remus in his garden; the orang-utan had a hand-held garden clipper and was occasionally snipping off a dead leaf or two from his prized rose bushes which he grew at the back of his home. Magnus was quite overwhelmed when he entered the Prefect's garden to realise just how large it was to the normal sized gardens that were common in Central City and in other surrounding provinces. Now Magnus understood why the best roses came from Remus' garden and were famed throughout and appreciated by many households, especially those of other Prefects and Councillors and it became somewhat of a status symbol. A bunch of Remus' Roses on the table was an acknowledgement of his influence, but more so depending on the colour of the roses; it is said that having a red rose denoted love, a yellow for sympathy, a white for cowardice, a black for treachery, a blue for favouritism, a pink for innocence and an orange for of course wisdom. But this naturally was only hearsay, since the only way the Remus Rose could occupy a place on the table was if Remus himself gave permission for delivery, as he himself considers his roses a precious gift not to be taken lightly, as it was truly judged as a sign of not only Remus' personal feelings but one that had political undertones. Whether true or not that was another matter, but there are those in political circles who believe in the flowers meaning, including that of Julian the Lawgiver himself. Besides the roses, which Remus has an extensive variety; the Prefect also grew other types of flowers as well which Magnus could not name to add further intrigue and a certain mystique as to the meanings of those flowers—if any.

"I've heard from Central City that an orang-utan was promoted the Deputy Chief of Security, but until now I really didn't believe it", Remus was saying, as he and Magnus continued their walk, "I must say...", having a quick look around to see if anybody was in hearing distance or present, then whispering to Magnus, "I am quite pleased, gorillas have there uses, but seem to lack...a certain intelligence, although Urko does seem brighter than most, still, you do us proud", nodding his head with a pleasing smile.

"Thank you for your vote of confidence Prefect Remus..." giving a small smile of self-satisfaction.

"...please just Remus, I don't think we need to stand on ceremony here".

"As you wish".

"Now, as I understand from Juba, you are here on duty, to capture two humans and a chimpanzee..."

"That's right, I'm making my headquarters here to help supervise the apprehension and capture of the fugitives; I assume Juba gave you instructions to that effect before my arrival?"

"Yes he did, your letter of introduction was most impressive and convincing, I didn't believe it at first, but your Commander was very persuasive—diplomatically speaking of

course, therefore I gave orders to Demas to carry out your instructions to the letter, he naturally wasn't impressed but I smoothed things over, he will have your fullest co-operation in this matter; besides, I told him, I will personally make a report to send to Central City praising him and his garrison".

"Good, it is very important that the fugitives be guided here, as indications show they are travelling in this direction, they will have to pass through Khanoch, and once they do...", clenching his left fist and pounding it into his right hand, "...I will have them".

"The southern passes and the roads leading to the ruined city, including Santas and Zharnn—even now—are being patrolled and guarded, as per your orders".

"Well done, I have already sent a trooper to Central City with my report so far and to request further reinforcements and to help strengthen the net—so to speak—to surround the northern parts of this area, cutting the fugitives off from any escape".

"There are a few human villages as well as simian ones with a small contingent of gorillas in each; I've sent word to the Prefects there, they'll know what to do".

"Excellent, all is going accordingly to plan; all we need now is patience, but I feel I will not have wait very long as I have an idea that may be fortuitous", smiling to himself.

—\*—\*—

Krieg was huddled in the corner of his cell all battered and bruised—his face showed it well with his left eye swollen, a possible broken nose, including various blood-dried cuts on his face and he was sure he had a couple of fractured ribs as well. He was just lying there not trying to move, not trying to aggravate the pain, trying to make his situation a little more comfortable than it was. He hoped and prayed that a rescue party would come and find him and deliver him from this nightmare—*how did I get myself into this?* All he could do was wait, and that was the hardest part—the waiting; Krieg imagined a clock on the cell wall slowly going, tick, tock, tick, tock; then it began to go faster, tick-tock-tick-tock-tick-tock, until it suddenly stopped.

Silence.

All Krieg could hear now was his own breathing, the slow in and outtake of breath that kept him alive for just one more second, one more minute, one more day—*hey, what day is it anyway?*

Silence...

...and then Krieg heard the cell door open.

—\*—\*—

Magnus entered the Chief of Police's office in which Juba was sitting behind the desk awaiting his arrival; Magnus came in late last night, but Juba was waiting for him and gave his report, Magnus although tired was pleased and wanted a full update in the morning. Juba began to get up, but Magnus waved him down. "No, sit Juba, it's alright", taking a seat for himself, "now, I believe we have a guest in the cells..."

"Yes, he is dressed in strange clothes; my guess is perhaps he is another ass-tro-naut from the stars, I had Hakonn interrogate him to see if he knew Virdon and Burke and their whereabouts, but he says he knows nothing—which is a lie of course..."

“...of course”, Magnus added slowly, and knowing the gorilla interrogational methods, this human would be bathed in blood, “does this human have a name?”

“He calls himself...” looking quickly at his my report on the desk which he was almost finished with to present Magnus, “...Lieutenant Benjamin Krieg”, making sure he got it right, even though he knew it already, it was just an automatic reflex on his part.

“A Lieutenant, since when do humans give themselves military rank?” very strange indeed thought Magnus, perhaps there is a mystery here that may need exploring, “well Juba I think we need to see this human—this Lieutenant Benjamin Krieg as he calls himself and ascertain his value”.

“Yes sir”, getting up from his chair as Magnus did likewise.

“Tell me, where did you find him?”

“On the beach by the main road, there was also a strange looking—oh I don’t know what to call it—a craft perhaps from the stars, made of the finest metal I’ve ever seen, and he was carrying this”, picking up the black metal devise and giving it to Magnus to study, “he seemed to be using it”.

“Yes it is strange”, examining the devise, “not like anything I’ve seen, it’s very high quality, and definitely not of simian manufacture, oh well, let’s go and see what this human Kreig has to say about it, I’m sure he *will* be able to enlighten us as to it function”.

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“By the way”, said Magnus, as he and Juba made their way across the compound to the cells, “good work in preparing our plans for the fugitives, I’m sure it won’t be long now before they are truly where they belong”.

“Thank you Magnus, I’ve been waiting a long time for this opportunity, I can’t wait to see their faces again, to make them remember, to make them pay for my suffering”.

“Don’t you worry my friend the rewards for their capture and the services to my father will be—*naturally* to your advantage when this is over, your career is assured”.

“Yes, I can’t believe my luck; I still have to pinch myself to realise it”, thinking of his future and the roll he will play in it.

“A new world order, Juba, *a new simian order*, and this time it will be done to the dictates of a new breed of ape, a new vision, a new way of thinking, a new purpose for all, with my father, myself to lead the way, and of course with your new found wealth and position, you will help shape our society; a society that will prosper under our guidance for a better happier world—*a better happier simian world*”.

—\*—\*—

A gorilla stationed by the cell door stood at attention as Magnus and Juba approached, “open up”. Juba ordered.

As the cell door opened, Magnus could smell the human stench mixed with blood, his revelations were correct the human Krieg was huddled in the far corner. He ordered the gorilla guard to pick him up gently. In so doing Krieg was awoken and stood up as best he could in his wobbly state.

"Can you hear Krieg?" questioned Magnus, as he faced the Lieutenant.

"Yes", trying to stand up straight without success.

"Good", said Magnus softly, "my name is Magnus, I'm the Deputy Chief of Security, please accept my apologies for your mistreatment, at the hands of my troopers, humans such as yourself are a rare sport and they do get carried away from time to time; but now that I'm here, I'm sure you and I will get along. All you need to do is answer a few questions to my satisfaction, and as a reward, I'm sure a bath, clean clothes and food would be to your liking—yes?"

"That sounds great to me", responded Krieg, trying to figure out if this was all a dream, but why dream of talking monkeys—he had no idea?

"You see", turning to Juba, "it seems Krieg will cooperate", facing the human again, "now as a token of my good faith, I will get a doctor to look at your wounds, and then we can sit down and have a chat..."

"Fine".

"Excellent, now before I go; can you answer me just one simply question", holding up the black metal device so Krieg could see it, "can you tell me what this is, please?"

"Camera—a camera, it takes pictures", Krieg answered, hoping this ape would not damage it.

"A camera, that takes pictures, I see, and what sought of pictures?"

"Landscapes, people, buildings, anything you like".

"I see, well perhaps you can show me how it works later?"

"I'll do my best", trying to stay awake as Krieg was getting tired of standing up; he wanted to rest—from the pain

"There, that's all for now Krieg; Juba get a doctor in here at once, we need to look after our guest".

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Valentius was retiring for the night when he heard someone knocking at his front door while crossing the hallway from his study on his way to bed; now who could that be at this time of night? he thought, as he made his way to receive this unwanted guest.

"Yes, who is it?", as Valentius opened the door, "what can I do for you?"

A young chimpanzee greeted the orang-utan holding a bunch of flowers, "Councillor Valentius?" he said nervously.

"Yes, what is it?" trying to be pleasant.

"A gift from Prefect Remus sir", giving the bunch of flowers to Valentius, "Good night sir and have a pleasant evening". Saying no more the chimpanzee then went on his way, leaving Valentius in the doorway holding a bunch of flowers. As he closed the door, the old orang-utan looked at his gift by the wall light and to his surprise it was a bunch of roses—yes

roses—*Remus' Roses*, an honour in itself. But more importantly it was the colour of the rose that astonished Valentius—blue, yes blue roses. A smile began to show itself on Valentius' face, now he knew, he knew his plans for success would be blessed; with the approval of Remus now unquestioned, Valentius would surely achieve his goals—it was only a matter of time. My political ambitions have the backing of one of the most influential apes from the Provinces, he thought, and with Remus' political affiliations within the city itself, my victory will be assured...Zaius you old fool, your time is running out...your time is nigh.

**POLICE HEADQUARTERS  
KHANOCH**

*Cold harbinger of night  
returning clear to the balconies  
out of mind, out of sight  
of ruined houses to shine  
within the eyes of the Valkyies  
on unknown tombs, the derelict remains  
of the smoking earth. Here rests  
our dream. Lonely you turn  
north where everything is flowing,  
except you only, lightless to death  
in the shadows where your heart is slowing.  
Gone is the day of the dead.*

*Quasimodo*

Magnus and Juba were walking back to the Chief of Police's office from the cells where their *human guest* was staying; Juba couldn't quite understand why Magnus was helping Krieg, but then again the orang-utan was in a different class of his own. Juba wondered what kind of thoughts were going through his superior's mind? So far Magnus had proven himself well adapted in the role as Urko's second-in-command but he needed to know what plans he had for the human if any, "Magnus, why are we helping this human Krieg? I understand he is different, but what purpose does he serve? He will tell us where the fugitives are sooner or later, and then I can have him shot".

"True Juba, but I have plans for him that may prove useful to us; he knows the fugitives; that is certain, I'm sure of it, and possibly where they are, and Virdon and Burke may know this Krieg. He definitely is not one of our humans—his strange clothes attest to that. So where did he come from—the stars? If so, Virdon and Burke may come looking for him, which means they have to come here to find and rescue him..."

"...we'll use Krieg as bait..." Juba said excitedly, trying to out think Magnus.

"...you catch on fast Juba; yes as bait, so why waste our resources and energy on trying to find the fugitives when all we have to do is wait for them here, it's so simple it's laughable. Now I want you to organise our troopers and station them covertly around this facility, patience is now our ally".

"Very good sir, but..." Juba obeyed, having a questionable look on his face.

"I know what you're thinking Juba, you're thinking what if the fugitives don't come or worse we fail? No matter, this Krieg will be our insurance as we present him to the Council for further interrogation by Zaius and Urko. So you see I have everything under control".

It was very late in the evening before Viridon, Burke, Bridger, O'Neill and Galen arrived just outside Khanoch. It had been a long hard slog to get to the seaside town, avoiding various gorilla patrols on horseback and one or two road blocks on the main road leading into the town. There was a lot of activity—more than usual to say the least, but the group managed well enough through the day and then under the cover of darkness, but still caution was the rule, it was almost as if they were expected, but then again...

The group were hiding by some thick bushes on top of a small hill overlooking the main road leading into Khanoch, which also had a couple of gorillas standing there doing guard duty. All seemed quiet and peaceful, but there seemed to be an air of tension, Viridon had a feeling and he didn't like it.

"You know", addressing the group in a whisper, "I've been having this bad feeling all day, but I just can't place it; Galen would a town this big have this many gorillas?"

"Well, yes and no", responded Galen, who was thankful to finally sit down and rest his weary feet from travelling all day; the chimpanzee was tired and exhausted. Although Galen was experienced in trekking across the land with Viridon and Burke, this was the longest journey he took without as much as a breather in between, but Galen managed, thanking the Lawgiver with his thoughts, "Khanoch being the last major fishing outlet for food and fertiliser; it would have a bigger garrison than most this far south, and if memory serves, there's the villages of Santos and Zharnn with a few human settlements in-between. So it would be prudent to have at least two garrisons stationed here to keep the peace and further beyond that there's nothing..."

"...except the road blocks?" put in Burke.

"Now, that's not normal, unless Urko knows we're here".

"Somehow I don't think he does, we've been too careful of late and besides, we've been on the seaQuest..." Viridon commented.

"...out of sight, out of mind", Bridger added.

"Even so, I've just got this feeling", Viridon said, trying to come to terms with his gut instincts, he had a pretty good record when it came to dangerous situations and this was no different, this town will be crawling with gorillas' that's a certainty.

"How do you want to handle it Al?" Burke questioned.

"We'll split into two teams, that way there'll be less chance of being caught and we can cover more ground in our search; Nathan and I will go for the police headquarters while you and Tim head for the garrison; we'll meet back here in say about an hour, Krieg has to be in one of these locations. Once we know, then we can devise his rescue", Viridon then addressed Galen looking sympathetic, "You alright Galen?"

"Yes, just tired I'm afraid".

"Yeah, I understand; look, you'll stay here and keep an eye out for us okay?"

"Oh that I can do", feeling relieved.



"If anything does happen, ol' buddy, you can be our cavalry to the rescue", Burke said with a grin.

"Oh please, if anyone needs to be rescued it should be me", thinking of a nice comfortable bed to sleep in and to dream of dreams that are yet to be dreamt.

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Burke and O'Neill went as cautiously as they could around the town's perimeter using the trees and shadows to hide their way, Burke knew from experience that the garrison would be stationed along its outer limits—they usual were, this allowed them the freedom to function at maximum efficiency to deal with any problems by not being closed in within the town; and having their own cells the gorillas could keep an eye on anyone who might be of serious danger to the community and or themselves and it was a good place to detain undesirables that could *mysteriously* disappear if need be—especially humans. Even though Burke didn't know the layout of Khanoch, all he had to do was follow the main buildings until he came to the garrison itself; and from there determine a way in, and then into the garrison's cells, and hopefully find Krieg; if he was still alive.

"Tim, you okay, you seem pretty quiet of late?" Burke queried.

"Oh, I'm right thanks, it's just...well I feel responsible, for Ben's capture and all, I mean I should've helped him when I had a chance instead of hiding while the gorillas got him, and maybe we wouldn't be in this mess..." O'Neill answered, trying to console himself, but not doing a great job of it.

"You shouldn't worry about that Tim, you couldn't have done anything anyway, the best thing you did was to stay put, you were outnumbered, and besides, if you were captured along with Ben, it would've been twice as difficult trying to rescue both of you. Don't put yourself down because you felt you let Ben be captured; it wasn't your fault, it happened. Besides, Ben was hoping you would've hid and observed what was going on, so that you could report back, you did the right thing, so forget it".

"I guess you're right, but I still feel bad", still not satisfied.

"You're no coward Tim, if that's what you're thinking, being here proves it", Burke said, knowing that O'Neill felt some guilt about leaving his friend behind to face the music, he would've done the same if Virдон was caught, "looks like were here", as Burke and O'Neill crouched down quietly beside a bush looking at the garrison. There seemed to be only one guard on duty doing his rounds, as the two men watched him go by, "well so far so good; you ready?"

"Let's do it", O'Neill answered with a new air of confidence, as the two men crossed over from the trees to the garrison praying that they won't get caught.

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Virдон and Bridger had difficulty getting into Khanoch from the start; they managed to bypass the two gorillas guarding the main road by heading for the beach around them to enter Khanoch. The town built by the sea had its advantages for commerce and Virдон was thankful that it could be used as cover to get him and Bridger in without being seen—so far.

"Just our luck to take the scenic route", Bridger said.

"Never let it be said that I as your tour guide don't give you your monies worth on this adventure, and the fun will soon *really* begin".

"Funny, I don't remember paying for this holiday?"

"You didn't, it's an all-expenses paid trip, courtesy of the UEO".

"Yeah, that figures, I should've known".

The two men stealthy made their way towards the centre of Khanoch, as Virдон knew that the police headquarters would be there; the basic town plan for all ape communities was to have the law enforcement situated this way, where possible, so the police could easily get to any trouble spots quickly and as efficiently as possible. Virдон and Bridger had to dodge one or two gorillas patrolling the streets before finding the entrance to police headquarters; being late in the night, it was a good bet that there wouldn't be any gorillas inside the reception area doing guard duty. As Virдон silently opened the front door, his intuition was correct—all clear, as he and Bridger slipped inside.

"So far so good", Bridger whispered, having a look around the outer office.

"Yeah, and that hallway", Virдон nodding his head in that direction, "leads to the cells..."

Just as both men started to go into the hallway, they heard a door open and then close at the corridor's end around the corner. Virдон and Bridger quickly looked around for a place to hide and made for the main office just to their left, as they closed the door behind them, a gorilla, rifle in hand walked through the hallway to the reception area and quickly glanced around to see if everything was alright; satisfied, he turned around and went back the way he came.

"Boy; that was close", Bridger said relieved.

"You and me both; I guess that was to be expected, there maybe one or two more, if Krieg is here", Virдон replied, opening the door slightly to see if the coast was clear.

"I believe he is".

Virдон closed the door and looked over his shoulder turning as he did so to follow Bridger's voice; who was at the desk holding in his hands what looked like a camera. Virдон tip-toed to the Captain of the seaQuest, "A camera?"

"Yes, Kreig's".

"Well that proves it, he's here".

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Galen was very tired and tried to stay awake, but the long day's trek took its toll and he began to nod off to sleep when he heard a noise which alerted him of possible danger; but to his relief it was only Burke and O'Neill returning.

"Any luck?" Galen said sleepishly, trying to keep his eyes open.

"No, Krieg wasn't at the garrison", replied Burke, as he and O'Neill rejoined their simian friend, "any sign of Alan and Nathan?"

"At the moment, none, the guards are still there, as stubborn as ever, that's about all".

"Let's hope they had better luck, than we did", O'Neill added.

"I hope so, because in a few hours it'll be light before long, and the sooner we can rescue Ben the better, we can use the night to help in our escape and if all goes well, put some distance between us and the gorillas before they know he's gone", Burke informed, watching the town.

It seemed longer than an hour; before the trio noticed their friends making their way back to them via the beach, "How did you go?" Burke asked.

"Jackpot", replied Virdon, "he's there, we're pretty sure of it".

"You mean you don't know for sure?" Burke queried, seemingly disappointed with his friend's answer.

"We found his camera", Bridger said, showing the group the digital camera, "so he has to be there".

"We'll only get one chance at this", said Burke, still not pleased, but he had to be optimistic, for the groups' sake, it'll take all of them to get Ben out, "so, what's the plan?"

"We'll enter via the front door, that's easy enough", Virdon explained, "there's one gorilla to take care of inside doing his rounds. I had a quick peek further inside the building, from what I could see, there's a courtyard and the cells are opposite, we'll go around the courtyard using the porch which surrounds it, we'll keep to the shadows until we reach the main entrance to the cells, get in, find Ben, and get out the way we came".

"Sounds simple enough", Burke added, "but, too simple, there may be more than one guard, especially inside the main cell area".

"True, but that's the chance we'll have to take..."

"...we have to try, for Ben's sake", this coming from O'Neill, "Lord knows what condition he's in?"

"Speaking of condition", Galen said, "I don't want to let the side down—but, I'm not sure I can do this, I'm just exhausted".

"That's okay Galen", Virdon sympathized, "You can stay here, and keep watch, the four of us will be more than enough to get Ben out".

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Luck was on their side—so far, as the four men made their way back to police headquarters; as predicted the gorilla guard came back through the hallway as Virdon and Burke hid opposite each other near the entryway to surprise him; while Bridger and O'Neill concealed themselves in the main office ready to come out and help. As the gorilla walked past Virdon and Burke, the two men ambushed him and with a few well placed punches before the gorilla could make a sound, fell to the floor unconscious.

"Well that's that", Virdon commented rubbing his fists, as Bridger and O'Neill came out of the office.

"We better tie him up, just in case", Bridger advised the group. "We don't know how long he'll be out".

"Good idea and we have a rifle as a bonus", Virdon replied, picking up the rifle.

The gorilla was tied up and gagged using some tablecloth from the main office and was carried into the room, so he wouldn't be discovered—hopefully in the morning, "Now for the next part", Burke said.

The group quietly walked down the hallway and Virdon cautiously opened the door a little to the courtyard, all was ominously silent as he surveyed the outside, "Let's go, the coast is clear", Virdon ordered, as the men crouching behind one another with Virdon in the lead, quickly moved through the covered porch area to the main cell door. In which Virdon stood up and tried the door—it was locked—*naturally* he thought, but a little loose, "I think I can open it", giving the rifle to Bridger who was squatted down behind him, as were the others, "I'll use my knife", Virdon unsheathed his knife and started to work on the lock, with a little jig here and there he was able to make the blade loosen the door enough to force the lock to open with success, "we're in", he finally said to his companions who showed a sign of relief on their faces; as they stood up and followed him in. Virdon still felt they were not out of danger yet—and he was right; there in the back of the passageway was another gorilla sitting on a stool sleeping.

"Looks like we have just one more obstacle", Virdon whispered to Burke who took the cue and borrowing the rifle from Bridger both he and Virdon tip-toed to the sleeping guard and with one careful swing, Burke used the rifle butt to knock the second gorilla unconscious on the head.

"Well he's sleeping like a babe, now", Burke mused.

The searching of the cells began and it only took a minute for O'Neill to find Krieg in one of them by looking through the peep hole in the wooden door, sleeping in the far corner, "I found him", he said, a little excited.

Again Virdon used his skills with the knife to pry the jail door open; as Burke couldn't find any keys on the gorilla guard, which seemed strange because usually there was; Burke suddenly had an uneasy feeling, but kept it to himself.

Bridger and O'Neill quickly went to Krieg's sleeping form which was huddled on the floor, "Ben, it's Captain Bridger", gently trying to shake his crewman awake, who then slowly opened his only good eye, "how you feeling?"

"Cap...t'n?" Krieg responded slowly, not sure if he was still dreaming, "I..."

"Don't talk; we need to get you out of here and away as quietly and quickly as possible".

"Tim...", looking at his friend.

"You didn't think I'd leave you behind now would you?" helping Ben up to his feet.

"Can you walk?" Bridger asked.

"I'm in training for the marathon, didn't you know?" trying to smile, without too much success.

"They may have hurt you bad, but your sense-of-humours' still intact", giving him a return smile.

With Virдон and Burke in front keeping a look out; Bridger and O'Neill helped Kreig get his bearings and assisted him out of the cell and then into the passageway. The group had just made it out of the main cell door, when their greatest fear came to face them.

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It seemed like an eternity; the longest second being felt by all the men at once when it happened; if your life, they say flashes before your eyes just before death, then this would be livings' equivalent of just such a moment.

The fear; the heavy pounding of your heartbeat; the sudden chill of the night air going hot and then cold; the numbness of your body trying to regain some sense of balance; it all seems...too much. Your brain working overtime, trying to register your thoughts and feelings ...all in one go, trying to accept reality of the situation, but finding it hard to do so.

It had been *too* easy...too easy. Now they knew why.

Their senses were coming back into real time...time that seemed to stand still.

But it never really was...it moved...and kept going...and there was nowhere...to run.

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"Well, well, well, Virдон and Burke, nice of you to drop in; but are you leaving so soon without a hello or goodbye, how rude", said Juba with a smile, as he glared with glee at the astronauts; the little group of men were surrounded by a dozen gorilla troopers all holding rifles pointed at them. Also with Juba was Magnus who stood quietly beside him observing Juba's performance, "my-my, it's been awhile hasn't it, but I still remember...last time I let you go, but this time...this time..." with a little more strength in his voice.

"Yeah, I remember you too Juba..." Burke said, dropping the rifle to the ground, resigned to the current fate, "...I never forget an ugly face, especially yours..."

"Human scum!" shouted Juba, who came up and confronted Burke and slapped him across the face, "it may be funny to you now, but soon you won't be laughing as you face your execution..."

"Enough Juba!" called out Magnus, who stepped forward a little to end this sour comedy.

"Sorry sir; arh yes, I believe you haven't met my superior; Virдон and Burke", indicating the two astronauts to Magnus, "may I present Magnus, the new Deputy Chief of Security. Magnus these two humans are Virдон and Burke—the fugitives; but where is your friend Galen my friends?..." as if on cue two gorilla troopers came into the courtyard from the main entrance opposite with Galen being dragged in-between them to join his captive human friends, "...oh here he is, Magnus this is Galen the human loving chimp", showing Galen off to Magnus, and spiting on the ground as he said it in disgust, as if to cleanse his mouth from uttering a blasphemy, as the two gorillas shoved Galen onto the ground near Burke.

"The *new* Deputy Chief of Security?" Virдон questioned, "I wasn't aware Urko had one".

"The High Council in their wisdom decided to create the position and appointed me into the role to help Urko capture you...and it seems I have succeeded", Magnus replied eyeing Viridon.

"It seems you have, now what, back to Central City?"

"Of course, there you will face trial, be found guilty, interrogated, and then executed for crimes against the simian race, all really standard procedure for humans—especially yourselves as you are a special case; in all honesty though our humans are simply shot, we don't need to waste time on a trial or interrogation, unless for the purposes of gorilla training".

"I'm glad we exercise special attention", commented Viridon, "I wouldn't want to put you out".

"Oh no trouble at all", Magnus said, "you can thank Zaius for that, he's the one who wants to interrogate you...and *then* have you shot, I myself would rather shoot you now and be done with it, you astronauts have caused quite enough trouble already..."

"What about Galen?" Burke questioned. "What's going to happen to him?"

"That will be for Zaius and the High Council to decide, but I have it on good authority he won't be shot for heresy, treason and murder".

"Well that's a relief", Galen said in a tired voice, who now was on his feet, "I thought for sure I wouldn't get off that easy".

"Perhaps, but there are other forms of punishment for a renegade", smiling as he said it.

"What about us?" Bridger spoke up, as he and O'Neill were all this time silently listening to the conversation between the apes and their friends while still holding up Kreig between them, who was by now trying to keep conscious by staying awake but without too much success, as Hakonn's beatings took their toll on his body, screaming, burning, as his brain tried to cool the fires of pain within.

"After Viridon and Burke's execution, you'll be next, it's that simple".

"I don't think so Magnus".

"Really, and why not, I don't think you are in a position to dictate your future".

"Oh I think I can, why don't you order your gorillas to drop their rifles...like right now".

"You must think me a fool, why should I do that?"

"Because, he said so", a raised voice from behind replied.

As Magnus, Juba and the rest of the gorillas turned around to see who talked, they were confronted by a group of armed men aiming their automatic rifles at them on the veranda, "You okay Cap'n?" Crocker asked.

"Just fine, glad you could join the party".

"I always was a gatecrasher; okay you apes drop your rifles", Crocker ordered as some of his team including Ortiz who was also present came forward to help the apes comply; looking bewildered, the troopers glanced at Magnus and Juba for confirmation.

"Do as the human says", Magnus ordered, in which the gorillas did obediently.

"There's the cells behind us Manilow, you can lock up the apes in there".

"Right, Ortiz", walking into the courtyard, "why don't you show our friends to their quarters for the night".

"Will do sir, okay you lot you heard him, move".

As Ortiz and some of the rescue team marshalled the gorillas into the cells, including Magnus and Juba; the orang-utan stopped in front of Bridger before continuing on to join them, "Well done human, I congratulate you; what is your name by the way?"

"My name is Bridger, Captain Nathan Bridger".

"I will remember; next time you will not be so fortunate".

"Don't worry; there won't be a next time", as Bridger watched Magnus being escorted into the cells to be locked up with the rest of his troopers, "Manilow, we need to get Ben back to the ship for treatment", giving up his place to another crewman to help O'Neill with Krieg, "where's the launch?"

"By the beach Cap'n", coming up to stand by Bridger, "we followed your signal as directed".

"Good, when you've finished here we'll leave".

"Right", Crocker replied, walking to the cells to see if everything was alright, he didn't want any surprises, like the gorillas escaping before the sea launch had a chance to leave for the seaQuest.

"I don't understand", this coming from Virdon looking confused, as were Burke and Galen trying to figure it all out, "how..."

"All in good Alan, all in good time; first let's get back to the ship and then I'll explain".

"I gotta hear this", Burke said amazed, shaking his head in disbelief, wondering how they got out of this one...alive.

**SEAQUEST  
OFF THE COAST OF KHANOCH**

"Well you certainly pulled the wool over our eyes", said Virdon, who along with Burke, Galen and Bridger were sitting round a table in the Mess Hall having a well deserved coffee and cake for morning tea after last night's surprise rescue; with the exception of Galen who preferred apple juice, and having tasted the cake-chocolate fudge—as Bridger called it, which he found quite pleasing to his palate, "how did you manage it?"

"Yeah, I mean, I was sure we were goners, but brilliant just the same", Burke added.

"Well it's like this", answered Bridger, with a slight twinkle in his eye, "I never commit to a plan unless I have a backup of my own which will give me the edge if needed. Since by mutual consent the seaQuest crew couldn't carry any weapons topside for fear that the apes might get a hold of them; the only course of action left to me was the PHT—Personal Homing Tracker, which when activated gives the whereabouts of the person carrying it. Before we left to rescue Kreig, I gave orders to Ford to follow us to Khanoch in the seaQuest. Now I know we could've done that instead of walking, but I believe non-interference where possible was necessary. I also gave orders to Crocker to assemble a backup team to help us if anything were to go wrong if I gave the signal from my PHT, which I did when we were captured. All in all it was a calculated risk, but from my point of view and with information about this ship's future I had to act as assertively as possible to succeed in the mission..."

"...basically, it was all or nothing?" Virdon said, beginning to understand the steps taken by Bridger to help them rescue Kreig, "but why didn't you tell us?"

"I felt it better that you didn't know, I mean your plan may have succeeded, and then there wouldn't have to be a need to call for backup, but since the seaQuest was following us anyway, it would've been logical to head for the beach and get away quickly as I would've signalled in for a launch to pick us up".

"Now *that* I would agree on", said Galen, thankfully knowing of his condition from last night, "there was no way I could've walked all the way back". Feeling very relieved.

"And it wouldn't have helped Ben either in his condition", added Burke, "we may have been able to escape safely, but we wouldn't have gone far enough away before Magnus and his cronies caught up with us".

"Exactly, that's why I had to do what I had to do; it was a one shot risk that had to work", Bridger said, pleased with himself that the outcome was successful.

"You said something about the ship's future, what did you mean by that?" Virdon asked.

"It's like this Alan", said Bridger, taking a moment to compose himself to explain what he had planned, "the seaQuest has to go back to the Mariana Trench, and re-enter the Whirlhole and hopefully go back to our time and our earth..."



“...hang on, our earth?” said Burke jumping in, being a little confused, “what do you mean?” this was certainly news to him.

“I did some checking in our database and conferred with Hurl in his analysis of the probes; firstly this isn’t my earth, it’s another earth—a parallel world, that’s why there’s no ANSA or any mention of it or the Icarus Program in my database. I’m from a different earth, from a different time; this planet ruled by apes, is not my planet but yours, your earth, your time, your future. The Whirlhole that brought the seaQuest here, acted like a time portal in more ways than one. But time is running out, the Whirlhole is getting weaker, indications are that it will disappear altogether, and if so the seaQuest will be trapped here. That’s why the seaQuest has to get back to re-enter the Whirlhole before it’s too late.”

“Another earth”, Virdon said softly, trying to comprehend the meaning, but as he thought about what Nathan said, it seemed to make some sense.

“You could come with us if you like?” Bridger asked. “Life would be much better for you, than staying here”.

Virdon looked at his two friends, wanting to know their feelings; it was very tempting, very tempting indeed. To finally leave this god forsaken place and return to a more civilized life, without the fear of an ape future where they would dominate the earth. It would mean leaving Sally and Chris behind, never to see them again, technically they were already dead, but officially Virdon still hoped to get back, to be reunited. Sure it was a long shot but he had to try, it was the only thing that kept him going.

“Well”, said Virdon, to his two friends, “what do you think, do you want to go?”

“It is tempting”, said Burke, knowing that leaving this earth for another may not be so bad, “I mean, how different could it be, sure thirty nine years is a long time to be away, but at least it’s home, and maybe our skills as astronauts could still be of use?” looking at Bridger for confirmation.

“That’s right”, said Bridger nodding his head, “we certainly have a space program, and with my recommendations, I see you having no trouble fitting in, as it is we need astronauts, and you two being experienced, with a little retraining, I’m sure your lives will be better than before”.

“What about Galen?” Virdon asked. “Can he come?”

“Galen would be most welcomed”, answered Bridger, looking at the young chimp for approval.

Galen was deep in thought, weighting the pro’s and con’s of this possible life changing experience. Could he leave this world behind—the world he knew, for another? He would be alone, the only chimpanzee—the only talking ape. How would he *really* fit in? Could he, can he? How would these humans treat him? Too many questions, not enough answers.

He would be alone.

“I have to stay here”, Galen finally said, showing some regret, “this is my home”.

“I understand”, this coming from Bridger, *Home is where the heart is, if one had a heart to find a home.*

"Pete, what do you want to do?" Viridon enquired, "if you wish to go, I'm not going to stop you..."

"...it sounds like you've made up your mind already", added Burke.

"I'm staying Pete, as much as I would like to go, it would be like running away somehow. As Galen said, 'this is my home', the human race on this planet has made this earth through its own history the way it is today—now, it can't be changed, and we have to live with that—the mistakes..."

"...you still think you can find a way back to Sally and Chris, don't you?"

"Sorry Pete, I have to try".

"Arh hell", feeling resigned, "if you think I'm going to let you have all the fun with Zaius and Urko, you're mistaken; besides, we're probably the best fun they had in years", giving a half-hearted smile.

"You sure Pete, I mean, you can go with my best wishes".

"I'm sure Alan, like you said, 'this is home' for better or worse, it's home, our home", then looking at Galen, "So you thought you could get rid of me ol' buddy", giving Galen a slap on the back, "well think again..."

"...I don't know what you're talking about Pete; I'm just a simple chimpanzee..."

"...with a devious mind to boot, I'll bet".

"Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps", Galen said, with a crafty look about him.

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Krieg was in the infirmary eyes closed trying to rest after his ordeal with the apes, he couldn't believe it really happened—but it did. Dr. Westphalen fixed him up as best she could but informed him and Captain Bridger that he really needed hospital care as soon as possible. What a nightmare, he thought, I'm glad it's over; who would want to live in this kind of world is beyond me. Krieg began to lightly doze off; the pills that the doctor gave him to sleep were starting to take effect, when he felt something on his cheek, he opened his eyes—or eye for that matter and saw to his surprise Katherine.

"Hi", he said softly.

"Hi yourself, you okay—well that was stupid, I mean..." showing concern; they were married once but that didn't mean Hitchcock didn't care about him—especially now.

"...no it's okay; you know of all the people I was thinking about that I might never see again, only you came into my thoughts, maybe it was because we were together once—I don't know, but I felt I was never going to see you again or anybody for that matter. I don't want it to happen again..." slowly shaking his head, "...never".

"Don't worry Ben; your safe now, and I'll be here for you", watching him beginning to fall a sleep.

"Thanks", he mumbled.



## EPILOGUE

### POLICE HEADQUARTERS KHANOCH

Hakonn found Balbus and untied him in the main office. "What happened?" he asked annoyed that a gorilla was found in this undignified position.

"Two humans jumped me while I was doing my rounds", rubbing the back of his head and stomach, "I think they were the fugitives Magnus was after".

"You think! Idiot! Where's Magnus and Juba now?" not happy with what he heard so far.

"I don't know, all I know is we were laying a trap for them as planned, when they came for the other human".

"Alright Balbus, you better stand guard outside and wait for further orders while I'll check the cells".

—\*—\*—

Hakonn made his way to the cells and to his surprise found Magnus, Juba and a dozen or so troopers locked up inside; after letting them out, Magnus issued new orders for capturing the fugitives. "Juba I want you to check the beach area and then make your way up north, Hakonn go south; I want those humans found, they couldn't have gone too far especially with Krieg being in the condition that he is. I want no mistakes this time, if you see them shoot them on sight". Both Juba and Hakonn nodded in agreement, as Hakonn left with half of the gorillas following behind him to begin the search, Juba was stopped by Magnus by grabbing his arm before he too went his way, "Juba, I want this human Bridger alive, you understand, bring him back to me, alive, we have unfinished business with this human, you understand?"

"Yes Magnus", nodding his head again, "what about the other strange humans—the ones with the rifles?"

"Shoot them! If you can capture one or two, good, but otherwise kill them on sight, but Bridger must be captured alive, he is the key to all this I'm sure. There maybe more humans out there like him, and if so, we must find where they are. It seems Virdon and Burke are now not the only humans that are a danger to our simian civilization".

"I understand", Juba left leaving Magnus to contemplate his next move.

"I'll have to make a report to Central City about this new development, if there are humans with weapons and they have an army somewhere, this could be a beginning of a war between our two species; a war that could undermine the peace and serenity of simian society".

## THE CITY OF THE ANGELS CALIFORNIA

Viridon, Burke and Galen were standing on the beach watching the sea launch from the seaQuest disappear beneath the waves, “Going, going, going, gone”, said Burke finally, “well that’s that”, feeling a mixture of regret and disappointment at what could have been.

“I guess we better get going”, said Viridon looking at the map of Los Angeles which Bridger gave him among other things in the group’s backpacks to help them survive their world; ‘I hope these will be of some use to you Alan’, Bridger remarked as he and the seaQuest crew farewelled the trio on the ship before departing for the surface, ‘good luck and I hope you’ll find your way home again’. ‘Thanks, thanks for all you’ve done’, Viridon replied, as he rejoined his friends inside the sea launch. There were two first aid kits with extra bandages, two solar torches with long-life batteries, a compass; two hunting knives, two machetes, two solar water proof digital watches with life-time batteries, assorted camping gear with tents and blankets, two Swiss pocket army knives, cooking utensils, matches, plus some food rations, and various other little nic-nacs. “Okay”, turning around to face the city of Los Angeles in all its ruined glory, while studying the map again, “we’ll head his way...” pointing to a spot on the map for Burke and Galen to see, “...and then make our way here”.

“I’ve never seen a human city this big before”, Galen said, looking in awe of this once proud city that was.

“It was *the* most influential city on the Western coast of America Galen”, Burke said, thinking back to a time he remembered visiting this city—was it so long ago, “you would’ve been amazed...”

“...yeah, and look at it now, all in ruins, with twisted metal and steel with concrete and glass scattered everywhere—like a giant forest on an alien landscape, constructed from an artist’s perverted mind...”

“...an imagination gone wild AI—why did it happen; why?” Burke said, shaking his head in disbelief, “it’s enough to make you sick”.

“If man is to learn, he must be reborn from a world of his making”.

Both Viridon and Burke looked at their simian friend with surprise, “I didn’t know you were into philosophy, Galen”, Viridon remarked, amazed at Galen’s words of wisdom.

“I’m not just a pretty face you know, I have my moments”, showing a beam of a smile.

“This could be serious AI”, said Burke, reaching out and touching Galen’s forehead with the palm of his left hand, “it may be contagious to one’s wealth”.

“Never mind Pete”, removing Burke’s hand from his face, “I’m quite well...”

“...okay—okay you two, let’s stop clowning around and get moving, it’ll be dark soon and I want to search for a good place to rest for the night before we can explore the city in the morning”.

“Do you think we’ll find anything to help us get back home AI, anything at all?”

“I hope so Pete, I hope so”.

## THE MAIN STREET CENTRAL CITY

Valentius was not happy, but be that as it may the old orang-utan with his son's report in hand was making his way to Zaius' home to give him the news; news that could change the simian way of life perhaps forever. If what Magnus says is true, it could mean the end of the beginning—a beginning that would surely be the end as one would know it—it was unthinkable. But perhaps this news could be the catalyst that I've been waiting for Valentius thought, but I'll have to be very careful, one wrong move and my career will be over before I've had a chance to put my plans into action, one must tread softly. As Valentius neared his objective he spotted Zaius *and* Urko leaving by the front door and called out to them. The pair turned towards the voice calling their names, thus recognising and acknowledging Valentius' summons by walking towards him.

"Zaius!" shoving the scroll into the Councillor's hands, "my son's report from Khanoch, you'd better read it..."

"Let me guess Valentius", Ukro surmised, with a little sneer on his face, "Magnus, failed to capture the fugitives..."

"It's worse than that Urko, much worse", looking at Zaius for confirmation as he watched him read the scroll.

"I'm afraid he's right Urko", Zaius confirmed after a moment, looking up after finishing reading the scroll, and then giving it to Urko to read himself, "it seems our nightmare has caught up with us; a day that I have longed feared has finally come".

"But this outrageous!" Urko said in a raised voice, after he too finished reading, "a human army with rifles, what nonsense is this? Humans don't have the ability to fight, let alone with weapons".

"True Urko", Valentius agreed, "but these aren't our humans, these humans came from somewhere else to rescue one of their own, *with* the help of Virdon and Burke. These have become dangerous times Zaius, we must act quickly if we are to defeat this new threat to our existence".

"I agree; if word of this human army spreads, our humans might start thinking for themselves and rebellion may set in. We must act as soon as possible". Zaius responded, then turning to Urko, "I want you to start plans to assemble an army of our own Urko, this is a bigger threat than the fugitives put together".

"Very well; according to this", pointing to the scroll in his hand, "the only possible place that Magnus suggests where these humans may be hiding, would be that ruined city further south".

"It's big enough, and after all these years, who knows what else is there", Valentius said, "but my son still wants to pursue Virdon and Burke, they knew these humans, and perhaps with their recapture we could find out more?"

"Yes, you inform your son, and in the meantime Urko and I will formulate a plan of action and present it to the Council; we must be vigilant in this hour of new knowledge that has come to us; if we succeed, all will be as was before, but if we fail, the future of apekind and its place in the world will be forever exterminated from the pages of history. We stand on the brink between life and death my friends...life and death".

## SEAQUEST MARIANA TRENCH

Going through the Whirlhole once was a nightmare to begin with, but going through it again would be considered insane; and luckily for Bridger he wasn't, no Captain in his right mind would do the unthinkable if they were in his place. But Bridger wouldn't trade places for what he was about to do for anything. The seaQuest was his ship, it was his command, and he was determined to get the seaQuest back home; back to their own time and to their own earth. The Captain looked around the Bridge, everybody was waiting for the order; everyone was at their stations Bridger patched in a final call to Westphalen, to check if everything was alright, she was in the infirmary, making sure her patients—including Kreig were strapped in ready for the re-entry into the Whirlhole, "Kristin, is everything okay with you down there?"

"Yes, everything is secure", her voice seemed tense and on edge, and why wouldn't it be? Bridger thought; this was going to be one hell of a ride...again.

"Good, I'll see you soon; Commander, are all others stations and compartments secured for final re-entry into the Whirlhole?"

"Yes sir, all is green", Ford replied, with his voice slightly nervous.

"Right", having another look around, his gaze went to Chapman who was monitoring the Whirlhole from his position; of all the people on board, he didn't seem fazed by their current predicament, but then again, perhaps he wasn't showing it—but Bridger knew.

"Now would be as good a time as any Captain to re-enter the Whirlhole", Chapman said looking at Bridger, giving him a nod.

"Alright Commander, the order is given, and let's pray we come out of this alive and well the second time around, God speed everyone".

—\*—\*—

Lucas was sitting by the monitor screen on the Bridge of the Marianas watching the trench; ever since the seaQuest disappeared ten hours ago he kept watch for any sign of its return. The Whirlhole seemed to be fluctuating in power by growing weaker. He couldn't explain it, neither could Dr. Phillips, but she was sure the Whirlhole was stable enough for the seaQuest to come back out. It had happened so fast, one minute the seaQuest was there on the screen and then as it entered the Whirlhole it disappeared. There was no sign of her. Phillips entered the bridge carrying two cups of coffee, she looked worried, as she was concerned about how Lucas was taking it, but the boy kept on watching, hardly ever taking a break. "Any sign of them Lucas?" she said eyeing the young man with respect for his vigilance.

"No, nothing", taking his eyes off the screen for a second, to address the doctor and that's when it happened, a beep came from the monitor, as something appeared.

"Lucas! Look on the screen, they're back!" her eyes wide with jubilation.

On the monitor both Lucas and Phillips watched with excitement as the seaQuest made its re-emergence through the Whirlhole. "This is the seaQuest calling Mariannas, do you read, over?" Bridger's radioed voice filled the room.

"Loud and clear Captain", Lucas signalled back happily, "loud...and...clear".

**THE WHIRLHOLE**  
**MARIANA TRENCH**

*I am free.*

*She is free.*

*The mother has returned with her children, I am glad.*

*But I must go, for I am in search of my own.*

*In this, the darkness, deep in silence, I search for that which I need the most.*

*Solitude.*

*I may return to this place that has offered me peace.*

*For, I am curious.*

*There is so much I need to know of this place.*

*This world full of life, that is unknown to me.*

*What are they? Who are they? Why does the mother need them?*

*But that is for another time.*

*It is time to leave, for my journey is an endless path.*

*A path to enlightenment of being*

*In search of the way*

*Goodbye.*

*Goodbye.*

*Good...bye*



## ENDLOGUE ONE

*Strange as it may seem, to all who are present  
The senses do but wonder at the thought  
Where as the spirit floats in eternity  
The soul, swims within the waters of the way  
And yet, the mind is still  
I ask, "Do your thoughts wander, my friend?"  
"No", was the reply, "for my mind is the universe, for all to share"*

*Julian, the Lawgiver*







## ENDLOGUE TWO

*There is no Emotion...*

*...but a feeling that is in one's own mind,  
forming the calm of self, for within...*

*...there is Peace.*

*There is no Ignorance...*

*...but an understanding that is in one's own mind,  
forming the awareness of self, for within...*

*...there is Knowledge.*

*There is no Arrogance...*

*...but a pre-eminence that is in one's own mind,  
forming the insight of self, for within...*

*...there is Wisdom.*

*There is no Passion...*

*...but a desire that is in one's own mind,  
forming the tranquillity of self, for within...*

*...there is Serenity.*

*There is no Lust...*

*...but a longing that is in one's own mind,  
forming the approval of self, for within...*

*...there is Acceptance.*

*There is no Hesitation...*

*...but an uncertainty that is in one's own mind,  
forming the affirmation of self, for within...*

*...there is Confidence.*

*There is no Cowardice...*

*...but a fear that is in one's own mind,  
forming the valour of self, for within...*

*...there is Courage.*

*There is no Despair...*

*...but a depression that is in one's own mind,  
forming the yearning of self, for within...*

*...there is Hope.*

*There is no Chaos...*

*...but a confusion that is in one's own mind,  
forming the silence of self, for within...*

*...there is Harmony.*

*There is no Death...*

*...but a passing that is in one's own mind,  
forming the infinity of self, for within...*

*...there is Eternity.*

*For where there is Life...*

*...in existence that is in one's own mind,  
forming the reality of self, for within...*

*...there is Truth.*

*And where there is Truth...*

*...the path to true self is revealed from within.*

*\* From a scroll entitled 'The Musings of Caesar volume XII' by Caesar.*



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

It's been over a year now and I've finally finished my second Planet of the Apes fan fiction story which I hope you will enjoy as much as I had writing it.

This story is as you may have guessed already is a 'cross-over'; so why do one? Simple, I had this idea of combining two of my favourite Sci-fi shows into one to see how it would turn out, and I think I did pretty well. As is my nature with from my first Planet the Apes fan fiction story experience, I did research for the second.

I believe it is very important to do any research if one has ideas to make the story you are writing about believable if not plausible, even within the imagination of one's own mind, but entertaining nonetheless. I am still amazed when I look back at what I have written to realise that I was able to write what I did to bring my dream alive in written form.

I have read a lot of Planet of the Apes fan fiction and I must confess that a majority are not that bad, but readable and acceptable, with only a few which are good to excellent, and only a couple being total crap and should have been written more carefully with some more thought by the author, in regards to the readership.

Now for a couple of thank you's, firstly to Dave Ballard, who gave his permission for me to use his character creation of Juba from his various Planet of the Apes fan fiction stories; thanks Dave, and to David Doyle for giving me 'The Code', which came from a martial arts style-type of Kung-fu, told to him by a master teaching David sword techniques years back; thanks David.

Now for something completely different.

### **Pre-log and End-log: An Explanation.**

When writing a novel, and or a short work, you may have certain ideas or situations that have developed or been written when editing your work for final publication that are not important; but are good enough not to be discarded because perhaps you like it but don't know where to put it in your body of work. This is where a pre-log and or an end-log come in handy into its own.

A pre-log (inserted before the prologue) and end-log (inserted after the epilogue) is a one page edition to your written work that is not part of it (officially) that could contain one word, one paragraph, one sentence, a saying, a quote, a poem or even a picture; but not relevant enough to affect part or the whole written work; but having said that it doesn't have

to be read at all for the reader to understand the author's intension, but just compliment it.

A pre-log and end-log can be whatever the author wishes it to be, and thus be liberal in its contents. As a rule-of-thumb, a pre-log and end-log is described as a 'non-edition' not truly affecting the whole body of work, but important to the author only; who wanted it included for his/her satisfaction. In which case it is left to the reader's interpretation of what the author wishes to convey and express.

Various spelling variations:

Prelog  
Pre-log  
Prelogue  
Pre-logue

Endlog  
End-log  
Endlogue  
End-logue

Well that's about it from me, so if you haven't read my fan fiction yet, (since you skipped it to read the Author's Notes first) please do and don't forget to read my first one called 'Resurrection of the Planet of the Apes' which can be found on Kassidy Rae's website for POTA fan fiction. If you would like to comment on what you have read please email me at [karbovski@hotmail.com](mailto:karbovski@hotmail.com) and let me know your thoughts.

All the best for now.

# Appendices

**PLANET OF THE APES CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES**

**SEAQUEST CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES**

**SEAQUEST DSV 4600 DESIGN SPECS**

**SEAQUEST DSV 4600 HISTORY**



# Planet of the Apes Character Biographies

## ALAN JOHN VIRDON, COLONEL



Born in January 12 1942 in Jackson County, Texas<sup>1</sup>, where his parents owned a farm in which he grew up; Virdon in his youth learned about farming techniques from his father and how to ride horses. After finishing High School, Virdon enrolled at the University of Colorado in 1961 and Majored in Aeronautics Engineering B.S. and minored in Chemistry<sup>2</sup>. After graduation Virdon entered the U.S. Air Force in 1964; two years later he met and married Sally Hayes<sup>3</sup>, in which they had a son, Chris born the following year, who while growing up on the family farm in Texas, is taught by Virdon all he knows about farming—particularly the importance of planting the best seeds to insure the health of next year's crop. On the farm, Virdon watches veterinarians work to get familiar with birthing and other techniques. As such, he learns how to help a cow in labour whose calf has turned around in the womb.

By 1974 Virdon now a Major was assigned to Edwards Air Force Base, and meets for the first time Lieutenants' Peter Burke and Stephen Jones and the three men quickly become good friends as astronauts-in-training for the NASA space program. Approximately two years later Virdon is promoted to Colonel, he along with Captains' Peter Burke and Stephen Jones enter the ANSA Interstellar Space Program at The Johnson Space Center. Thus as a training prerequisite, Virdon, Burke and Jones serve together on a mission to Titan to prepare them for Alpha Centauri.

It is now August 19, 1980 and the *Hyperion* is ready for launch to Alpha Centauri, Virdon is mission commander, and accompanying him are Majors' Peter Burke and Stephen Jones. Unknown to them due to political pressure is that their mission will be the last to launch from Cape Kennedy, for shortly after the Icarus Program is cancelled. As the *Hyperion* approaches Alpha Centauri, it travels through "radioactive turbulence" and goes out of control. Is this the famous Hasslein Curve? Virdon directs Jones to activate the automatic homing device before the three astronauts are knocked unconscious. The *Hyperion* crash-lands back to earth about 1100 years into the future, with Jones dead, Virdon and Burke with the help of a human named Farrow find out that the planet is now ruled by apes.

Virdon, the consummate family man, is driven by the need to find a way back home to his wife, Sally and son, Chris. With this in mind, Virdon salvaged a magnetic disk from the now wrecked *Hyperion*, which might just be the ticket home...if Virdon can find a computer to read it.

His sense of responsibility extends to his second-in-command, Peter Burke, and their new-found simian friend, Galen, who helped Viridon and Burke escape from Urko, who is the Chief of Security and Zaius, who is the President of the High Council of Central City, as all three of them are now branded fugitives and must avoid capture while on the run. Viridon is also a compassionate man, a problem-solver, the voice of reason and his cool determination and ability to think on his feet make him the de facto leader of the trio.

Being a leader he tries very hard to hear all sides of the story, and occasionally has to pull rank to get things done to his way of thinking, even if it means risking his life. Viridon is very fond of Galen and tries to impart human wisdom whenever he can to help Galen understand humans and their ways.

*1-Viridon's birthplace of Jackson County is stated in the episode "The Good Seeds", but of course which one? So I have chosen Jackson County Texas, as Chris his son was also born in Houston, Texas thus it seemed logical that Viridon was too.*

*2-From the Fan Fiction story "Land Before Time" by SSS 979.*

*3-Sally's surname is given by Carol Davis in her Fan Fiction story "Countdown".*

## PETER JAMES BURKE, MAJOR



Born in December 6 1951 to Tom<sup>1</sup> Burke, an ex-Korean veteran, who tries to encourage important lessons that he learned in the Korean War and about life to his son by asking such questions as, "Son, when the going gets tough, and the tough get going, what will you do?" and Mary Powell<sup>2</sup> a religious woman who read Biblical bedtime stories to Peter, like the Biblical story of Isaac and his twin sons, Jacob and Esau, hoping to implant in him the importance of avoiding deception. With the help of his parents' teachings it was hoped that Burke would grow up with a sense of balance in his life, knowing by feeling and instinct, right and wrong, truth and justice. Burke is one of three children, with two sisters. The family owned a dog named 'Skip'<sup>3</sup> and Burke commented once *"That he'd preferred to have two dogs and one sister instead"*. Burke spent his childhood years growing up in Jersey City, attending P.S.103 dreaming of one day becoming an astronaut.

Burke also has a cousin, Steve Burke<sup>4</sup> who lives in Seacouver, Washington with his daughter Angie. In 1964 Burke began his High School years, and became excellent in athletics and sports, joining the baseball team as a pitcher. By 1970 Burke enrolled at Michigan State University and becomes a running back for the football team and takes R.O.T.C. (*Reserve Officers' Training Corps*) classes; Burke majored in Computer Science<sup>5</sup> and later upon graduation attained a Bachelors' Degree in Astrophysics and a Masters' in Aeronautic Engineering<sup>6</sup>.

After graduating from Michigan State University, Burke briefly considered purchasing a bar in Jersey City, but decided not to pursue that career path as he felt his future lay in his dream of becoming an astronaut.

So in 1973 he enters the US Air Force, During his military training, Burke hated the hours spent running on a treadmill, but his excellent athletic abilities do him good stead as he was able to endure it; As part of that training, Burke was also subjected to a mock interrogation to see how he held up, and did very well and resisted, by only providing only his name, rank and serial number. By 1974 Burke and his friend Stephen Jones who he met through training are both promoted to Lieutenants and assigned to Edwards Air Force Base, in which they meet Viridon to train as astronauts.

In 1976, Burke now a Captain enters the ANSA Interstellar Space Program with Viridon and Jones and begins training for the mission to Alpha Centauri at the Johnson Space Center. Burke progresses well in his studies and new found abilities and in 1978 Burke is promoted to Major, and along with Viridon and Jones serve together on a manned mission to Titan to prepare them for Alpha Centauri. During his time in training, Burke dates a woman named Susan, enjoying many picnics and romantic moments with her. Despite her attempts to get him to talk more about his past, he keeps his emotional distance from her, causing the relationship to end.

It is now 1980 and about two weeks before the August 19th launch date, after a pre-flight indoctrination, Viridon and Burke enjoy a relaxing couple of days at Hanson Point, on the shore of California. Viridon's wife Sally is there, along with Burke's date, a redhead named Jan Adams. Smitten with her, Burke carves her initials in a cave on the beach. Though Burke is a self proclaimed "ladies' man", Jan is the only woman whose initials he ever carves anywhere.

Burke is gifted with a dry wit and a practical, frequently pessimistic nature; he is impulsive and sarcastic, yet courageous in the face of danger. Burke's hot-headed temperament frequently lands him into trouble but is balanced by a sense of humour which he uses against Galen so he can to liven things up a little, but his wisecracks and rash temper can rub the wrong way creating emotional tension and has an innate kindness buried beneath the bravado. Burke follows Viridon on his quest out of fierce loyalty but is cynical of his and Viridon's chances of ever getting back to their own time and, having no family there, is less motivated to expend energy towards that goal, preferring the 'When in Rome' attitude, nevertheless Burke has a strong sense of duty to Viridon more as a friend than as a fellow officer.

*1-Tom, from the fan fiction story "Seven Truths" by Sandra McDonald, and it is also stated in the same story that Tom is an ex-Vietnam veteran, the Vietnam War was between 1959-1975, but the Korean War was between 1950-1953 and is possibly more likely.*

*2-Powell, from the fan fiction story "Elsewhere" by Carol Davis. Special Note: the first name of Kate was also given to Burke's mother in the story, but I chose Mary from the Fan Fiction story "Echoes of the Past" by Cassidy Rae, to strengthen her religious background.*

*3-Skip, added by the author.*

*4-Cousin information, from the fan fiction story "Time Matters" by Dawn Cunningham.*

*5-This information comes from the Fan Fiction story "Evol-Q-tion" by Dayton Ward.*

*6-This information comes from the Fan Fiction story "Land Before Time" by SSS979.*



## GALEN



Born in September 17 3061 to Yalu, who became a respected member on the High Council in 3085, and Ann; both parents currently live in Central City. Galen has a third cousin on his mother's side of the family named Augustus who was born in the same year as Galen, the two chimps grow up together and become close friends. Galen's childhood was like any other chimps, playing and getting into mischief, like hiding in a secret gully to play hooky from school, or like the time when he and Augustus were nine, stealing apples from a neighbour's tree. Galen can be too impulsive at times as well, and this occasionally got him into trouble; and there were other times when Galen went off exploring by himself, for he showed curiosity at a very young age, to this end Galen discovered a small brook near his home, and on days where he would like to be alone, Galen would lay by the stream and listen to the running water, and be comforted by its gentle sound.

During his-what might be termed-High School years, Galen met and fell in love with Kira, and they both became sweethearts, the relationship continued through to university where they continued their studies and by 3081 became engaged to be married, but for undisclosed reasons, they broke off their engagement and wedding plans. In 3085 Galen was going to become Councillor Zaius' Personal Assistant, but that was all about to change when news came of a mysterious ship crashing to earth near the village of Chalo, where Galen's second cousin, Veska was Prefect.

Thus Zaius sent Galen along with Urko to investigate, and as they approached this mysterious ship, Urko captures two humans—two astronauts—Virdon and Burke. On the way back to Central City Galen learns more about them, again his curiosity got the better of him and while going to visit the astronauts in jail outside Central City, prevented their murder being set up by Urko; but by doing so, was himself charged with murdering a gorilla by Urko, thus being jailed himself awaiting execution. But luckily, Virdon and Burke got Galen out, and all three of them became fugitives on the run.

Now an outlaw to his own kind, Galen roams the countryside with his human friends, aiding their quest to discover a way back home. Galen's flair for play-acting and numerous contacts in the ape world (*He seems to have friends and relatives just about everywhere*) help the trio to survive against all odds, while their adventures provide the chimpanzee's insatiable curiosity with an never-ending supply of new discoveries and experiences as well as searching for the truth about his planet's past knowing justice must prevail if there is to be a new sense of freedom for all—human and ape. Although Galen is frequently exasperated by Burke and Virdon's behaviour, the deep friendship shared by the three gives them hope that some day humans and apes may live together in peace. Galen looks up to Virdon as an authority figure while sharing a more brotherly relationship with Burke.

## ZAIUS, COUNCILLOR, PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH COUNCIL



Born in March 8 3034, Zaius was elected President of the High Council in 3070, taking over from his mentor and friend Doswa who retired to pursue a quiet life in the country. In 3073 Zaius' first serious stint as President came about when the earth ship the *Pegasus* crash-landed with two surviving astronauts from the past, knowing about earth's past history Zaius wanted to question them, but Chief of Security Urko had them killed before he could interrogate them. It was another 12 years before another earth ship the *Hyperion* in 3085 did the same, but this time the surviving astronauts, Virdon and Burke escaped jail with the help of Galen, a chimpanzee that Zaius was considering to hire as his Personal Assistant. But this was never to be as Galen murdered a gorilla helping the astronauts escape, thus along with Virdon and Burke became fugitives on the run.

As the President presiding over the High Council, Zaius' powers extend throughout the known provinces on the western half of the United States. Zaius is a crafty and sometimes ruthless politician who insists on strict adherence to the letter of the law—his law. Zaius knows the truth about mankind's past superiority and is convinced Virdon and Burke represent an infection that will overthrow ape society, by inciting the other humans to rise up and rebel against their masters. *"They are a disease that must not spread; the infection they have is fatal"*. Zaius commented once, but his desire to study them before they are killed, puts him at odds with Urko. *"If we are to know their kind, to prevent their knowledge from increasing to the rest of our society, we must know their thoughts and their plans"*.

Although Zaius rules Central City with an iron fist—almost, he has to a certain degree neglected various teachings of the Lawgiver; this is especially true when he orders Galen's execution, Zaius feels the *"Ape Shall Never Kill Ape"* which was the Lawgiver's (Caesar's actually) first law, should not protect or apply to those who are guilty of murder—even if accidental, to prevent judgement. *"If we are to maintain law and order, we must be liberal in our thoughts, if we are to advance simian society"*. As Zaius once told Julian<sup>1</sup> the current Lawgiver, who is not too pleased with how Zaius handles his office, who replied, *"One cannot advance if one walks backwards behind the sun"*.

<sup>1</sup>-Julian (The office of Lawgiver between 3047-3093) Geologic Table.

## URKO, GENERAL, CHIEF OF SECURITY



Born in October 15 3035, Urko grew up believing that all humans are liars, and that their kind should be exterminated, but as Zaius remarked to him once, *"They have their uses, without them, who would tend the fields, build our dwellings?"* So begrudgingly Urko puts up with them. In 3061 Urko enrolls at the Central City Military Academy, where he befriends two fellow gorillas, Aboro and Bulta. By 3065 near the end of their training Urko, Aboro and Bulta show promise as leaders, but when Aboro is caught cheating in the final days of his senior year, his reputation is irreparably damaged, while Urko and Bulta graduate from the academy. It is during this time Urko meets Elta a daughter of a prominent council member and eventually they marry. Over the next two decades, Urko, Aboro and Bulta remain friends, with Aboro never rising higher than District Chief of the village of Hathor, as the blot on his record prevents his promotion. Aboro pretends to accept his fate but secretly covets Urko's success. For in 3070 Urko becomes a General, the Supreme Commander of the military and the Chief of Central City Security, with Bulta as his assistant.

Urko's true test at being Chief of Security came in 3073 when he captured two humans who claimed to be astronauts from earth's past. Knowing that they posed a danger to simian society, Urko had had them killed before Zaius had time to question them. He remarked later that, *"I was doing my duty as my office demanded"*. But secretly Urko felt that these astronauts would disrupt other humans to stimulate new ways of thinking that could undermine ape rule.

But Zaius was to have a second chance at finding out about earth's past to understand the human mind for in 3085 another earth ship crash-landed, this time Urko's plan to kill them failed. As Urko now had to deal not only with recapturing two astronauts but a chimpanzee as well by the name of Galen who helped them escape, who he now considers a traitor to his own kind. Although Zaius has ordered their recapture alive for interrogation, Urko thinks learning about the astronauts is a waste of time.

Urko secretly wants them dead and will go to any lengths possible to see this through, even if it means going against Zaius' orders. Urko being of the military mind is one tough gorilla, though he can be surprisingly reasonable at times as well as stubborn. Urko is an excellent leader when it comes to the gorilla mentality and is not to be reckoned with. If Zaius is the intelligence behind simian administration and authority, Urko has the strength and power to carry it out with force and with fear.

### REFERENCE MATERIAL:

1] [WWW.POTATV.KASSIDYRAE.CO](http://WWW.POTATV.KASSIDYRAE.CO)

2] [WWW.HADLEYBURG.DEMON.CO.UK](http://WWW.HADLEYBURG.DEMON.CO.UK)

3] [WWW.NETCOMUK.CO.UK](http://WWW.NETCOMUK.CO.UK)

4] 'THE HASSLEIN CURVE' A TIMELINE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES BY RICH HANDLEY.

The logo features a stylized globe with a blue and yellow color scheme. A yellow anchor is positioned in the center of the globe. The words "seaQuest" and "Character Biographies" are written in a blue, serif font across the top of the globe. Below the globe, the letters "UeO" are written in a yellow, stylized font.

## seaQuest Character Biographies

### **NATHAN HALE BRIDGER, CAPTAIN**

As the chief designer of the *seaQuest*, Captain Bridger was a model officer of the U.S. Navy. However, after the death of his son, Robert, he left the military, promising his wife he would never go back. After his wife died, he disappeared to a secluded island, where he spent his days in retirement working on communication skills with his pet dolphin, Darwin. Being lured back into the Navy by Admiral Noyce, a friend of his for over 35 years, Bridger finally accepted the position of captain aboard the fully-functional *seaQuest* DSV in 2018. As Captain, he worked to bring his dream of combining science, research, and exploration with military peacekeeping interests. He became a stand-in father figure for Lucas. Finally, after coming to terms with his wife's death, he had some romantic interests in, first, Dr. Kristin Westphalen and, later, Dr. Wendy Smith. After the *seaQuest* and her crew were returned from Hyperion, he left the military for the final time. Having found his grandchild on the island to which he returned, he hoped that in time he could locate Robert and reunite them.

### **COMMANDER JONATHAN FORD, FIRST OFFICER**

Part of the first tour of the *seaQuest* under Captain Marilyn Stark, Ford was forced to relieve her of command. Admiral Noyce ordered him to act arrogant and unfit for command in the effort to get Bridger to stay on board. When Bridger accepted, he made certain the Navy's military interests are upheld with Bridger's sometimes too science-oriented mentality. Having a very serious nature (*which results in a dry sense of humour*), Ford is able to handle high-risk situations confidently. He spends most of his time working on the bridge, and enjoys theatre, music, and courses, which have little or no relevance to society, such as the Fractal Theories of Cold Fusion. He and Lonnie Henderson developed a mutual attraction for each other, which lead to a shipboard romance. Ford stayed on board the *seaQuest* when it returned from Hyperion, and was given to Captain Hudson. Though at first their personalities clashed, then ended up having a mutual respect for each other.

### **LT. COMM. KATHERINE HITCHCOCK, MISSION SPECIALIST**

Katie was a very serious individual. She would often times be found either on the bridge or in the gym. She was married briefly to Lt. Krieg, though they quickly got divorced but remained friends. Very ambitious she hoped to command her own ship. She was often a member of special mission teams. She also commanded the Hyper Reality Probe. She and Commander Ford were good friends and she trusted him implicitly. After the first *seaQuest* was destroyed she opted to become a captain of a tanker, and not return for the next tour.

## **DR. KRISTIN WESTPHALEN, SENIOR PHYSICIAN**

After *seaQuest* was recommissioned to be a science and exploration vehicle Kristin and her science team were brought on board, thus outnumbered the military by quite a bit. This led to a few problems at first between her and Commander Ford. Eventually things began to run smoothly. She was one of the first people to trust in Lucas's computer abilities, and did become friends with him. She was not a member of most away missions, though she was an important voice in the planning of said missions. She did have a fondness for playing chess, but after an incident with Dr. Rubin Zellar she gave it up, deciding instead that poker was a better game. She was Captain Bridger's first love interest since his wife Carol died. Though after the first *seaQuest* was destroyed, she opted not to return for the next tour.

## **SENIOR CHIEF PETTY OFFICER MIGUEL ORTIZ, SENSOR CHIEF**

Miguel is a curious person by nature and much appreciated by the entire crew. He specializes in sensors, and operates the WSKRs aboard *seaQuest*. He is good at mathematics, and is a quick problem solver. Being quite reserved when he first came aboard *seaQuest* he opened up and soon had many friends, the two closest to him being Commander Ford, and Lt. Brody. He spends most of his time on the bridge. He does enjoy heavy thrash music in his spare time. Being very innovative he is often picked to be part of special missions. He also, had a brief interest in Lonnie Henderson.

## **LT. J.G. TIM O'NEILL, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER**

Being fluent in six languages makes Tim a very valuable member of the crew. Originally serving under Captain Stark, he continued his service under both Captain Bridger and Captain Hudson. When once asked if he could read a very ancient language, Temecuan, he replied with, "I'm not that dull am I?" Tim was a friendly, but shy man, with an inquisitive nature. A quick problem solver, he would tend to get very nervous; and sometimes felt that he got pushed around and not appreciated. An avid Catholic, he often prays when in tight situations, prompting other crewmembers to ask if he'll offer a prayer for them too. He briefly showed signs of being slightly tele-empathic during Season 1 when Darwin became sick. One of O'Neill's quirky peculiarities was organizing his underwear by the day. He, along with a lot of other males, was strongly attracted to Ensign Lonnie Henderson when she first came on board. He dated her, but decided he did not want a shipboard romance.

## **LT. BENJAMIN KRIEG, SUPPLY & MORALE OFFICER**

Ben was one of the few military members to remain on *seaQuest* after she was recommissioned. He has a dry sense of humour, and was often found making jokes at the wrong time. He was always looking for a quick way to make money, whether it be several hundred pairs of long-johns, or Kreiglite. Early on we found out that Ben had gone to school with Robert Bridger, Nathan's son. He was also briefly married to Lt. Comm. Hitchcock. They got along well enough and one could consider them to be friends. Lucas often times hung out with Krieg as Krieg himself was much like a teenager. Ben did have a serious side, though it showed very rarely. He could always be counted on in a tight situation. He was one of the first members of the crew to have contact with the Aliens. After *seaQuest* disappeared in 2022 Ben left the navy and eventually became a revolutionary.



## **MANILOW CROCKER, CHIEF OF SECURITY**

Chief of Security – Season One. He and Captain Bridger go back a long way, as he and Nathan served together before Nathan left the military. He was just about to retire when he was called to be the Chief of Security when the *seaQuest* was refitted with the new Science crew. He remembers the old days fondly and knows quite a few mariner songs. He is a solid rock of strength aboard the ship and is looked up to with great respect. He is very leery about things that he knows nothing about, such as aliens. When the alien ship was discovered on the ocean floor he was one of the lucky crewmembers chosen to go aboard. As they say “Join the Navy, see the world.” Late in season one he finds out that his wife is leaving him for another man and he is very hurt. He opts to leave the Navy for good, we assume, in the hopes of finding happiness again.

## **LUCAS WOLENCZAK, CHIEF COMPUTER ANALYST**

Lucas graduated magna-cum-laude with a degree in Applied Principles of Artificial Intelligence from Stanford University. No one has broken his GPA record since. His father, who thought the experience would be good for him, dumped Lucas aboard the *seaQuest*. Lucas was the only teenager the boat. His father, with the help of Admiral Noyce, created an assignment for Lucas because he was too busy with his own work to watch him. A genius, he graduated from Stanford University at the age of 16. Although his IQ was extremely high, Lucas was still a teenager, and ran into many teenager-related problems. He fell in and out of love many times during his tours on the ship. The two most important being Lt. Commander Hitchcock and Julianna another genius that he met during his stay at Node 3. Captain Bridger became a stand-in father figure for him and gave him advice on many occasions. Lucas was a very valuable member of the *seaQuest*, though at first, his cockiness made some others dislike him. He soon lost his cocky edge (although it never completely went away) and made many friends, the best of which was Darwin, the dolphin. During his first tour, Lucas finished development of and installed a dolphin-English translating program, allowing Darwin to speak. Because of the sacrifices he made and excellent actions on the original *seaQuest*, he was promoted to Chief Computer Analyst, making him a full scientific personnel. This promotion allowed him access and a station on the bridge.

## **ENSIGN DARWIN, SPECIAL RECONNAISSANCE, DEEP-SEA TRACKING & DATA RETRIEVAL**

As a young dolphin, Captain Bridger, who then nursed him back to good health, rescued Darwin from a tangled fishing net. Bridger and Darwin formed a bond and began developing a means of communication. As part of the bait to get Bridger to command the *seaQuest*, Darwin was transported to the boat when Bridger went onboard for a tour, and became quite happy with his new environment. He could enter or leave the craft at will, and, once inside, he could roam anywhere in the ship through a water-filled tube system. An advanced computer program allowed direct communication, translating a shared vocabulary of approximately 125 words of English with dolphin clicks and squeaks. The program was designed by Lucas, who soon became Darwin's best friend.

# seaQuest DSV 4600 Design Specs



The *seaQuest* is the brain child of Captain Nathan Bridger who designed the boat in the early 21st century, however, Bridger left the navy before construction on the ship was completed. Upon its completion, *seaQuest* was the biggest submarine and deep submergence vehicle ever constructed, measuring more than 1,000 feet from stem to stern with a crew of more than 240. The ship could travel at speeds up to 160 knots and was propelled by an inexhaustible fuel supply: sea water, itself. Propelled by twin fission turbines, the *seaQuest* was coated in a genetically engineered bio-skin which remained completely inert against (*most*) marine bacteria and organisms with a crush depth of more than 30,000 feet of water. The ship is equipped with a complement of standard torpedoes, as well as nuclear warheads, sea to air missiles, state of the art laser banks, as well as a specialized "grapnel torpedo" which, when fired, would impact a target and allow the *seaQuest* to tow or retract.

The ship was also equipped with a series of W.S.K.R.S. (*Wireless Sea Knowledge Retrieval Satellites*); small probes that were remotely controlled by the ship's sensor chief. The W.S.K.R.S., codenamed "Mother", "Junior", and "Loner", served as the "eyes and ears of *seaQuest*" and could relay data back to the ship miles away. In a pinch, the W.S.K.R.S. could also be used as an emergency power supply and could be reconfigured for communication purposes. A special "Hyper-Reality Probe" was also part of the *seaQuest*'s arsenal which allowed the operator to manually control the probe and conduct delicate repair operations or investigate various anomalies. The ship's communications buoy could also be detached to enable contact with surface bound vessels.

The ship was also equipped with a series of sea launch shuttles, as well as a series of speeder shuttles, a series of sea crab-class vehicles and eventually, a specialized, high-speed, one-man submersible named *The Stinger* by one of the designers, Lucas Wolenczak. In 2032, the ship was equipped with two high-speed spector-class sub-fighters; high speed submersibles capable of engagements up to speeds approaching 300 knots, comparable to (*but not equal to*) the Lysander-class sub-fighter engineered by Deon International.

*seaQuest* featured an emergency override called the "Dead Man's Codes"; in the event that the ship's crew was incapacitated or the ship was hijacked and taken off course, the codes could be used to bring the ship to any location on the globe by remote. The UEO Secretary General kept one set of the codes while another set was flash-fed into the computer banks and scrambled at random intervals.

Originally designed as a purely military vessel, the *seaQuest* underwent a refit in 2017 following the signing of the United Earth Oceans Organization charter, the dissolution of NORPAC, (*North Pacific*) and the Livingston Trench Incident.

# seaQuest DSV 4600 History



The high-tech submarine *seaQuest* operated by the United Earth Oceans Organization (UEO), a global federation of nations, similar to the United Nations, which was created following a major global conflict that occurred circa 2010. The *seaQuest* was built by NORPAC (*North Pacific*) and given to the UEO after its creation. The storyline begins in the year 2018, after mankind has exhausted almost all natural resources, except for the ones on the ocean floor. Many new colonies have been established there and it's the job of the *seaQuest* and its crew to protect them from hostile nonaligned nations and to aid in mediating disputes.

Under the command of Captain Marilyn Stark, the *seaQuest* converged on the Livingston Trench where a showdown between various undersea confederations could have erupted in nuclear war. The *seaQuest* almost instigated hostilities when Stark planned to fire first in violation of NORPAC orders. Commander Ford instantly relieved her of command and the situation was defused.

Thirteen months later, after an extensive scientific refit, the new UEO lured retired Captain Nathan Bridger aboard the ship as part of a VIP tour, however, once aboard, the *seaQuest* shoved off, effectively trapping Bridger aboard. Ford, under the orders of Admiral William Noyce, behaved in a very cowardly manner in an attempt to lull Bridger to take command. The ploy worked and Bridger signed aboard as captain. ("*To Be or Not to Be*")

The *seaQuest* unwittingly brought aboard biochemist and war criminal Dr. Rubin Zellar several weeks later after Zellar had assumed the identity of his ice prison's warden. With free reign on the *seaQuest*, Zellar held the crew hostage with a toxin frozen in ice and gained access to the missile control room where he coerced Bridger and Ford to activate the ship's missiles and fire them towards UEO Headquarters in Pearl Harbor. However, Bridger had wisely disabled all the missiles once the crew learned of Zellar's true identity and disaster was averted. ("*Games*")

The ship suffered significant damage when the communications buoy was struck by lightning several weeks later. With all power knocked off line, an away team stranded in a hurricane on the surface of the water, and a downed French sight-seeing submarine to search for, Bridger suggested that one of the W.S.K.R.S. could be used to power the bridge stations enough to locate the French ship, save the away team and return to the ship to drydock for repairs. ("*Bad Water*")

Several months later, *seaQuest* was hijacked by a group of ecologic extremists led by Colonel Steven Shrader, who planned to use the ship's computer to obtain "shut-down codes" for various global pollutants. Shrader's plans were foiled when Commander Ford flooded the boat, causing Shrader and his men to panic and attempt to escape. However, Shrader failed to realize that because the *seaQuest* was sinking, the increased water pressure would crush his ship.



He ultimately died in the attempt, while Lucas and Krieg were able to activate Captain Bridger's prototype "hull cyphens" which pumped the flooding water out of the boat and refloated the ship. (*"Nothing But the Truth"*)

The *seaQuest* was also involved with several space-related incidents, such as the recovery of the *Wayfarer*, the first manned space shuttle to reach Mars as well as uncovering an ancient derelict alien starship which had been entombed in an underwater ridge for over a million years. The crew discovered that there were still active holographic projections aboard the ship which boarded the *seaQuest* and expressed their desire to have formal introductions with the human race. The bridge crew elected to send a message to the alien homeworld themselves and not tell the military about what had truly happened. (*"Such Great Patience"*)

Unfortunately, the *seaQuest* met her ultimate demise at the end of its tour of duty when Captain Bridger ordered all hands to abandon ship and locked the ship's autopilot into a direct course with a lava well that threatened to raise ocean temperatures and melt the polar ice caps. Detonating the ship's nuclear weapons, the massive explosion of the *seaQuest* was enough to seal the rupture and avert ecologic catastrophe. (*"Higher Power"*)

## **COMMAND HISTORY**

### ***seaQuest DSV 4600***

Captain Marilyn Stark: 2013-2017  
Captain Nathan Bridger: 2018-2019

### ***seaQuest DSV 4600-II***

Captain Nathan Bridger: 2021-2022 (*presumed destroyed*)  
Captain Oliver Hudson: 2032-onward

**THE YEAR IS 3086.**

**WHILE ON ASSIGNMENT TO THE MARIANA TRENCH TO EXAMINE A STRANGE PHENOMENON, THE SEAQUEST UPON INVESTIGATION ENTERS AN UNKNOWN ENTITY OF MYSTERIOUS ORIGINS—A WHIRLING VORTEX CALLED A ‘WHIRLHOLE’ AND DISAPPEARS.**

**AFTER THE SEAQUEST FAILS TO RE-ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION WITH UEO HEADQUARTERS AFTER THE EVENT; THE SHIP RESURFACES TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM.**

**THE SEAQUEST AND ITS CREW ARE GREETED BY VIRDON, BURKE AND GALEN, WHO ARE PLEASED TO SEE THEM, AND EXPLAIN THEIR PREDICAMENT.**

**THERE’S JUST ONE HITCH, CAPTAIN BRIDGER HAS NEVER HEARD OF THEM OR OF ANSA.**

**QUESTIONS ARISE AS VIRDON AND BURKE TRY TO MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL...**

**ON THE PLANET OF THE APES.**