

# **RESURRECTION OF THE PLANET OF THE APES**

**PETER KARSTEN**



## **RESURRECTION OF THE PLANET OF THE APES 2005**

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# **RESURRECTION OF 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**

Arthur P. Jacobs  
Roddy McDowall  
Mark Lenard





## PRE-LOG

*...this is Peter Karbowski reporting to you from Cape Kennedy, and as you can see behind me, the interstellar spacecraft Astræa is readying itself for launch to Alpha Centauri. This four-member crew commanded by Colonel George Taylor...*

—\*—\*—

*...in other news today, ANSA has launched, what it sees as a rescue mission, to find out what happened to the Astræa, when all contact was lost with the spacecraft six months ago...*

—\*—\*—

*...the ANSA got its hopes up this morning when the Astræa crash-landed off the coast of California today, but instead of being greeted by its long lost crew of astronauts, they were astonished to find what seemed to be three chimpanzees...*

—\*—\*—

*...they say if you don't succeed, try and try again, that's what the Director of ANSA has told the Committee Hearing in Washington as preparations for the Pegasus mission to Alpha Centauri went ahead as scheduled, if all goes well...*

—\*—\*—

*...its been two years since the last Icarus mission to the stars, the President is under pressure from Congress to terminate the Icarus Program, but the President is determined to continue the Program regardless of previous failures, in a televised address to the nation...*

—\*—\*—

*... Hyperion commanded by Colonel Alan Virdon will be the last mission attempted by ANSA to reach Alpha Centauri, the Senate has voted overwhelmingly to cancel the Icarus Program, but Dr. Hughes the new Director at ANSA said today...*

—\*—\*—

*...rumours have circulated that the Icarus Program is alive and well, even after ten years since its cancellation, the President has reportedly denied such rumours as hearsay, although Dr. Hughes the Director of ANSA will not confirm or deny...*



## PROLOGUE

### WASHINGTON DC, THE PENTAGON 1ST JUNE 1990

General Karl Whitaker was sitting behind his desk staring at a stack of top-secret files that he just read. Four of them were personnel files about four astronauts, two men and two women. God he thought, I wonder if they know what they're in for? If this mission works, there could still be hope. Hope for all humanity and ape alike.

The General looked towards his window into the outside world. It was raining, a grey visage curtaining reality, a shadowed cloak concealing life and light alike. As a young boy he had always felt that the Earth was crying when it rained, but the tears kept on coming, day in, day out, it never stopped.

*Is Gæa mourning her lost forgotten son, or is she mourning for the sins that have been raped from her by Man's very hand?*

*Will Gæa ever smile again; will she ever regain her happiness?*

*Will Helios ride once more upon his chariot to reclaim that which was lost? Perhaps, perhaps one day he might bless us with his caressing rays of warmth? But not today, today Gæa will keep on weeping, for the pain runs deep and her tears further still.*

Whitaker picked up and glanced over again the details of another of the top-secret files on his desk. It contained all the information about the three apes that landed here all those years ago, Cornelius, Zira and Milo and that's when it had all started. Hell, Whitaker thought, why did they ever come here? Was it to warn humanity of what was to come? Was it to prevent global events that will lead to the Holocaust? Or was it to begin a new extinction of the dominant species—humans, to replace them with apes? Whitaker sighed, they were responsible for the plague that killed all our cats and dogs weren't they? Well maybe not directly, but as far as the scientists could tell, when Taylor's ship had come back from the future and the ship's hatch was re-opened, it had released an air-born virus, which had then escaped into the atmosphere. It wasn't noticeable at first, a dog here, a cat there, but then the deaths began to escalate. It seemed like another mass extinction was well on the way; luckily the world governments had enough brains to work together and had created a so-called 'Gene Pool' of each and every species of all known cats and dogs. This had also included species from the animal kingdom as well. Lions, tigers, hyenas and dingoes, all had their unique eggs and sperm collected before the plague could do its job. Some scientists had tried to develop a vaccine, but the virus mutated every time.

It was madness, it was insanity at work, and some religious groups thought it was the work of the Devil or God even. 'Man shall pay for his sins', they said, 'we are next on the list, you'll see, but there is a choice, be cleansed and repent, pray for forgiveness, pray my brothers, pray!'

Where did we go wrong? Whitaker wondered; why doesn't Man ever learn from his mistakes? Was the Earth better off without Man? Will the Apes be better as the new rulers of Earth? Are they the next step in this planet's evolutionary cycle to dominate the new world?

Who can tell? Who can? Who will?

Whittaker glimpsed another top-secret file beside all the others, about the last mission to the stars to the elusive Alpha Centauri. Three astronauts Virdon, Burke and Jones lost in space, that was ten years ago. I wonder what ever happened to them? He mused. Perhaps this next mission will give us the answers. The Nemesis will be the final mission, before 'Phase 3', and humanities final hope. It's got to work; it just has to. Man must survive, even if the ape lives to dominate the Earth. Man has to find a way to regain his lost heritage, his lost dignity to a world he calls home. A home that needs to be reborn if man is to survive, and survival is what man does best. With the help of Colonel Richards and his team it will come... at a price and that price will be what the military and the President will ask of him. This mission must not fail, all the hopes and dreams of humanities future lies with its success. There is no second chance, we've only got one shot at it, and it has to count.

Whittaker then looked at a black folder just to his right. It contained not only classified information on not only the American Alpha-Omega 'Doomsday' bomb's location but the Eastern Powers projected locations of their bombs' as well. As if one bomb wasn't enough to destroy the world, the Eastern Powers had to have theirs as well. It was for what they deemed as 'Security Measures' to protect the interests and safety of their people. If these locations prove correct Whittaker told himself, Richards will have to neutralize them the best way he can. If not, when he comes back, America will have to do the dirty. I hope the Eastern Powers are bluffing when they say they have their own, Whitaker thought, I just hope they are.

One thing was for sure, the SAT-DS1 satellite that was on the moon right now would be used to find out the truth. It was a stroke of genius to build an underground silo to house the satellite that had taken eight years to complete, and with the satellite's unique instrumentation, not only could it guide the Nemesis into Earth orbit but it could also help determine if there were any other 'Doomsday' bombs on the planet.

The revelations of Man: *'He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son'*. But will the sons of earth inherit that which he was born to rule?



**THE PENTAGON, GENERAL WHITTAKER'S OFFICE  
1ST JUNE 1990**

It's time, thought General Whitaker as he glanced at his wristwatch, while he reached for the office intercom, "Miss Simpson, is Colonel Richards in yet?"

"Yes sir General, he's here waiting".

"Good, send him in will you". Now it begins he thought, the clock is ticking; the countdown has begun.

Colonel William James Richards entered the General's office, as the General stood up, "Good morning sir", saluting the General, who also returned the gesture in kind.

"Colonel, please sit down".

"Thank you sir".

Both men sat in their respective chairs; Whitaker collected the top-secret files and put them all to one side of his desk.

"Will, what I am about to tell you does not go beyond this room, we never had this conversation, if there is a leak concerning what I am about to tell you; then both of us will be executed. Have I made myself clear?"

"Yes General, quite clear". Richards replied, more than a little puzzled.

"Good; first you may or may not be aware of rumours that the Russians and the Chinese have each developed their own 'Doomsday' bombs to counter ours and the British versions. Well, those rumours are true Colonel and already there have been anti-war demonstrations across the globe pertaining to the possible existence of these weapons. The President has been granted an emergency meeting of the UN to explain his actions and purpose in developing such a bomb. He's hoping that by revealing his intentions, as well as those of the Eastern Powers development of their 'Doomsday' bombs, he might embarrass the Russians and the Chinese for having not gone public first in their declaration of such weapons".

"What would be gained sir? We are not going to decommission our bomb if the Eastern Powers don't do theirs, if they have any at all".



“True, but the President is hoping that some internal dissatisfaction from those governments might trigger a discontinuation of more bombs being developed and hopefully a decommissioning of the existing ones, naturally we will follow suit if and after they have declared such actions”.

“That’s a pretty big ‘if’ sir”.

“That’s politics Colonel, I’m just a simple soldier who follows orders when they’ve given”.

“Yes sir, but surely that won’t warrant an execution if the information is made public?”

“I know, but the emergency session of the UN is an hour from now, and a lot can happen in sixty minutes Colonel, if the Eastern Powers get an inkling of what is to come there could be hell to pay, and America always prefers to have a ‘first strike’ option when we can get it”.

“If I may sir, am I suppose to be anywhere else within the hour?”

“No, not just yet, oh you will be somewhere else Will, but not where you think you might be. Let me explain, I have here on my desk,” indicating the folders, “four files on four astronauts that will volunteer for a mission in which you will command Colonel”.

“I take it I had no choice in volunteering in this matter, sir?” Richards sounding a bit annoyed.

“Now Will, you are one of the best astronauts in the ANSA, this mission is vital to the planet Earth, and I mean vital, the survival of the human race is at stake, as well as our future dominators, the apes”.

“Apes sir?”

“That’s right Will, the apes. It may not look like it now, but in the future the apes will inherit the Earth after the Holocaust”.

“You mean sir it’s really going to happen? Can we stop it, now?” Richards asked, not too happy at what the General has told him so far.

“No, we cannot stop it now, but you can stop it later. Your mission is go into Earth’s future and reconfigure the Alpha-Omega ‘Doomsday’ bomb. It will still detonate when Taylor pushes the button but instead of destroying the Earth, it will destroy all living matter within a twenty-five kilometre radius”.

“Why not just deactivate it, it would be so much simpler?”

“True, but due to the highly sophisticated circuitry that won’t be possible, Will, this is the final mission the ANSA will undertake under the present political and economic climate until the activation of ‘Phase 3’ you cannot fail, you mustn’t fail”.

“What is this ‘Phase 3’ General?”

“That’s Dr. Hughes’ territory to explain, I could but I won’t, you don’t have clearance yet. All I can tell you is your mission has been code named ‘Phase 1’. I know it may not seem like it now, but you’ve got a lot of responsibility being put on your shoulders Will, the entire Earth in fact. All our triumphs, our tragedies, history and knowledge rests with you and your team being successful”.

Whitaker stood up, as did Richards.

“Will, I know you have a lot more questions to ask, but I’m not the one to answer them; Dr. Hughes can do that for you at the Cape”. The General had moved from around his desk to face Richards, “Pamela will give you copies of the files on the other three astronauts that will be accompanying you and a summary of the mission briefing as you go out. I know you didn’t ask for this or was given the option to refuse, if its any consolation, neither were the other three, good luck Will”. The General held out his hand and both men shook in farewell.

Just before Richards opened the door to go, he turned around to the General and asked, “Will I come back?”

The General looked straight into his eyes and replied slowly, “That’s up to you”.

As a reflex Richards gave a salute, which Whitaker returned, and then walked out of the office.

“God speed my boy, God speed”. Whitaker said softly to himself and then he suddenly felt very tired; he walked over to his desk and sat down to rest, he reached for the intercom, “Pamela, can you get me some coffee please and make it very strong this time?”

*Gæa shall weep for her forgotten son no more, for he shall return to the womb. Blessed are the meek and strong, I will pray for thee, I will pray for thee. Know this that when the tears no longer fill the rivers and the streams, no longer fill the seas, the waters will no longer flow.*

*Deserts shall reign across the land, forests will fall, the hills will be flattened and the mountains will crumble to dust. As Man shall too one day, for he shall perish into the soil, for his seed is doomed, never to grow.*

*“I shall never see the sun”*

*But Helios will; he is the son of sons.*



### **THE PENTAGON, THEN TO THE AIRPORT 1ST JUNE 1990**

As Pamela gave Richards his black attaché case with the relevant documents, General Whitaker buzzed her on the intercom, "Pamela, can you get me some coffee please and make it very strong this time?"

She signalled for Richards to wait as she replied to the General's request, "Yes sir, I'll have some brought to you in a moment".

"Thanks Pamela".

"Well Colonel, good luck".

"Thanks," Richards replied, "so you know?"

"Yes I do, you have a great responsibility upon your shoulders, I don't know how you can be so calm about it?"

"Oh, I don't know about that, I haven't got the full story yet, but when I do, I doubt I'll be this calm again, I just hope it can be done".

"So do I", said Pamela as she briefly locked eyes on Richards, then after a moments pause, "I better get that coffee".

"Sure see-ya". Richards said as he left the office, on his way out a pair of military police Sergeants were waiting for him.

"Colonel Richards?" asked the first Sergeant as he and his partner stepped forward.

"Yes".

"We are here to escort you to Cape Kennedy sir". The first Sergeant continued.

"I see, well let's get going then".

As the three men went their way out of the building, Richards thought, I guess the General didn't want to leave anything to chance, my own personal escort to Cape Kennedy, swell. Where my ship will be waiting, where destiny will be waiting, where the fate of the world will be waiting. But in all honesty I don't think the President will make any headway into this so-called military crisis, besides the only thing he will accomplish if anything will be the admission of our own bomb and the hope of political embarrassment by the other nation's denial of theirs, which they too will have to admit sooner or later, thank God I'm not a politician.

A black bullet-proof limousine with tinted windows awaited the trio outside the Pentagon entrance. The rain had eased to a light sprinkle, as Richards and the two military police got into the car, he noticed several chimpanzees walking with their umbrellas up, helping their human masters beside them not to get wet. While the apes themselves were oblivious to the rain itself with little or no protection for themselves, or were they? Some human masters were kind to their simian servants, while others were not. Even so, thankfully there were laws introduced that protected the ape and prohibited their mistreatment.

If Man was going to use them as servants, Man must give the apes certain Rights, otherwise the distinction between man and beast, and master and slave, would become blurred. But Man always had problems distinguishing himself from others; he needed to be in control, he believed it was his birthright. But the one thing Man didn't count on was the 'Right of Freedom' for all living things. No wonder human civilization was all screwed up.

While Richards sat down in the back, his escorts sat in the front, he wondered, if the apes would rule the world one day. Would they be any better than us? Would they treat humans any better or worse than we have treated them? Will it become a divine punishment that man must endure to become an animal, a lower inferior species, while apes reign supreme? These were all questions that needed answers...

Richards' thoughts were interrupted when the first Sergeant turned around in his seat to address him, "We'll go from here to the Airport, then by ANSA private jet to the Cape sir".

"Okay Sergeant you're the boss, lead the way".

The first Sergeant indicated to his partner to begin the journey, then pushed a little button on the dashboard that activated the privacy screen that separated them from the Colonel to ensure time alone. As Richards began to relax he opened his attaché case to look at the files within; he opened the mission briefing and scanned the pages, nothing new here he thought, except? Primary Objective: Code Named 'Phase 1'. Is to reconfigure the Alpha-Omega 'Doomsday' bomb at all costs. Secondary Objective: Code named 'Phase 2' Gather as much information as possible about the Earth in the future, most importantly about the apes in all aspects, this includes, society, culture and religion as they become available. Richards then glanced at the bottom of the final page, to the last paragraph; it read:

*Colonel Richards this Mission Brief has been given to you in confidence and must not be discussed with the other members of your team until Dr. Jameson Hughes has cleared you; a fuller report on all Objectives and Phases will be given at the appropriate time.*

He put down the Mission Brief and picked up to his surprise four personnel files of his mission team. A file of his personal criteria/information had also been included; I suppose just to compare mine with the others Richards concluded, as he began reviewing the information.

First, there was Major Kyle Petersen Smith, 35, Mission Specialist: 'Alpha-Omega' Configuration, Computer Circuitry Analyst and Electronics. Second, a Major Laureen Anne Harden, 30, Mission Specialist: 'Alpha-Omega' Configuration/Computer Circuitry Analyst, Electronics and Pilot, and thirdly a Captain, Dr. Natalie Almira Merryll, 30, Mission Specialist: Medical Officer/Psychologist and Biologist and finally he thought, last but not least, himself, Colonel William James Richards, 37, Mission Specialist: Security, Weapons and Pilot.

Two men and two women, four final hopes for the future of Ape and Mankind; I wonder if the apes would appreciate what we are about to do? Would they care? Would they want to? Then another thought entered Richards' mind, what if the apes try to stop us from saving the Earth from destruction? Could they be made to understand? Maybe they would welcome the planet's demise instead? No, they wouldn't be that stupid? Questions, questions, questions, the only real answers will be found when we land back in the future. The only bona fide question is when; will it be fifty, one hundred or one thousand years into the future? I guess Dr. Hughes will have the answer to that, he'd better and as well as telling us how to get back. Unless, no it couldn't be, but a suicide mission, hell that's just great, that's just really great. Hang on old boy, don't let your imagination go wild, it might not be that way at all, just wait and see, things could be a lot better than they are worse.

Richards looked out the window of his car, the sun was just appearing from time to time behind the still semi-cloudy sky which was in its own way trying to prevent the sun from showing itself, preventing light to shine through the darkness, wanting us humans to keep our eyes closed to the truth of the world.

A world full of impossible false hope.

A world of the impossible.

A world that will change to an eternal nightmare of perpetual darkness—to come.

Lost in thought Richards was awoken by the first Sergeant again reappearing from behind the descending privacy screen separating the front and back sections of the car, he turned around and faced Richards

"We're here sir".



## THREE

### **CAPE KENNEDY, ANSA HEADQUARTERS 1ST JUNE 1990**

"We're here sir", said the first Sergeant, "ANSA Headquarters".

"Right". Richards responded.

After disembarking from the Airport, Richards and his escort got into another limousine that was waiting for them and drove to Cape Kennedy. It was here that ANSA had established their headquarters for the launching of the Icarus Program, a series of interstellar spacecraft, designed and developed to go to our nearest star system, Alpha Centauri.

So, why go to Alpha Centauri instead of say, the planet Mars? After the successful moon landings in 1969, the President decided to go one step further in trying to find life on other planets, as well as planets that could sustain human life. Although? Mars was the next logical step to find these answers, Alpha Centauri was chosen as the likely candidate, because it was the closest star system to ours, and it passed various tests to determine whether life was possible there for human colonization.

It also gave the space program the ability to test new technology to see if man and machine can handle long durational flights and Alpha Centauri offered a good test study in this area. Thus the Icarus Program was initiated and by 1972 before the first launching to Alpha Centauri, three ships were built for such a purpose. Since then, only five Icarus-type spacecraft have been launched successfully to try to reach Alpha Centauri, but only one has ever returned; the one commanded by Colonel George Taylor, which when it arrived, did not contain four human astronauts, but three chimpanzees from the future—Earth's future.

It was the beginning of the end, or was that the end of the beginning? Whichever way you looked at it, it didn't matter, the events that unfolded from the chimpanzees arrival to their horrific deaths was the beginning of a series of even more bizarre events that would change the world forever.

The human world.

From which the simian world would eventually emerge victorious, freed from their human masters to become the new masters of the Earth, while the residue of the human race became their slaves, their animals, their vermin to be exterminated.

It had become a vicious circle, where man had abolished slavery against other men; he failed to do so with his animal cousins, not recognizing the Rights of all living creatures. But then, could man recognize the difference? Did he want to? Only man fears man, and in the future it will be the ape that will fear man, to almost annihilation.

And then there was the Holocaust; how did that fit in? Did the apes that tried to take over the world cause it or were there other events: political, economical, social or international? Maybe it was all these factors combined that caused a bottleneck in which the world governments and or the UN couldn't handle, and thus it exploded in their faces? Well, whatever the reason it was going to happen, it was just a matter of when, not how, for time in reality was running short.

As Richards got out of the car, the ANSA's Chief Head of Security Captain Robert McBaine greeted him with a salute and then with a handshake.

"Welcome back to the Cape Colonel, how was your trip down from Washington?"

"Pretty good but uneventful, to say the least".

"Well, things will certainly change from here on in".

"It seems that way".

"Stay with the car," McBaine ordered the two MP's "You will escort Colonel Richards to Cocoa Beach when he is done seeing with Dr. Hughes".

The two Sergeants responded with a "Yes sir" and waited by the car until Richards returned.

McBaine escorted Richards into the ANSA building towards the elevators and as he was doing so continued to talk, "The other three members of your team are already here sir, I believe Dr. Hughes will be giving a dinner party this evening so that the all four of you can get acquainted before the launch".

"Right, I've had a look at their files, pretty impressive by what I've read so far".

"It better be, we've only got one chance at this, Dr. Hughes handpicked all four of you himself".

"I'm flattered, I guess. Does everybody know about this mission?"

"Only a select few, but don't worry, security on this is strictly hush-hush, on a need-to-know basis, I've made sure of that".

The two men by this time had entered the elevator and ascended to the top floor of the building to an awaiting pair of security officers. Before McBaine and Richards could go any further, the senior one of the two stepped forward and asked for identification and a pass.

McBaine gave his ID and pass to the security officer, and while he was examining these cards, McBaine spoke to him, "Colonel Richards is with me, he's just arrived from Washington DC to see Dr. Hughes".

The security officer turned and indicated to his partner with a nod to check with Dr. Hughes; as this was done via an intercom on the wall, the security officer handed McBaine back his cards and told him, "Won't be a moment sir, you understand?"

"Sure, take all the time you need".

The security officer by the intercom gave a nod of approval, which cleared both McBaine and Richards to continue, "All cleared sir, have a nice day".

"Thanks, and well done".

McBaine led Richards to Dr. Hughes' office, "This is where I'll leave sir, I'll see you later perhaps, and I've still got my rounds to make". McBaine saluted.

"Okay, sure, thanks for everything". Richards returned the salute, and watched as McBaine departed to continue his security checks around the complex.

Richards knocked on the door and entered Dr. Hughes' outer office, where his personal secretary Frances was seated typing away, but stopped for a moment to look up and see who entered the office. She smiled when she saw Richards and greeted him, "Welcome back sir, how have you been?"

"Just fine, and you?"

"Oh you know, this and that". Frances then informed Dr. Hughes via her intercom on the desk that Colonel Richards was here.

"Send him in Frances, send him in". The doctor replied enthusiastically.

Richards gave a small pat on Frances' shoulder and a smile as a thank you and said to her "See you soon", and walked into Dr. Hughes office.





**FOUR**

**ANSA HEADQUARTERS, DR. HUGHES' OFFICE  
1ST JUNE 1990**

A short white haired man of about sixty-five with bifocals; Dr. Jameson Hughes was at his desk looking over the final preparations for Nemesis' launching details, making sure that everything was ready when the final countdown began in forty-eight hours time. He heard a small beep from his intercom and responded. "Yes Frances".

"Colonel Richards is here to see you sir".

"Send him in Frances, send him in".

Good, thought Dr. Hughes, he's finally here, now I can begin my final stages of planning for this mission.

As Richards walked in, Dr. Hughes got up from his chair and both men greeted each other.

"Nice to see you again doctor".

"You too Will, I guess being on holidays in Hawaii agrees with you".

"It had its moments".

"I'm sorry I had to cut it short".

"That's okay, one week here or there, didn't make any difference; I was getting a little bored anyway".

"Sure, please sit down". Hughes said, indicating the chair in front of Richards.

"How did your preliminary briefing with General Ralston in Hawaii go?"

"Fine. No complaints, a bit of an eye opener".

"And how about with General Whitaker in Washington?"

"The same, he said you'll be filling me in about the upcoming mission".

"Yes, I got his communiqué this morning after you left".

Both men were now a little more comfortable; Dr. Hughes began his well-rehearsed speech that Richards needed to hear in order to understand what was going to happen.

"Will, in about forty-eight hours time you and three others will be launched in the Nemesis to prevent a global catastrophe; a cataclysmic event very vital to our existence—the destruction of the Earth. The 'Alpha-Omega', known as the 'Doomsday' bomb will be detonated by Taylor in the year 3978AD, the bomb's delicate and sophisticated circuitry and components make it impossible to deactivate it to prevent the bomb exploding. So I have been able to devise an alternative solution, that solution is to reconfigure the bomb's matrix to only explode in a twenty-five-kilometre radius, this of course will mean that everything within that radius will not survive. But to this end the Earth's destruction will be prevented, and thus there may be a future hope for Man and Apekind alike to co-exist as equals. Well that's a long shot, I know, but at least the Earth will be around long enough for us to do something about it; that will be your Primary Objective, known as 'Phase 1'. Your Second Objective, 'Phase 2', is to find out everything you can about ape society, their strengths, their weaknesses, how they are organized, what kind of government they have, what sort of environment they live in, how do they treat humans; basically any information that may help us..."

"...defeat them". Richards added.

"Well", a short pause, "it may help us understand where we went wrong and maybe by helping ourselves we can help the apes achieve a belief that humans and simians can live together in peace by working together as equals, and together develop a society of co-existence and co-operation to better a new world of the future".

Richards tried to take it all in, but when it came to the survival of the species, Man was an expert on such matters, he was never able to give up without a fight. If there was hope on the horizon he took it and be damned with the outcome, as long as he was on top of the food chain as it were to survive another day.

"What you're implying from all else," said Richards, "is that there is a return flight involved, Taylor's ship was lucky to return considering its condition, the Icarus spacecraft needs a launching pad, which I believe from the returning chimpanzees information, they were able to construct an adequate platform in time before the Earth's destruction. It may not be possible to do so in the future with four people".

With the wave of his hand Dr. Hughes brushed aside Richards' concerns, "That has been all taken care of Will, which brings me to your Third Objective before I continue, which by the way has been classified up to this point; known as 'Phase 3', before your launch I will give you verbal details, but for now it is important that you tell no one including your crew. When you arrive back in Earth's future it will be up to your discretion on a need-to-know basis to reveal 'Phase 3' if necessary, do you understand Will?"

"Sure, this 'Phase 3' must be very important or dangerous?"

"Important yes—to the survival of Man, but dangerous, well that remains to be seen. Now, for the past ten years we have been planning, developing and organizing this mission, as you know it takes about twelve to fifteen months to fully build and test an Icarus spacecraft for long durational

flight, you will be in command of the Nemesis, but there is another Icarus in storage here in Cape Kennedy. The Pleiades is ready and waiting for launching, as well as another launching pad for the Nemesis. The details of the location are sealed and won't be given to you until you are on board ship. We also have deployed a satellite known as SAT-DS1, which is now on the near side of the moon in its own underground silo and that was a job in itself, let me tell you. The satellite is now ready and awaiting a release code, which will launch it into Earth orbit upon your arrival in the future to help your ship navigate itself into orbit preventing a crash landing, and to also help you and your crew in your investigations; I will go into further details with you later before launch".

"Will the others of my team know about 'Phase 2'?"

"Yes, they will when you tell them upon Nemesis' arrival to Earth; also as you may have gathered from the information I have just told you, that in order to complete 'Phase 2', two of you must stay behind. One of them will be you Will, sorry, the other will be a volunteer or if not, you will have to do the picking. One of the main reasons I chose you and the other three of your team, is that you are all single, no emotional baggage as they say, that way there is a less worry about any loved ones, you're leaving behind, it's important that you and your team stay focused. It's not that I'm being inhuman, it's just one less worry you'll have to go through".

All through the Mission Briefing Dr. Hughes was generally concerned about how Richards would react to what was asked of him, he seemed to hold up quite well considering. Ten years worth of planning this the final (*well for the moment anyway*) mission, all came down to how Richards would perform his duties as Commander of the Nemesis; and it was hoped that the other three astronauts would take a shine to him as well as the other way around, in forty-eight hours time four complete strangers will have to work and trust each other to accomplish the near impossible. Usually before any missions, the crews assigned would spend at least 12 months together, in work and in play to get to know one another; but in this case, it was not to be.

Richards himself needed time to think things through, it was all moving just a little too fast for him to put everything together so he could grasp a handle to it all, if and if this was all, it was going to be a big job to get things done; let alone trying to get along with three other members of his team, which he really knew nothing about on a personal level; and to add to his worries, he won't be coming back, well not just yet anyway.

"Doctor", Richards asked, "How long will the two of us have to stay to complete 'Phase 2'?"

"Considering that technology will be non-existent, along with the extra Icarus there will be some other equipment put in storage in an underground radiation proof nuclear facility, which again the location will remain a secret until your launch, this facility will help you achieve the objectives at hand, as well as your sanity, to stay one step ahead of the apes if they become troublesome", after a short breather Dr. Hughes continued, "Will, don't worry about a thing, I've had ten years to work out the kinks of this mission, why don't you go home and relax until tonight when we

have dinner together with the other members of your team, and then I'll explain the rest to you in private after they leave".

"That's fine with me but there's just one more thing I'd like explained to me before I go, considering what General Ralstone told me in Hawaii, and it's been bugging me ever since".

"Sure Will what is it?"

"How did we know about Taylor detonating the 'Alpha-Omega'? and how do we know about these mutant-human telepaths?"

Dr. Hughes took a moment to calmly recollect his thoughts before he answered, "I was wondering when you'd get around to asking those questions Will, so I'll do my best to explain them", after a brief pause Dr. Hughes continued. "There's only one answer to both those questions Will, you see the 'Alpha-Omega' is monitored by its own control panel for the activation of launch and detonation; the control panel is a highly specialized and sophisticated piece of equipment. Inside this computer console is a silver sphere, made of a titanium-based heat-resistant alloy; this sphere acts like an aeroplane's 'Black Box'. It's called a Chrysalis. And the clear fibre optic cylinder rods on the control panel are connected to this Chrysalis. These rods are especially sensitised to record any person's fingerprints or skin configurations as well as that person's DNA, in this way we have a 'scan' if you like of every authorized or unauthorized personnel using the control panel".

Dr. Hughes paused again for a moment to allow Richards to comprehend and understand before he continued. "Now, this is where it gets interesting, twenty-five years ago—I won't bother you with the details—the Pentagon came into its possession a Chrysalis that showed signs of having come from deep space. Naturally at that time the Pentagon didn't know what they had since the 'Alpha-Omega' wasn't in existence yet. But as research and development began on the 'Doomsday' bomb, it was found that the Pentagon's Chrysalis was the exact same copy of which the current bomb has in its control panel which your team are going to reconfigure ".

"Impossible". Richards spoke softly not believing it.

"Yes it is and it isn't, the theory is—and only a theory really—but until a better, more appropriate one comes along it's all we have. When Taylor activated the bomb for detonation, the tremendous explosion that resulted from the destruction of the Earth, created a massive energy wave causing a rift or hole if you like, in space-time, through which the Chrysalis was hurled back into time; and when we examined the information stored in the Chrysalis we knew that Taylor was the last person to use the control panel".

"Okay, that explains my first question..."

"...and here's the answer to the second one, at first we didn't know what to make of it, but after detailed analysis of the foreign DNA also 'scanned' by the Chrysalis; it was determined that a new form of human had evolved in the not too distant future. This DNA showed signs of mutation caused by nuclear radiation, and after extensive research and cross-referencing various human DNA samples from our own 'gene pool' and DNA

data banks the information was conclusive. Certain DNA sequencing can reveal people with special abilities, either dormant or active, in this case these unknown human individuals had advanced abnormalities pertaining to their telepathic capabilities”.

“Alright, I’ll buy it, but how did these telepaths get a hold on the bomb in the first place?”

“That is a question I cannot answer Will, but the fact that they had it in their possession for so long surprises me, because I wonder if they knew what they had”.

“Maybe I’ll find out the answer for you”.

“That would be nice, I hate unanswered questions Will. I really do”.

“Well, let’s not worry about it for now”.

“Good,” Dr. Hughes got up from his chair as Richards stood up also and both men walked out towards the outer office door, upon which the doctor opened it to usher Richards out.

Shaking Richards’ hand Dr. Hughes said, “See you tonight Will”.

“See you doctor”. Richards responded a little coldly and walked out.

“I didn’t like his tone, doctor”. Frances commented.

“Neither did I Frances”. Hughes responded turning around to face Frances, “Neither did I”.

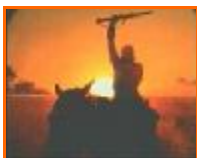
“Perhaps tonight, when you fully explain to him the details, he might feel better?”

“That remains to be seen Frances, but he is the man for the job, otherwise I would’ve picked him, he’ll be alright”.

*The shadows of light dance upon the night of broken dreams  
Diana sings her lovers song  
As Helios sleeps his troubles away*

*“Let us imagine your thoughts of flight”  
“Let us guide your steeds of light”  
“Let us bring you warmth of night”  
“Let us see you out of sight”*

*I shall caress your fears away  
For the night my kingdom be the day  
Awaiting your return my Helios  
It is all I wish to say*

**CAPE CANAVERAL, COCOA BEACH  
1ST JUNE 1990**

Richards arrived at Dr. Hughes' house for an informal dinner and to finally meet the team that would help him accomplish the mission. Will the rest of the mission briefing be explained tonight or will Dr. Hughes leave it to me? Richards pondered. For the last few hours Richards had been going over the mission's details trying to make sense of it all. Everything was easy on paper, but when you got right down to it, in reality the practicality was quite different, especially when there were so many variables involved.

When Richards opened the classified documents given to him by a military courier at his home, to further review and understand his objectives, he was amazed of what Dr. Hughes had done in the last ten years leading up to the launch. Not only had he organized, designed, built and constructed the primary launch site for the Nemesis – but had overseen the construction of a second, top-secret site for the Pleiades; both in a secret location within Cape Kennedy. Secondly, he had secured another site for storing the necessary equipment needed to complete the mission objectives. This complex was known as the Facility and was built deep underground with radiation proof nuclear shielding, so as to prevent future detection and damage when the Holocaust became an actuality. Finally, and this is what amazed Richards still, was a launch silo built on the near side of the moon which housed a satellite ready for deployment for when his crew arrived back within the solar system in the future to help complete the mission. How ANSA managed that was anyone's guess.

When it really comes down to it, in saving the Earth, Richards thought, no expense will be spared, because in the future, no human technology will exist to achieve what is needed. The Earth must survive in order for Man to live and for the Apes to conquer. The past must save the future, even if the Apes control that future, Man must save that which he has, or will destroy, in order to redeem his past transgressions of world dominance. His inability to comprehend his own limitations, has led him to selfish acts of war, all in the name of conquest, of power, of glory and all in the name of God, to which he felt he was becoming.

No wonder the Apes will rise up in defiance of Man, of destruction, of slavery to their own kind. It will be they, who will become the new humans, while we, who will become the new beasts, to be hunted, to be killed, to be enslaved; and through all this insanity can Man and Ape reconcile their differences and embrace each other as brothers, as equals, to co-exist in peace? Only time will tell, and time is running out.

Richards rang the front door bell and Barbara, Dr. Hughes' wife answered it, "Welcome Will, please come in, it's nice to see you again".

"Thanks Barbara, you to, it's been awhile".

"Well now that you're here, you're forgiven. Let me take your coat and hat, the rest of the group are in the living room". Barbara departed with Richards' things and went into the kitchen to prepare dinner.

Richards went into the living room and was greeted by Dr. Hughes, "Glad you could make it, Will, you know of course Frances, and these," indicating the three fellow astronauts, "are your crew. This is Major Kyle Smith, Major Laureen Harden and Dr. Natalie Merryll".

All three members of his crew stood up as Dr. Hughes introduced them and Richards greeted all three members of his team in turn.

Dr. Hughes continued, "Please, all of you sit down and get acquainted, I'll fetch you a drink Will". Dr. Hughes then left the group alone in order to do so.

Richards decided to break the ice as it were and be the first to speak, "It's nice to put faces to names, even though I have seen your files. Still, I hope we can all get along, forty-eight hours till lift-off doesn't give us much time, to get acquainted, so lets make the best of it".

"No offence sir", it was Smith who spoke, "but we don't know much about you, only what the doctor told us".

"Privilege of rank I guess, considering our mission, needless to say, one can learn a lot more about someone in the flesh than on paper".

"I agree with you there Colonel", said Merryll, "Usually before any mission, the crew spend some time together and get to know each other, professionally and personally if regulations permit. In this way we familiarize ourselves so we can function better as a team, in understanding our strengths and weaknesses".

"Well as your Commander that's one aspect I'm going to fast track as a learn-as-you-go thing. We all know our jobs, we all know our fields of expertise so as far as this mission goes it's, think twice act once".

"Is that why there are two of us sir?" It was Harden who indicated Smith and herself, "on this mission to reconfigure the bomb".

"Yes, you see if one of you were incapacitated in any way..."

"...that would leave the other specialist to do the job," continued Dr. Hughes as he re-entered the living room with Richards' drink. He handed it over and continued, "this mission is of vital importance, and I cannot stress enough how imperative it is you succeed. There is no second chance. And, with the very real possibility that some, or all of you may never return..." Hughes left the sentence unfinished. "The apes of the future are dangerous and will shoot you on sight; the information gathered by us from Cornelius and Zira paints a horrific picture of how the apes treat all humans, especially if they know humans can talk".



"I'm assuming that upon completion of our objective we will return back to *our* Earth doctor?" Smith questioned.

"That..." continued Dr. Hughes, who was standing in front of the fireplace. "...will be the decision of Colonel Richards, who will assess the situation and determine how to proceed".

"I get the feeling there's more to this mission than meets the eye?" Merryll noted.

"Let me say this", responded Dr. Hughes, "Will has a great responsibility put on him by the ANSA and the United States Government. Any additional information needed to complete this mission will come from him in due time, on a need-to-know basis".

"Don't we need to know, now?" Harden said, not liking how the conversation was going.

"All you need to know now," said Richards, "is all of you have been hand picked by the doctor, and as your Commander, I will try my very best to see you safely returned to Earth barring death. If any of you feel you cannot proceed, no discredit will be on your records if you decide to op out".

His three fellow astronauts were silent as they took in what Richards had to say, but none made any further comment on the subject.

"Tomorrow I will be at my office finalizing the launch, if any of you wish to talk to me about tonight, please feel free to say what's on your minds", Dr. Hughes reminded everyone. "It's important to resolve any doubts in your minds if you are to fully comprehend and complete this vital mission to save our planet. The four of you will be Humanities final hope; the pressure to do your job will be enormous, but time will be on your side, remember that".

All four astronauts seemed to appreciate the doctor's gesture and his sincerity in regards to their concerns and any problems they might wish to resolve before the launch.

"Now, how about dinner?" he announced, lightening the mood, "I'm starved, let's go and eat, I believe roast duck is on the menu". Dr. Hughes concluded, who led the ravenous crew of the Nemesis into the dining room where the meal, his wife had prepared for them all, was waiting to be enjoyed.





Six

**CAPE KENNEDY, ANSA HEADQUARTERS  
2ND JUNE 1990**

Dr. Hughes had just finished a conversation with Major Smith who was concerned about why it was so important to launch before anyone had even had a chance to get to know his team-mates better.

The doctor had responded quite simply that due to the current political climatic, foreign powers might prevent the launch if it were known, and any pre-meditation of such a launch could be interpreted as an act of a pre-emptive strike against them; thus putting pressure on the President to abort the lift-off. It was imperative that the launch be executed in secret until such time as when the President decided to go public with the knowledge to belay any fears that might surface from not only the Eastern Powers but from those at home.

Not only that, he had explained, but there were certain pro-ape groups like '*The Simian Liberation Front*' that might try to stop them, thinking that it is better that apes inherit the Earth and that we should leave well enough alone. Such groups had been known to sabotage and infiltrate organizations to prevent any progress between human and ape, that might benefit all, and not just the few. In history there have been fanatics to a cause, which have been just or unjust depending on their point of view. These current events, which have been set upon us, could act as a catalyst for any crusade against what these fanatics truly do not understand, or perhaps didn't want to.

Smith left Dr. Hughes office feeling a little better after the talk, but still concerned about how he would handle himself with the rest of the crew... especially Richards. But with the launch scheduled for tomorrow he had the rest of the day to socialize with them at the local golf club, teeing off at 10 o'clock.

As Smith made his way down to the elevator he bumped into Harden. "On your way to see the doc?"

"Yep, what about you?"

"I've been, it was okay I guess, see you at the club".

"Sure". She promised, and then they went their separate ways.

Harden met Frances as she entered the office, at the dinner last night they had got on pretty well together, "Good morning".

"Good morning, how are you feeling?"

"Not bad, maybe better after the golf game, it's the boys verses the girls, Dr. Hughes' wife Barbara is going to join us".

"A classic battle of the sexes; men they never learn".

"I guess that's why we women have to teach them". Both women allowed themselves a little smile at the thought.

Frances buzzed the doctor on her intercom and after he acknowledged her, told Harden to enter his office.

"Please, sit down Laureen". Dr. Hughes greeted her.

"Thanks".

"So what can I do for you?"

"Will we... I, come back from this mission, it just seems to me it's a one way trip, how can the Nemesis re-launch itself without it's boosters and platform?"

"Good question", the doctor sat down in his chair. "You see Laureen that part of the mission detailing a return flight has been taken care of, Richards has all the information needed, which he will reveal to you in due course. You *can* come back, have no fear".

"I see... well what about these apes and those so-called mutant-human telepaths that we may encounter. The ones, General Whitaker told us about in our Briefing? I don't mind a little bit of danger, but it seems four humans may not be enough to do the job".

"True, but let me say this, the technology you and the rest of the crew will possess will be superior to theirs, because in that future there is no other technology to threaten you, and if used wisely the mission will be completed. Remember, in the future you will have time to reconfigure the bomb; and yes these mutant-human telepaths who may have access to the 'Alpha-Omega' may be a problem, but that too has been thought out. So hopefully they will be neutralized allowing for you and Smith to complete your assigned tasks. Please understand Laureen I cannot give out too much information about this mission and how you will be able to accomplish it. Trust is the key, but when you arrive back here on Earth in the future Colonel Richards will, as they say, lay all the cards on the table".

Harden had a worried look on her face, but she did understand what the doctor was trying to say. Basically security was the key before a launch, and Richards was the key in finding out more about the mission when they arrived back on Earth in the future. She just couldn't believe that she would be leaving all her friends and family behind. She had to come back, she must.

"All right doctor I understand, we just have to do what we have to do and hope for the best".

"Laureen, just take it one step at a time, Colonel Richards is a fine Commander and under his guidance you'll do fine; believe me. I hand picked all of you myself, so I should know, you're the best the ANSA has to offer".

"We should've had more time". Laureen said, still feeling concerned.

"Yes I agree, but the pressure to successfully get underway is enormous, especially since we don't even know when the reported 'Holocaust' will begin. Each day basically wastes time in our goal to right a wrong that shouldn't happen".

"Do you think the launch, when the word gets out, might be the cause of the Holocaust doctor?"

"Oh I certainly hope not, the launching of one ship should not be considered an act of war, but there are those who may think so and try to persuade others that it is. Power is a very addictive drug".

"So Richards will have the answers?"

"Yes, he will. I spoke to him privately last night to fully brief him on the mission, what to expect and what he has at his disposal to deal with and complete the mission. All is now ready, all is as it should be".

"I just don't like being left in the dark, that's all".

"I understand, truly I do, but this mission you are about to undertake will have profound consequences if you succeed..."

"...or if we fail?"

"If we are to fail, then perhaps it is God's will, but we have to try. We have to try to change that which we know is wrong, to try to save our planet. We cannot walk away, we cannot".

—\*—\*—

We cannot walk away, we cannot. That was what Dr. Hughes had said, thought Harden, as she exited the building for her golf game with the rest of the crew. Well I won't walk away from this golf game, the girls are gonna win.



## SEVEN

### CAPE KENNEDY, MISSION CONTROL 3RD JUNE 1990

All is as it should be, thought the Flight Director as he surveyed Mission Control for the launch. Everything seems to be normal, no hitch ups or delays for the final countdown. Everything seems to be going according to plan and that's the way I like it. "This is Mission Control at T-Minus sixty minutes from launch, all is green for go". Reported the Flight Director from his station. Dr. Hughes was watching the big view-screen from the launch room above; while personnel stationed at their computers were busy checking and rechecking their information. Each had an assigned task to complete to help ensure a successful launch. That could be observed from the launch room, behind the safety of a giant, transparent, observation window.

"Thank you Director", responded the doctor, as he switched off the Intercom. He then headed towards the observation window to watch the launch procedures. With him to watch the launch were his wife Barbara, Frances his secretary, Captain McBaine and General Whitaker who wouldn't miss this launch for the world, being as it was this world that was going to be saved... he hoped.

"Well ladies and gentlemen", said Dr. Hughes, "This is it. After ten years of hard work it all comes down to this". He extended his arm wide indicating all before them.

On the Mission Control view-screen as well as a smaller one in the launch room, they all could see the Nemesis at the launch site. This sleek and majestic metal bird to the stars would carry and fly the hopes and dreams of Humanity, and fulfil a destiny awaiting a salvation of final reckoning for all humans and apes alike.

Around the launch site security teams were making their final rounds. Sirens began to sound to clear the launch bays and to secure the area for final lockdown.

—\*—\*—

"T-minus thirty minutes and counting, all is still green for go". The Flight Director announced.

Around the launch site all was silent. The Nemesis was poised, like a needle. Observers waited with baited breath to see it pierce the blue blanket of sky covered clouds and reach the blackness of space... and beyond. Media reports started to flood the airwaves; questioning the reasons behind another attempt to reach Alpha Centauri, but little did they know the real truth.

The President himself was avoiding the media frenzy until the Nemesis was well underway. A White House Spokesman said that the President would answer any questions regarding the purpose of the Nemesis to appease any fears and misconceptions. Little did the public know that the President himself was being bombarded by calls from various ambassadors, wanting an explanation as to why the Icarus Program was never cancelled as was reported all those years ago and what was the purpose of this current spaceflight?

—\*—\*—

**10**

T-Minus ten minutes and counting.

**9**

The four astronauts were suited up and seated for lift off.

**8**

“Mission Control”, radioed Richards, “all instruments are green”.

**7**

They won’t enter their hibernation cells until they pass the moon.

**6**

Then, once the on-board computers were set, their journey will begin.

**5**

The ship will head for Alpha Centauri to help activate its time warp.

**4**

A warp in space and time, to return home to Earth’s future.

**3**

A future awaiting the Nemesis crew, to a past destiny unknown.

**2**

“This is Mission Control, good luck and God’s speed”.

**1**

The Nemesis crew tensed up and prepared to meet the G-forces to follow.

**LIFT OFF!**

A white metallic bird with specks of green, red and blue, guided by cloud and light against a blue backdrop, heads towards a future with man's past. A mistake that needs to be corrected to prevent the ultimate tragedy, so the next phase in man's redemption can begin.

As the Nemesis breaks away from Earth's orbit and heads towards the moon the crew of the Nemesis make their final checks in preparation for the deep long sleep ahead.

"Mission Control", Richards announced, "All instrumentation is green and clear".

"This is Mission Control to Nemesis, message received and understood. Your trajectory heading is still green".

Richards turned to the rest of the crew, "Okay, when we're past the moon we'll make final preparations for hibernation. The computers will follow the last known co-ordinates of Taylor's ship and compensate for the time difference his ship experienced. In this way we should be able to arrive back on Earth at least between seven hundred and fifty to one thousand years before Taylor's ship arrives".

"And hopefully fully awake before we crash, right?" Harden questioned.

"That's right, but don't worry, when we pass the moon in a day's time, we will program the send and receive signals on both silo beacons, one located on the far side and the other at the satellite silo itself. The satellite silo beacon will then activate and launch the SAT-DS1 towards Earth into her orbit. Once done it will locate our approaching ship, activate the on-board computers and help guide the Nemesis into Earth orbit, then wake us once successful..."

"What happens if we're not?" Smith asked.

"Then I guess we crash, without waking up".

"Beautiful, just beautiful".

"Now", continued Richards, "until then, the two silo beacons will be in stand-by mode awaiting this ship's signal for activation upon our return into the solar system, any questions?"

"I guess it's too late to turn back", responded Harden, "I mean I think I left the gas on in the kitchen".

*The bird of fire has burned its wings; the flames alight with an unknown breeze. Gæa bids farewell, but cries not a tear.*

*The Phoenix will return, "My bird of paradise" she whispers.*

*"The feather of life rests upon your back, it is the way of the world"*



## EIGHT

### **WASHINGTON DC, THE WHITE HOUSE 4TH JUNE 1990**

In the Oval Office the President was at his desk going over his speech for the public that he would present outside the White House in just a few minutes. With him were several of his advisors, the head of the CIA John Danielson and some military brass, including General Whitaker.

"Well Whitaker, what's the story so far with the Nemesis?" The President asked.

The General was standing near the President's desk as he responded, "All is going according to plan, Mr. President. The Nemesis is, at this very moment, passing the moon and is on its way towards Alpha Centauri following the exact course of Taylor's ship. Dr. Hughes has informed me that the Nemesis should be able to re-create the 'Faster-Than-Light' velocity needed to enter the Hasslein Curve in Space-Time to arrive in Earth's future as predicated. Right now the crew are preparing for hibernation, and then the ship will be on automatic for the rest of the journey into deep space".

"This better work Karl, hell! I received a lot of crap from the UN when I went public about our current military capability including that of the Eastern Powers". The President was himself becoming concerned about world opinion on America's own military capabilities.

"And what the hell are they going to do?" interjected Danielson, who was sitting comfortably opposite the President's desk, "What can they do? In a few hours they will have to admit that they either have or haven't got equivalent 'Doomsday' bombs to our own. My best bet is that they'll admit they have because we've got one. They can't deny it because that would mean we have the power to control the world and dictate world foreign policies, hell they're scared shitless. I bet you right now they're crying for mommy, wanting to know where their toys are".

Some of the advisors showed a little smirk of a smile at this comment, even the President couldn't control himself. "Always stating the obvious, aren't you Danielson?"

"It's the only thing they can do Mr. President".

"You know", said one of the Generals in the room, "how will the world react when the Nemesis comes back? I mean, when its mission is completed? Even if the public accept that they went to Alpha Centauri, where's the proof?"

“Good question”, said Whitaker, “but we have that covered. The simple answer is this... we have gathered enough information on Alpha Centauri at present to deceive the public...”

“Not if the Eastern Powers launch their own ship to find out the truth”.

“Don’t even go there”, commented the President, “let’s handle one problem at a time, shall we?”

“Besides”, added Danielsonn, “according to my sources the Eastern Powers don’t have enough finances. Their economy is on the edge and their resources aren’t as good as ours. Even if they were to build their ship they wouldn’t be able to get it off the ground. It’d rust from lack of further government and private backing”.

“Whitaker, what are the chances that the Nemesis will find more than one ‘Doomsday’ bomb, especially those belonging to the Eastern Powers?” the President asked changing the subject.

“Well, it is possible, but that will depend on if the Eastern Powers reveal it today or not. If so, I briefed Colonel Richards just in case, and with the help of the SAT-DS1 he’ll find them if any exist but according to our information the bomb that Taylor detonated was ours, so I can only surmise that there were no others”.

“But there’s still a possibility right?” asked Danielsonn.

“Sure, but that doesn’t mean they’re active either. Two thousand years is a long time. Perhaps their bombs aren’t as good as ours, and thus have deteriorated over time rendering them inoperative”.

“Okay”, said the President, as he rose from his chair and walked to the window to have a quick look outside. “It seems we have all the bases covered at this point gentlemen; so I will tell the world media that the Nemesis launched and is headed for Alpha Centauri as planned. The Eastern Powers will naturally observe the ship’s departure and flight plan and they will see the truth”.

At this point there was a polite knock at the door and the President’s Aide walked in with a piece of paper in his hand. He approached the President and whispered in his ear and gave him the paper; then walked out of the room.

The President read what was before him and then addressed the group. “Gentlemen, news has just arrived that the Eastern Powers have gained two new allies: Pakistan and India”.

“You’ve got to be joking”, said Danielsonn, “that’s like mixing oil and water. Those two countries can’t even agree to wipe each other’s asses let alone give each other the toilet paper to help them do it”.



“Nevertheless, it seems that Russia and China have made an offer that they couldn’t refuse. No matter, I was afraid that this would happen anyway, it looks like to me, gentlemen, that the powers that be are—shall we say—pairing off. Unbeknownst to you all I myself have had secret talks with Canada and Taiwan. If they join us things could get very interesting”.

“Okay if we’re going in that direction”, continued Whitaker, “what about Australia, The United African League, Arabia and Europe. Hell, Cuba could be a problem in itself”.

“I don’t like it anymore than you do but if the situation escalates into who goes into bed with who, the fact is we need to keep ourselves open so we can defuse any fears and problems that might arise. As long as we can continue talking the bedroom door remains open for compromise and understanding. The world is not at war yet, gentlemen; and I’d like to keep it that way. I don’t want to be known as the President who started it all, not on my watch. This ‘Holocaust’ of the future that’s going to be, is not going to happen today or any other day while I’m alive, is that clear?” The President said defiantly and with confidence.

All those in the room agreed. World tensions were high and on the alert. The President walked from the window to his desk and gathered the speech he was going to use in front of the world media. The one thing that will be a certainty, the President thought as he left the room, is that the world will be a different place tomorrow. Hell, it was different now, like the changing of the seasons but there was one difference. Man’s ability to kill never changed, only his way of doing so did; from the stone axe to the gun to the nuclear missile.

History was made from war, the history of Man was war, and history was all that will be left over from war.

*The burning pages of history flame their final embrace.*

*Releasing its blackened ember words into the wind from the books that have recorded the last testament of Man’s heritage on this Earth.*

*Never to be read again.*

*To the last I drink with thee the red wine of war, to the last drop.*



**DEEP SPACE, NEMESIS SPACECRAFT  
SHIP TIME 29TH OCTOBER 1990  
EARTH TIME 6TH MARCH 2763**

The blackness of space is a cold and silent witness to all that happens within its vision. But she embraces all with her eternal sight, she sees all, she knows all, she feels all.

And yet she is never lonely for the company that those wishing to seek her need. The loneliness of space is full of mystery, wonder and knowledge.

A knowledge embedded within the seed of life and death. The darkness of youth that can never age, the light of a child that can never grow, a touch of a woman that can never feel.

So many suns, so many stars, so many galaxies, all vying for the attention of a small, insignificant speck of dust travelling within the lonely sea of tranquillity, a tranquillity infected by chaos of the unknown.

A tranquillity broken by its presence, searching for a way home, searching for its destiny, a destiny that could change its very existence, this speck of dust, this streak of light.

A light threading its way back from the oblivion beyond the depths that blanket space and time, a time beyond space, where the silent watch its every move, where the stars themselves watch with anticipation.

Do not leave us, they say, in thought. Do we not fulfil your dreams of desire? We are here to please your curious eyes, let us show you the secrets of our existence. Let us give so you may receive, please do not run away, come back—come back.

Come back it will, but not today, not now, it must first seek out a new desire, an old friend that has been lost within the sea, an island in the sky, a yellow light calling out its name.

*I call upon thee to come out from my womb and deliver yourself into my arms, let me caress your body with mine and let the warmth of our souls be as one, the mother and child must awaken, but as yet only sleep away the dreams that must be.*

It is cold in space; it is silent in space, a void without warmth, a void without feeling. And yet it soothes and caresses with a gentle hand of the solar wind, pushing, guiding, directing, searching.

Revealing a pulsing heart beating with life, which has slowed within eternity, one beat a minute. Four hearts, four beats, four eternities, four destinies, four humans caught within the web of life and death.

As they sleep, as they dream the deep dream, sleep the deep sleep, to only awaken when the time is right. They say you cannot dream once you're in hibernation, or if you do, only one image is frozen upon your mind.

One picture, one frame of colour, shape, form and light etched within your mind that you will see over and over again. Or perhaps it is a scene that replays itself in slow motion, recording every detail, every movement, every sound, and every sensation.

You cannot forget, you will not forget. Memories. They say also that you can recall any memory your heart desires, but only if you can remember, and Man can remember much if he wants to.

Including the nightmares of a past life, a present life, that is, that was. Can you remember? Do you remember? Will you ever forget? Do you want to? The mind likes to play tricks, likes to play games with your memory.

There is one memory Gæa cannot forget, she has cast out four of her children in search of a memory, a memory for a better time to return to her, she awaits, she ponders, she listens, she understands.

She is listening to the sounds of the universe, hearing the cosmic voices sing. The making of music, hearing the sad but happy rhythms of her fellow brethren, a symphony of life and light, of shadow and shades, of darkness and depth.

*Listen to my voice; listen to my song as I sing to you my own rejoice.*

Only space can hear the internal clicking of the Nemesis computers as it monitors itself, its surroundings, and its precious cargo of four humans in its care, all in a state of deep sleep, all is well, all awaiting the awakening to come.

As the Nemesis journeys across the vastness of space and time, it is a lonely echo within an endless cavern of sound, a resonance that is heard throughout the universe, a reverberation of a soulless soul seeking unity, seeking home.

And contained within its metallic womb are four souls, four hopes of Humanity that will change the course of history yet to be, two men and two women.

*Into the depths of hell will walk the souls in a heavenly wake.*

But where they are going, Humanity, as they know it will not exist, instead they will enter a world that has become a nightmare of the bizarre, man will be the animal, the ape his master.

And they themselves will become freaks of nature. If caught; to be studied, to be dissected; to be used as target practice and if they're really lucky, to be stuffed and put in an ape museum for display.

Before the Nemesis, upon deep space's horizon of infinite blackness, lies a distant star, that star is Sol; a shining beacon of light calling it home, towards a future past unknown, calling for its children.

Calling.

Calling.

Calling.

*A world in turmoil, a universe in chaos, the bird is aflame, a streak of light playing in the darkness.*

*The Phoenix returns in a blaze of glory, full of life and love, filled with the promise of better things.*

*The feather of truth is but a flight away, the revelations begin again, to seek the journey again.*

*"Oh bird of paradise come back to my side, in joy of beauty do you please my thoughts"*

*In darken folds that flow within the ripples of time.*

*The passage is ever near, the chosen path, ever so close.*

*Alas I hear your cry, you are home again, you are home again.*

*Helios greets the long lost wanderer, for Gæa has found her child.*

*While Diana looks on with a jealous eye.*



TEN

**NEMESIS SPACECRAFT**  
**SHIP TIME 5TH NOVEMBER 1990**  
**EARTH TIME 10TH APRIL 3115**

The Nemesis has come home once again; it left behind the hopes and fears of all those who built it, those whose legacy laid in its future. As the ship entered the outer solar system, its on-board computers were re-activated. The computers meticulously check and recheck the ship's internal systems for final approach to the planet Earth, an Earth, not of its making but an Earth alien to itself.

Then satisfied that all was as it should be, if a computer could ever be satisfied, it transmitted an activation signal, directed towards the moon. A barren desolate moon that has been immune to the unfolding events the Earth has been through, and to be honest is still witnessing.

The signal travelling at almost the speed of light reached the silo beacon on the lip horizon that separated the far and near sides of the moon. This beacon built within a depression named Schlüter, a prominent crater near the Grimaldi Basin, in turn relayed the signal to the satellite silo beacon beside its underground silo that housed a ready made SAT-DS1 satellite for launch located within the Ptolemaeus Basin on the near side.

The signal activated the sleeping metal eye from its protected abode, and with a silent whoosh it launched itself towards the Earth into the awaiting gravity pull that will lock it into geo-synchronized orbit. Seventy-two hours later the satellite had unfurled its solar panels to receive additional power from the sun. Once done it began self-checking its on-board systems for full operational readiness; it completed the self-analysis within six hours making sure all was in working order.

Then it relayed a signal back to the awaiting Nemesis' on-board computers, which in turn acknowledged the satellite's activation and position in Earth orbit. The two computers now began communicating between each other for the next phase of commands.

By the time the Nemesis reached the planet Mars it had slowed down in speed and guided by the satellite began its final approach to Earth. An Earth no longer recognized, an Earth no longer as it once knew, an Earth as alien as the planetary systems it passed to come back home; but whose home, whose Earth?

With calculated precession the Nemesis had now passed the moon and was heading towards the Earth with programmed caution. A caution realized to protect the four astronauts in its care, four soon to be awakened souls that will hopefully change the course of Earth history and maybe that of Human and Apekind. A history into the unknown that will, in time be known, to all who care to remember, to all who want to remember, to all who do not want to forget.

Within minutes with the help of the satellite the Nemesis fired its retro-rockets to guide itself into Earth orbit. To a poet it was akin to a white bird gliding in serenity above a blue ocean of peace, an ocean filled with life, a life without measure, an abundance of opportunities with the occasional wave and wind to direct its ever fulfilling thoughts. And what thoughts, what secrets can a world bequeath? From the phoenix, that never died in the flames to be reborn again?

The Nemesis was now in position and with reconfirmation from the satellite it began the process of reawakening from hibernation four human souls within its womb. Silently and without effort four glass seals opened to reveal from deep sleep four healthy breathing astronauts.

Richards was the first to awaken, he slowly opened his eyes and began to move his fingers and then his hands. He cautiously breathed in and then out letting his lungs take in oxygen that now craved for more. Getting up slowly he moved into a sitting position in his cell resting, waiting and watching the others of his crew to do the same. It seemed only minutes before that he had fallen asleep, now to be awakened again. Only this time it was different, this time it was another time, another place, another Earth, another reality.

Richards got up slowly to survey his ship and his crew. "Everyone all right?" He questioned, his voice slightly hoarse and dry from his deep sleep.

His crew: Smith, Harden and Merryll were all on their feet by now checking themselves over.

"Let me get my med-kit to make sure there are no ill-effects". Merryll said, as she walked to the aft of the ship to get her medical equipment from storage.

"The only ill-effects I'm feeling are my wobbly legs". Smith responded.

"Don't worry, you'll survive", Richards told him, "Harden, you okay?"

"I'm fine, just clearing my head a bit".

"When you're up to it can you check out the ship's systems; Smith go help Merryll find a cure for your wobbly legs".

As the crew went about their assigned tasks Richards followed Harden to the fore of the ship, while Merryll and Smith were aft.

"Beginning systems check", Harden said, as she sat down on the right seat as Richards took the left at the front of the ship.

Richards automatically looked at the ship's chronometer and he sensed that his crew, who were now all together, were waiting for him to give them the answer to the question that was on all their lips, and as he looked around he saw that he was right.

"Ship Time: 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1990, Earth Time: 13<sup>th</sup> of April 3115, about eight hundred and fifty years short of Taylor's arrival back to Earth as Dr. Hughes predicted; so we have plenty of time to deal with the bomb, okay, let's get to work".

After about an hour all the crew were done with the preliminarily checking of the ship and Merryll had declared herself and the others fit from their hibernation. They were all gathered near the fore of the ship waiting for Richards to speak. Before them looking out of the front view port, lay below them the Earth in all its dangerous beauty, a serene sphere that hides a sinister past.

A past that is now the future.

A future with an unknown past.

The nightmare now begins, but this time the eyes are wide-awake.

Richards slowly composed himself and looked at his crew. "Okay, I know you all have been patient, so what I am about to tell you will I hope clear any questions you have about this mission and what is expected from you, so here it goes".

**TETHOS VILLAGE, VIRDON AND BURKE'S HUT  
10TH APRIL 3115**

Three days before the Nemesis would arrive in Earth orbit; Virdon, Burke and Galen were sitting down and resting in their hut after a hard days work in the field preparing for this years crops. Fifteen years ago General Urko has stopped pursuing them due to ill health and thus had lost all interest in bringing the fugitives to justice; well that was the story anyway, whether it was true or not was another question and considering what could be believed coming from Central City or Urko himself, it was anyone's guess. Besides the trail went cold, Urko couldn't find them anymore, it was like they had vanished into thin air. Maybe Urko had gotten tired of trying to find the fugitives, but it wasn't like him to just give up, it wasn't in his ape blood. There had to be another reason.

Along with the now ex-fugitives if there could be such a thing, Galen's cousin Lucian, a chimp of about twenty years old, was helping to prepare the evening meal. He came from the village of Tethos not far from Virdon and Burke's hut; he came, not because he'd like to help around the place, but because he liked the stories that the astronauts told about their time and what it was like when man ruled the world before the apes took over, as well as the occasional amusing story of how they outwitted Urko and the late Councillor Zaius.

"You know", Virdon said, "next year's crop will be better than this years, I reckon".

"Well it better be", Burke added, "with all the work we've been doing I would hate to start over again".

"Oh, I second that", Galen responded, as he rubbed his lower back a little, "I'm not getting any younger you know, in chimp years that is".

"Relax Galen you're not that old", said Lucian consolingly, as he began placing plates of food on the table for the evening meal, "besides I can help, as can the rest of my family if need be. Ever since you came here with your friends, Tethos has prospered under their guidance to generate and increase our produce. In fifteen years Tethos has become a healthy, growing community again".

"That maybe so, as long as Central City doesn't know how and by what mean?"

"Don't worry, you'll be safe here, Urko stopped looking long ago and considering how far east we are from Central City, why bother searching this far?"



"Well, I have to admit we've been lucky so far". Burke added.

"After fifteen years, sure, no problems".

"We've been lucky because we've kept a low profile, and not only that because Urko himself gave up on us due to his health..."

"...and old age", Burke continued, "don't forget old age Alan".

"Okay old age, but still, didn't I hear that his son Crasis has been made General now and taken over Urko's duties..."

"...and Urko himself is now a Councillor on the High Council?"

"Yes", said Lucian, "news came in the other day from Central City, but Councillor Dr. Xavian a cousin to the late Councillor Zaius is still the head of the council itself".

"I'm sure Urko doesn't like that". Galen commented.

"Isn't Crasis a bit young to be a General of the armed forces anyway?" Burke questioned.

"Well in our society—and if you have influential friends, or in this case parents—one can gain office to any position if the price is right, so to speak. But in general the son does follow his father's profession, and Crasis has proven to be an able army Officer from what I've heard".

"I wonder if Crasis is like his father?" Viridon wondered.

"If he is, then we better start packing our bags and head for Rio". Burke responded with a little smile.

"Rio, what is Rio?" questioned Lucian; as he sat down to join the others at the table.

"It's a place where criminals and fugitives like ourselves would go to hide from the law. Where money talks and where there are lots and lots of dancing girls".

"Well let's not jump the gun just yet", said Viridon, "besides, if Crasis does make a move to find us, we'll have be ready".

"Just, when I was getting comfortable". Galen commented with a sigh.

"Don't worry Galen old buddy, we'll catch a cab this time". Burke said with a smile.

"We'll worry about it tomorrow", said Viridon, "for now, let's eat up and get some well deserved sleep, and then we can see Clavis in the morning about any news from Central City".

As the four of them ate their meals the night slowly crept in and surrounded the hut in a haze of black with only the light from the windows breaking the darkness beyond. It was almost time for bed but Virдон decided to go outside and drink his tea before he retired for the night.

Fifteen years ago during the fugitives travels, Virдон found a mutant strain of tea leaves that he was able to cultivate at Tethos. The village was high enough in altitude to allow successful growth of the plant and thus with Pete's help, he was able to teach the villagers, both ape and human, to plant and grow more tea for harvesting. The drinking of tea with or without milk caught on and Tethos was able to export the bushels of tea to other villages nearby for successful trade. The Prefect named Clavis, asked the fugitives to stay and was willing to hide them from Urko, as well as assist with the harvesting to produce better quality tea, and turn Tethos' economy around. Now after fifteen years, Tethos' industry was a success story and the villagers were living more comfortably than before, ape and human.

As Virдон looked up at the clear night sky, he began viewing the stars as he did almost every night, but this time he noticed something different, a small twinkle of light moving across his vision of view. But it disappeared under a small cloud for a few seconds, and then it reappeared again continuing going straight across. Virдон couldn't believe it, but he was sure it wasn't a meteor or a comet, because there was no tail; it had to be the only thing it could be.

Virдон ran back into the hut to get Pete and show him before that twinkle of light disappeared, but the twinkle of light in Virдон's eye was just as bright and it was far from disappearing.

**CENTRAL CITY, DR. XAVIAN'S HOUSE  
10TH APRIL 3115**

Councillor Urko was on his horse riding on his way to see Xavian to discuss a plan that he had. It involved himself, his son Crasis and concerned the fugitives. The night air was a bit chilly for his taste and he hurried himself as best he could. Everything was coming together, he thought, now it was time to strike. His patience would now be rewarded after all these years, and soon, very soon, his life long tragedy of errors would be at an end. Urko arrived just after dinner, in this way Xavian would be more receptive to his views, after dinner conversations were always the best time to discuss plans of any concern that Urko might have, in this way he had the upper hand in getting what he wanted. Even so, being on the Council was no guarantee that his interests were met, now that he, himself was a Councillor, the late Zaius and now Xavian would attest to that but no matter, this time he would have his own way, this time he must. Urko knocked on Xavian's front door and a human servant opened it. Before the human could speak Urko brushed past him, "I'm here to see Dr. Xavian, is he in his study?"

The servant just nodded, he didn't know what else to do.

"Well don't just stand there, close the door, it's chilly outside". Urko growled, as he looked at the human and continued on; humans, he thought, nothing but pests with no intelligence whatsoever, just the way it should be, but then if he had his way there would be no humans at all, and he had a cure for that too.

Urko politely knocked on the study door and waited for a response. "Enter".

Dr. Xavian was behind his desk looking over various reports and letters as Urko entered. Xavian glanced up "Ah, Urko I had a feeling I'd see you tonight".

"I didn't know you were a doctor in-what's it called? ESP as well Xavian".

"I find it has its uses now and again Urko". Xavian said, with a smile.

"It's nice to know you are in a happy mood tonight if you can make remarks like that".

"I'm always happy to see a fellow Councillor".

"And sarcastic as well".

“What can I do for you Urko?”

Urko began to slowly pace up and down, this helped him collect his thoughts, “Xavian, for the past thirty years I have been pursuing three fugitives, two astronauts named Viridon and Burke and one renegade chimp named Galen, and every time I came close to capturing them I failed, fifteen years ago I decided to stop trying to find them and developed a new strategy; and it paid off; and for those fifteen years I have known where they are, in the village called Tethos”.

“And how do you know all this, Urko?” enquired Xavian, although he basically knew how anyway.

“Simple, tea, Xavian, tea. Before Viridon and Burke came, tea didn’t exist, now everybody seems to be drinking it... even you, Xavian”. Urko quickly looked at Xavian for conformation.

“I find it relaxes my nerves somewhat”.

“When I discovered that Tethos was exporting this tea, I naturally made some discreet enquiries...”

“Naturally”.

“...and through my informants...”

“...spies”. Xavian corrected.

“...I was able to make positive identification of the fugitives. But instead of trying to capture them, I waited and they stayed and in so doing I have been able to keep my eyes on them, watching, waiting, waiting for the right moment to take them unawares; and that time is now Xavian, now”. Urko had stopped pacing and turned to face Xavian for his response.

“But why did you wait so long?” Xavian asked, who was curious himself at Urko’s tactics.

“I wanted to make sure that the fugitives felt I was no longer in pursuit of them and that I lost interest; in this way they would let their guard down and perhaps settle somewhere, where I could observe their every move until I was ready to recapture them”.

“And now you are?”

“Yes, now I am ready”.

“And then?”

“And then, we kill them”.

“No Urko”, continued Xavian, raising his voice a little, “we question them, we find out where they came from, how they got here, what kind of society they came from, and if others like them will follow? That’s what must be asked, that’s what must be done, then, and only then when the council is satisfied, then, you can do what you like with them”.

“Why must we make things difficult for ourselves Xavian? They are a threat, they need to be dealt with”.

“Yes, I agree, but all in good time Urko, all in good time, but till then we must find out everything we can so we can prepare ourselves if others of their kind show, that is what we must do; Zaius, rest his soul, left instructions for me to continue his work in this area where these astronauts were concerned. Information Urko, information must be gathered if we are to prepare ourselves for others of their kind invading our world”. Xavian now stood up and walked around his desk to face Urko, tensions began to rise.

“The only good human! Is a dead human!” Urko said, voicing the remark very strongly.

“Perhaps, but we need them to survive, as you well know”. Xavian replied, looking into Urko eyes.

“I’m going to Tethos, Xavian, and I’m taking Crasis with me and a division of our best troopers”. Urko informed him, as he began to move towards the door.

“And I will accompany you”.

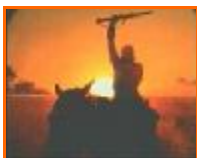
“There is...”

“There is a need Urko”, Xavian interrupted quickly, “because Tethos lies to the east just before the eastern Forbidden Zone, and there have been reports coming through that there are ape settlements beyond it. Which means it will have to be investigated, which means two divisions of troopers, plus supply wagons for the journey through the Forbidden Zone; or are you too old for that?” Xavian finished, with a strongly voiced tone.

“I am never too old for anything Xavian, anything”, Urko turned around once again and began walking out, and then he stopped and again looked at Xavian. “Be prepared for an early start in the morning Xavian”.

“I’ll be ready, don’t you worry Urko”.

And with that Urko grunted and left the study in a huff, mumbling to himself as he walked away to make preparations to Tethos and beyond. Leaving Xavian to ponder about Urko, his son and the mission ahead of him. This trip promises to be very interesting he thought, very interesting indeed.

**VIRDON AND BURKE'S HUT, A SHINING BEACON IN THE NIGHT  
10TH APRIL 3115**

"Alan..." began Pete sleepishly.

"Just come outside Pete before it's too late". Virdon whispered, who was waking Burke from his sleep.

"Okay, okay, I'm coming what's the rush". Burke responded, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

"You'll see Pete, hurry".

Burke got out of his bed and quickly followed Virdon outside. "Now", indicated Virdon, "where is it? Oh there, there it is". Virdon pointed out towards the starry night sky. "See Pete that moving dot".

"No—wait, yeah, I see it", then after a moment of watching it, "Alan?"

"There's only one explanation Pete, you and I both know it".

"A satellite?"

"A satellite, Pete, and the way home". Virdon said, happily.

"Why didn't we notice it before? Why now?" Burke said, more mystified than before.

"Because it was probably only launched within the last twenty-four hours, which means Pete there are people out there advanced enough to help us get back". Virdon said; feeling more excited.

"Or try to". Burke questioned.

"All right, try to, but don't you know what this means? It's hope Pete, and we need to find that hope, and there's only one place I can of".

"Don't say it Alan, please don't say what I think you're going to say".

"Pete, we need to find those people and the only place I can think of that the satellite may have been launched from, would be Cape Kennedy".

"Alan, Cape Kennedy is not the only launch site in America, or in the world for that matter; the satellite could've come from anywhere?"

"Sure, I know that, but we can start there, and if nothing else, maybe we can at least find an answer."

"I don't know Al, Cape Kennedy may be in ruins for all we know... to successfully -"

"We have to try Pete", said Virdon, interrupting Burke, "maybe we can fix a computer or two, and try and make contact with those responsible. That satellite didn't launch by itself Pete, you and I both know it".

"Alan, we are not as young as we use to be, and if, and I say *if* we go, don't you think Urko and his son Crasis will come after us?" Burke reminded Virdon, getting concerned, especially at the prospect of being hunted and chased again.

"They haven't found us in fifteen years..."

"...because we stayed put, out of sight, out of harms way". Burke continued.

"Pete, we've taken chances before, it's time to take that one more chance, that one more risk to find the people responsible for that satellite".

"What about Galen?"

"What about Galen?" responded Galen, as he walked out of the shadows from the front of the hut towards Virdon and Burke "It seems to me that another journey is about to begin, another mystery to solve, another chance of freedom, another way home, isn't that right?"

"Galen, it's our second chance; do you still want to come with us, back to our time?"

"I remembered saying yes once, and I still do; I can never really be free here, but maybe in your world I can, maybe in your world I can educate your people about my world if they'll listen".

"Yeah pal-o'-mine, they'll listen, and maybe just maybe they'll learn something". Burke commented, who still glanced occasionally at the satellite as it finally disappeared out of view.

"Okay then it's settled, we'll leave in the morning and head towards the eastern Forbidden Zone and then make our way across towards what was once known as Cape Kennedy". Virdon said, who was much relieved and reassured that all three of them were now going.

"Cape Kennedy?" queried Galen, "That's where the two of you were launched into space to go to Alpha Centauri wasn't it".

"That's right Galen, and that satellite could've come from there as well, it's our best shot so far to explain where it came from".

"And the way home?"

“Yes Galen, and a way home; and even if we get there and there’s nothing to find, we can come back here”. Virдон said, with a slight note of sadness in his voice.

“Alan, I just thought of something, considering the distance we have to travel from here to the Cape; it’s going to be a very long walk?”

“I know Pete, I calculate approximately between ten to twelve weeks, but it has to be done if we are to find out who launched that satellite”.

“Lucian will want to come too, you know”. Galen added.

“He’ll just have to stay behind Galen to look after things while we’re gone, and besides it’ll be too dangerous for him, Lord knows what’s out there, Lucian doesn’t have the experience that we do”. Virдон replied, concerned and disappointed as he was, but Lucian, he thought, was young and ignorant of the dangers that could be faced in the eastern Forbidden Zone and beyond. It was best that he remain behind and his parents would also agree on that.

All three friends turned around and walked back towards the hut, Burke put his arm around Galen’s shoulders. “Listen Galen, when we get back home, I’ll take you to the best restaurant in town, they have the best steak...”

“...but I’m a vegetarian”.

“The best vegetarian steak...”

Virдон who was behind the two smiled to himself as he, Burke and Galen walked into the hut still talking with amazement on Galen’s face, as Pete explained about vegetarian meat. Yes, tomorrow will begin a new journey of hope, Virдон contemplated, if we do find something, anything it will be worth it, to finally go back home, and with any luck, I can be reunited with my family again after all these years.

Virдон turned around before going inside the hut to join the others, and looked up at the night sky once more, please Lord, let it work out this time, let us find our way home, back to our world, our families and friends.

Unbeknown to all was that Lucian, who had left after dinner, had come back to hear more stories and was hiding in the bushes. He heard every word spoken and decided that he also, will join, even if covertly. For this, he thought, was an adventure not to be missed. Lucian quickly ran back home to write a note for his parents and pack a few things for the journey.



**CENTRAL CITY, GENERAL CRASIS' HOUSE  
10TH APRIL 3115**

After leaving Xavian's home, Urko headed for his son's place of residence. Of all the ignorant gall, thought Urko, there's only one reason why Xavian wanted to go tomorrow, and it's not because of some so-called rumours of other ape settlements beyond the eastern Forbidden Zone. Xavian wanted to see the fugitives for himself; ever since Zaius died, Xavian had followed his instructions on what to do and what to expect from these astronauts from the past. Well he had waited for thirty years to get these humans, another week or two wouldn't matter, and then he'll kill them and that will be that. The only problem left to deal with will be Galen; Xavian in his attempt to gain more influence as Chief Councillor within the High Council, he had reinstated some of the Lawgiver's commandments, one being the most sacred of all.

*'Ape shall Not Kill Ape'*

And because of that, Galen would be spared the death penalty. Urko had to admit that the ancient laws had been waning somewhat over the years, and Xavian decided to re-introduce them again to give the ape some form of civilization, some form of decency and a goal to better the ideals in simian life in an ordered society. Well Galen will have to be Xavian's problem, but, as for Virdon and Burke, they were his problem with only one solution.

Urko arrived at his son's house, which was in the middle of the city; in this way Crasis had easy access to any trouble spots within and could easily deal with them if the need arose. Urko dismounted and tethered his horse, when done he knocked on the front door, after a moment Cleia, Crasis' wife answered.

"Well hello Urko, how are you? Please come in".

"Thank you Cleia, but I'm afraid this isn't a social call, is Crasis in his study?"

"Yes he is, we just finished dinner, would you like something to eat? It's still warm".

"No thank you Cleia, I've already eaten", Urko lied to not upset her, "I'll just see my son, and then be on my way".

"Very well then I'll go to bed, good night". Cleia said, and then she departed before Urko could reply.

Cleia was a good wife thought Urko, always nice and polite and very understanding when it came to Crasis' work in making Central City and the other provinces safe and protected. It was a good match that would hopefully lead to him becoming a grandfather but he had other thoughts to attend to first before thinking about the future of his family; for he had another future to fulfil, his own destiny. Urko knocked on the study door, and then heard his son's response to enter.

"Ah, father how nice to see you", said Crasis, who got up from behind his desk to greet him, "did it go well with Xavian? I've got everything prepared for tomorrow".

"Well you better make some more preparations Crasis, an extra division of troopers and some more supply wagons", said Urko angrily, "because that fool Xavian is coming with us".

"For two humans and an ape, I don't understand he'll see them soon enough".

"Apparently it isn't enough, not only is he interested in them but according to him there have been reports from the other side of the eastern Forbidden Zone of other ape settlements, so we have to investigate".

"The eastern Forbidden Zone, yes I have been following these so-called reports". Crasis said, who picked up a scroll that had the information, which he tried to show his father, then put it back down on his desk, as Urko waved it away.

"I am not interested in reports, I'm only interested in those fugitives, then if you or Xavian want to go exploring, by all means do so, but not before I have them within my grasp, do you understand Crasis?" Urko said, voiced raised in excitement.

"I understand father".

"Crisis", said Urko softly, "these humans, these astronauts, as they call themselves, are a danger to us, they must be killed for the safety of all concerned, to preserve our way of life and keep our humans in their place, if word got out that humans are equal to us, then questions will be asked, rebellion and dissention will form. As long as we control the humans and they known their place, peace will be the result, and everything will be as it should be. For thirty years I have waited for justice, I am not going to be denied now".

"Very well father, as you say justice must be served, I'll make sure of that, in whatever way I see fit".

"Good my son, good, we have an early start tomorrow, so you better see to Xavian's wishes at once".

"I understand. All will be ready".

Urko hugged his son and left him to do his work for tomorrow, as he mounted his horse to head back to his home he thought about his son and what a fine General he was becoming, he's still wet behind the ears so to speak, but I'll fix that, I always do.

Crasis watched his father ride off from his study window, then turned around and gathered some scrolls from his desk. He then headed upstairs to his wife.

"Cleia", he said as he entered the bedroom.

"What is it Crasis?" Cleia was sitting up in bed reading when Crasis came in.

"I've got to go and do some final preparations before I leave tomorrow, so I'll be back as soon as I can".

"All right Crasis, but don't be long, you've had a long hard day, you need rest".

"I will, don't worry, I should only be about an hour, good night", Crasis leaned over and kissed Cleia on the cheek, "I'll be back as soon as I can". Then he left to do what was necessary for tomorrow's trip to Tethos and the eastern Forbidden Zone. If there's one thing Cleia's not going to like, thought Crasis as he left his house, it was going to an unknown danger like the Zone. He was looking at, at least a thirty day round trip. He already had one division of twenty gorillas and five wagons prepared but now he'll have to get one more division ready by morning.

Crasis went to the barn and saddled his horse, then he headed for Captain Darro's house to wake him, if he wasn't asleep already, to let him know there'd been a change in plans, he wasn't going to like it, but it couldn't be helped, with Councillor Xavian now coming along, things could become very interesting and difficult at the same time.

Unbeknownst to Crasis was that this trip to the eastern Forbidden Zone would be his most dangerous yet, a danger he more than bargained for and a life changing experience he would never forget.



## ON THE ROAD, TO THE EASTERN FORBIDDEN ZONE 11TH APRIL 3115

Viridon, Burke and Galen were almost ready to rest for the day. They were walking alongside a stream looking for a clearing to set up camp for the evening. Then as luck would have it they spotted a small grassy patch a bit further down just off the road. It looked like a good area to settle down in, and also to finally rest after a long day's journey. For tomorrow they would enter into a nightmare that would reawaken their fears, their forebodings in order to survive the crossing of the Forbidden Zone, and they would face Man's past, a past that had remained hidden for centuries.

While Viridon tried his hand at fishing by the stream nearby, Burke and Galen pitched their tents and made a campfire and just in case Alan didn't return with some fish for dinner, they had made ready some of their provisions, Alan was good at fishing, but not that good.

Galen glanced down the road as he occasionally did during the day, as if he was looking for something, and then turned back to the chores at hand, Burke noticed this and asked, "What's up Galen? You've been doing that ever since we left Tethos, Don't tell me you're homesick already?"

"Oh it's not that, it's just I get the feeling we're being followed that's all, the odd sound here and there, call it ape intuition if you like, but being on the run for many years, does attune one's senses to all possible dangers".

"Yeah, I know the feeling, and because of that, you've been able to help us get out of Urko's hands many a-time". Burke remembered, thinking back to the times in the past when Urko and Zaius were always so close to capturing them. On a couple of occasions they did, but as always they would escape, leaving Urko in a state of rage.

"I wonder if Alan is having any luck with our dinner?" Galen said, who was now getting a little hungry especially since fish was his favourite meal.

"Don't worry Galen, if anyone can catch fish it's Alan".

Just as Pete finished answering Galen's question, Alan appeared with a load of fish ready for cooking. "Just like old times back home, if these don't fill our bellies, nothing will".

"That's great Alan I'll start preparing the cooking pot". Galen said, who enthusiastically began going through the provisions he laid out to add some flavour to the already simmering pot that was over the fire.

As Virdon was cleaning the fish for dinner, Burke looked up at the sky, which was darkening into night, various stars started to come out; but there was one starry object he was searching for, the satellite, and as he scanned the now night sky he just caught a glimpse of it.

“Well there it is on queue, our mysterious eye in the sky”.

“And with any luck, that eye will see us back home Pete”. Virdon said, as he finished with the fish, and began preparing them for cooking with another small fire that Burke primed earlier.

“Home, but will it be our home, our time, that’s one thing we may not be able to control Alan”. Burke said with concern.

“Maybe, but we have to try Pete, we have to, to erase any doubt that might exist and to appease our curiosity if nothing else”.

“Do you think there maybe is another ship there waiting for us to use?”

“Well if I know ANSA it’s possible, there’s no reason not to, then again our success rate in going to Alpha Centauri is nothing to be proud of, but that doesn’t mean ANSA have to stop trying”

“If there is a ship, even if it’s not in working condition, we could try to put it together?”

“I thought you were the pessimist of the group, Pete?”

“Hey, if there’s a light at the end of the tunnel...”

Galen interrupted Virdon and Burke with a small cough. “I hate to break the conversation, but look who I found hiding in the bushes”.

Both Virdon and Burke turned to face Galen and as they did so Lucian came out from behind Galen to present himself to the group. “He’s been trailing us all day, I knew we were being followed, but I didn’t think it would be Lucian”. Galen added, looking a bit angry.

“Now, I know what you’ll are going to say, Lucian responded with a slightly uneasy voice, “but I just had to come with you, I left a note with my parents, so everything will be okay”.

“No, it is not okay Lucian”, Virdon replied, who got up on his feet, as did Burke, to face Lucian, “you don’t understand, it’s dangerous where we’re going, Lord knows what’s out there? Even we don’t know what to expect, but at least we have the experience to deal with the unexpected, and if anything were to happen to you, your parents will never forgive us”.

“I can look after myself, and besides you might need me; you told me stories about your time, where you came from, and what it was like before the apes took over the planet, I want to see the people and the technology that built this satellite of yours, I want to see for myself, I need to know”, then after a short pause Lucian continued, “you’re my friends, I want to help you go home”.

When Lucian finished talking both Viridon and Burke looked at each other, as though to say, what now? "Okay Lucian", said Viridon, "I suppose it's too late for you to go back home, but I want you to understand, you have to do as you are told by the three of us", indicating himself, Burke and Galen, "It's important if we are to help one another and survive any dangers that we may face, but it's not just the eastern Forbidden Zone, it's beyond that as well, do you understand Lucian?"

"Yeah, I understand Alan".

"Good, well you better have some dinner, then off to bed".

Galen and Lucian went together to get dinner ready and as they left, Viridon and Burke heard Galen talking to Lucian; probably giving a piece of his mind at what Lucian has done, that could endanger all their lives.

"Alan, if we do find a way home, and since Galen will be coming with us, how's Lucian going to find his way back?"

"Pete, that's one headache I don't have an answer for just yet, maybe it'll come soon enough, but for now, let's go get a bite to eat".



## **ON THE ROAD, TO THE VILLAGE OF TETHOS 12TH APRIL 3115**

The ape convoy consisting of Xavian, Urko, Crasis and two divisions of troops totalling sixty gorillas which included ten supply wagons with their drivers, were moving at a steady pace to their destination; towards the village of Tethos, which hopefully they would reach by late tomorrow afternoon. But before then Urko had planned to block the two roads that led in and out of the village plus strategically place some troopers at certain areas around Tethos to make sure Viridon, Burke and Galen would not escape. This time, Urko thought, reviewing his plans, I have them.

It was getting late in the afternoon and soon the convoy would have to stop and make camp for the night. Captain Darro galloped to where Crasis was at the head of the convoy, which also included Xavian and Urko. "Crisis, sir, it's getting late, let me order two gorillas to scout ahead for a possible camping site?"

"Very well Darro, carry on".

"Yes sir". Darro trotted back to the convoy and hand picked two of his gorillas and gave the order.

As the two gorilla's galloped past the convoy to scout along the road, Crasis was thinking about how Cleia had reacted when he had told her he would be gone for at least a month, naturally she was not impressed with the news to put it lightly.

"I don't mind you being gone for a couple of days to a week Crasis", she had told him, "but this is too much, not only are you going to Tethos but to the eastern Forbidden Zone as well, and beyond, is it really necessary?"

"Yes dear it is, it's part of my job, and the Council has ordered it, these rumours about other ape settlements beyond the Zone need to be investigated, that's all there is to it". Crasis explained, trying to be sympathetic to Cleia's feelings, but without success.

"But you're needed here Crasis, surely", Cleia persisted, "Captain Darro can handle this expedition into the Forbidden Zone?"

"Yes, he can, but he'll be needed to escort these fugitives back from Tethos, as well as my father. Then when Xavian and I return in a month's time, these fugitives will be put on trial".

"I don't know Crasis, I don't like it. I just don't like it".

"You worry too much Cleia, I can handle myself, and with me gone, you have Urko or Darro to help you if there are any problems".

"I know dear, but still, you'll be gone a long time".

"We all must perform our duty Cleia, for better or for worse..."

Crasis was interrupted in his thoughts by Urko, "Crasis, you seemed troubled my boy, let me guess, Cleia?"

"She wasn't happy about what I told her".

"Arrh, females, are they ever happy about anything? Listen when this business with Tethos and the eastern Forbidden Zone is over, we'll all get together for a family gathering and celebrate my victory with the fugitives and yours into the Zone, there maybe tales to tell, and new areas to explore beyond the unknown, cheer up, all is going as planned".

"I hope you're right father?"

"Of course I'm right, aren't I always?"

"Just as long as it has Council approval Urko", interrupted Xavian, as he rode up alongside the other two, "remember, I want those fugitives alive, we go by the scroll Urko, do you understand?"

"Xavian seems to forget that I am also part of the Council that has given its approval". Speaking to Crasis.

"I believe you were outvoted..."

"...in which case I made certain concessions", turning to face Xavian, "I am not in a hurry to kill these astronauts Xavian, but they will die, that is a guarantee". Urko said, with an air of confidence.

"When Crasis and I get back from the Zone, they better be alive Urko, or you will be put on trial for murder, *that*, is also a guarantee".

"All these years I have waited, another month or two won't make any difference to me".

"That depends on whether you will be alive or dead in two months".

"*'Ape Shall Not Kill Ape'*". Urko quoted, trying to be smart.

"Who said anything about an ape executing you". Xavian responded with a smile, then he trotted ahead of them as the two gorilla scouts returned passing him to report back to Darro, who then reported back to Crasis with an location just up ahead around the next bend.



Within two hours the convoy had established camp alongside a small stream just off the main road, Darro reported to Crasis in the command tent whom was himself sitting at his desk that all was secure and guards were posted around the perimeter.

"Very good Darro, has Dr. Xavian and my father been taken care of?" Crasis said, looking up at his Captain.

"Yes Crasis".

"Excellent, dismissed".

"I'll keep you informed if anything happens during the night". Darro informed Crasis, as he was just about to turn around to leave.

"I don't think we'll have any trouble, it's tomorrow I'm concerned about". Crasis said, thinking out loud.

"My troopers can handle anything sir, humans have never been any trouble". Darro replied, with confidence in his voice.

"But these are special humans Darro, humans, who think they are better than us, that is dangerous, not just to us but to any other humans these fugitives come into contact with".

"I understand Crasis".

"Good, see you in the morning".

As Darro left, Crasis returned to looking at the daily reports, the information about the fugitives, the eastern Forbidden Zone and also varied written statements of witnesses about other apes from the other side of the Zone. It was going to be a journey of discovery and exploration he thought once these fugitives were captured and sent to Central City. The greatest test for his gorillas will be crossing the Zone, which has never been done before. The only thing that was, was the putting up of the boundary markers that separated civilization with the unknown. I just hope Xavian knows what he is doing; the convoy's moral at the moment is high but that's going to change once we enter the Zone and beyond.

But another question crossed Crasis' mind; will we come back? Can we come back? I'll just have to take it one day at a time he thought, one day at a time.



## **JOURNEYING THROUGH THE EASTERN FORBIDDEN ZONE**

### **13TH APRIL 3115**

They say that nightmares take refuge within the darkest recesses of your mind, a mind clouded in the unknown. An unknown filled with beasts and beings of the most profound descriptions ever imagined in a mind gone mad, and where madness rules your every thought and fibre of existence.

It is this way of thinking that has dominated the fables and fantasies for over a thousand years, the nuclear holocaust that devastated the planet Earth, leaving scars of unimaginable fear and terror, that has plagued ape and man alike for generations.

The twisted remains of war and death have taken their hold as myth and legend; never to be questioned, never to be examined, never to be scrutinized; that is until today, for today marks the unveiling of uncertainties revealed, past mysteries and atrocities awakened. They say 'history never repeats' itself, whoever said that—lied, history always does, always will, it may change its superficial appearance, but underneath it's always the same. The carnage of the past has been reopened once again for the eye to see; and it is a pitiful sight, a sight filled with a collage of twisted grotesque remains of the indescribable, of the damned, of the unbelievable.

Thus they also say, 'seeing is believing' as Virдон, Burke, Galen and Lucian are about to find out. From the lush green forests and hills in which they have journeyed through to the now dry desert like terrain, all is quiet, all is serene in it's own way, no birds in sight, no gentle trickling of a watering stream can be heard, even the wind seems rebellious to the whims of the desert with no breeze to cool the brows of four living souls looking for shelter and shade for the night. Finally after almost a full day's walking, Virдон, Burke, Galen and Lucian made it across the zone to the other side, but to the other side of what?

Two day's ago the four would-be explorers came across the boundary that separated civilization and desolation; generations ago the simian forefathers of the now Ape dominated world erected giant macabre crosses with dead rotting animal, human and ape carcasses tied to beams as a warning to all those wishing to go forward to turn back whenst they came or else be forever lost and be damned in a hell not of their making.

The boundary between life and death defined by these monuments, these structures from an insane past greeted our companions as they walked from their familiar life to an uncertain one. They edged their way closer climbing a barren hillside scorched with pain from the sun that laughed at their foolishness. Eventually nearing the top and after a brief rest and examination of these beacons of death, made their way down the other side

to begin their journey across the dry scorched desert floor to the other side of the Forbidden Zone.

It would be two days before they reached the desert's rim that divided the now receding barren nightmare from their new destination; it was almost dark before they were able to find a suitable place to camp for the night to rest their tired and weary bones.

As Virdon, Burke, Galen and Lucian set about pitching their tents and making a campfire for their dinner on the perimeter between the Forbidden Zone and the unexplored eastern territory that will hopefully lead them to Cape Kennedy, eerie sounds came from that direction as if in greeting.

"Looks like the local wildlife don't like us trespassing on their turf?" Burke said, in response to the unnatural animal noises coming from the distant forest.

"Don't worry Pete", said Virdon, "the fire will keep them at bay".

"It better, I don't want to wake up with a pair of glowing red eyes looking at me, as if to say, 'hello dinner'".

Virdon smiled at that comment, but was more concerned about Lucian, he didn't like the trek across the desert and was continually being exhausted from dehydration by the intense heat from the sun; luckily before they left, they were able to take with them extra water skins for the journey. Galen also was not faring too well in that department, but he was able to hold up pretty well considering his age.

After dinner Lucian went to bed while Virdon and Burke sat near the campfire, when Galen was satisfied seeing Lucian to bed he came over to his friends.

"I'm afraid Lucian will need at least a day's rest", said Galen as he approached, "he is totally worn out from today's crossing, and come to that so am I. We apes are not use to the extreme conditions of the weather like you humans. Do you think we can recuperate tomorrow before moving on Alan?"

"Sure Galen, I think we all need to rest for a day before continuing, the Forbidden Zone took a lot out of us and judging by the skeletons of other animals and apes we saw they didn't make it either; besides we're in no hurry and we can explore our surroundings a bit just to see where we are".

"Great, well if you don't mind I'll retire, I could sleep for a hundred years". Galen said, as he walked back to his tent.

Both Virdon and Burke smiled at each other. "You know", said Burke, "he's getting to be like us every day".

"More human than ape".

"You know Alan, those skeletons of the apes looked like they came from here judging by the direction they fell. Even though it took us two days to walk across the Zone, you would think the apes would be more prepared for the crossing".

"You right Pete on both counts, which means there could be other ape settlements over on this side. I think it would be best if we did a little scouting around tomorrow just to see how things are; and for all we know there may not be any humans in this part of the country".

"And if you're right, we'll need Galen and Lucian more than ever".

"Right".

With that said, both Virdon and Burke decided also to hit the sack and within minutes they were fast asleep in their tents. As the night wore on strange phosphorescent lightning appeared in the distance above the desert sky, which made no sound, and the weird animal noises seemed to have all but stopped; adding to this, light rain began to fall, which eventually put out the campfire but by then it was early morning, and the sun was just beginning to appear on the horizon to greet the new day.

*A day of rest is a day of peace.* Someone once said, and today will be that day.

*I long to rest my weary bones  
I long to rest my body  
It is perhaps a better way  
To greet in peace  
I pray for every day*

*To sleep upon my bed  
And dream away the hours  
To rest my lonely aching head  
And to dream of fruit  
That never sours*

*A day of rest is a day of peace  
Is the day I die to finally cease?  
To awaken from sleep to open my eye  
And look upon a darken sky*

*To walk before the rain, and never cry*



## **THE VILLAGE OF TETHOS, THE PREFECT'S HOUSE 14TH APRIL 3115**

"I don't believe it! I just don't believe it!" Urko shouted, as he banged his fist on Prefect Clavis' desk in frustration.

When the convoy arrived in Tethos, all was going to plan at that point, the roads were blocked, and various troopers were stationed at key points in and around the village; all that was left was to find and apprehend the fugitives, even though it was early evening, it was decided to capture the fugitives unawares, thus an element of surprise was on Urko's side for the intended ambush. But as the plan was put into action Urko's informant by the name of Aratus who was stationed at the village to keep an eye on the fugitives reported that they had gone.

"Settle down Urko, all is not lost yet". Xavian said trying to calm things down.

"Where did they go Aratus, where!" Urko replied angrily, turning to him for an answer.

Also present in the room were Xavian, Crasis, Darro and of course the Prefect himself Clavis; all were watching Urko pace up and down trying to control his rage at the missed opportunity of recapturing the fugitives once and for all. But the fugitives luck even now seems to be endless after all these years, no matter, Urko thought, I will never give up, never.

"All I know is that the fugitives and a chimpanzee named Lucian left three days ago, and if my information is correct Clavis knows where". Aratus said, looking at the Prefect.

"Is this true?" Xavian interrupted, cutting in before Urko could question him.

"Dr. Xavian, for twenty years I have been Perfect of this village, when these so-called fugitives came here fifteen years ago they were able to turn our poor economy around and since then Tethos has prospered. This ape community owes them it's gratitude, I for one found them very intelligent for humans and I've had no trouble from them".

"That still doesn't answer my question Clavis, remember, harbouring fugitives is a capital offence and your position here will suffer, including your family and the prestige this village has gained over the years. So I ask you again, where did they go?" Xavian questioned, with a renewed sense of authority.

"Lucian's parents came to me and told me that he and the fugitives left to go into the Forbidden Zone, but why they did I don't know". Clavis lied; knowing that the note Lucian had left his parents was in his desk, which stated otherwise.

"It seems we will be killing two birds with one stone, if the fugitives are heading into the Forbidden Zone then we can follow them, since we are also going in that direction".

"I'll start making plans for our journey tomorrow". Crasis responded, who indicated to Darro to follow him out of the Prefect's office to make preparations for the crossing.

As they left, Urko was still angry but was appeased somewhat, although still not happy considering that he would have to accompany Xavian and Crasis into the Zone and possibly beyond to recapture the fugitives. He was hoping to escort them back to Central City and grudgingly await the convoy's return from the Zone to begin the trial and interrogation proceedings, but not necessarily in that order. Even so, this opportunity may prove fruitful in any event because accidents do happen, especially to those that threaten the simian way of life, ape or human.

"Aratus, you can return to Central City your job is done now, go". Urko commanded.

"I shall await your return for further instructions Urko". Aratus replied, who exited the room to go back to his hut.

"If I maybe so bold Xavian", said Clavis, "if you knew the fugitives were here why did you wait so long to recapture them, considering this village's prosperity through them, I would have thought that being so dangerous to the ape community would prompt immediate action from the Council".

"Normally, such action would be, but Urko here has kept them under observation for the past fifteen years, and since the fugitives had made a home here, we felt it unnecessary to apprehend them, until now".

"Then my position as Perfect is in the clear, including my family and this village's standing", said Clavis as he moved behind his desk to sit down, "it is not my fault that the Council has kept vital information from me in regards to its actions whether criminal or not".

"Now you listen to me", said Xavian who confronted Clavis, "the Council does not have inform anyone of their actions that might harm the integrity of our society, from our information you were in no danger, and if you were, we would have dealt with it long before now".

"Perhaps".

"Not perhaps Clavis", added Urko, "you are a fool, how can it be that you did not question the fugitives upon their arrival here, didn't it seem strange to you that they were different than the humans already here? or is stupidity your main hobby this far out?"

"I will admit they were intelligent than the average human, but that doesn't alter the fact that you had pre-knowledge of their identity and didn't have the wisdom to inform me as such, perhaps stupidity is also a pastime that the Council indulges in as well", Clavis replied, in a shrewd manner.

"Enough!" said Xavian, who could no longer tolerate this conversation, "we are getting nowhere, suffice it to say that, what is done is done. Now as for tomorrow we will follow the fugitives, I'm sure their trail will still be easy to find, you Clavis will make sure the convoy has sufficient supplies, especially water for our crossing into the Zone, understood?"

"As you say Xavian, as you say".

"Good, Urko let's leave our friend Clavis to make arrangements for our departure". Xavian added, as he headed out towards the door with Urko.

Urko then turned quickly to face Clavis before he followed Xavian and gave him a contemptible look, as if to say 'this is not over yet', and then went on his way. While Clavis for his part tried to ignore it, Viridon, Burke and Galen were his friends and they did a lot for this village, I hope he thought, that with a three day lead his friends would be safe and avoid being captured; and I hope that they will be able to find what they're looking for at this place called Cape Kennedy. If not, I'm sure they'll come back here. Good luck my friends.



## **NEMESIS SPACECRAFT, ORBITING ABOVE THE EARTH**

### **13TH APRIL 3115**

“As you know”, began Richards, who was now going to explain not only the primary, but also the secondary missions to his crew, “our primary mission, codenamed ‘Phase 1’ is the reconfiguration of the bomb once we locate it and land, where we land will be at Cape Kennedy or what is left of it. Now, within the Cape there are several deep underground installations known collectively as the Facility, which I hope is still intact for us to use, this will act as our base of operations where we will prepare ourselves for the mission. Once that has been accomplished and that I am satisfied the bomb has been reconfigured we move on to our secondary mission codenamed ‘Phase 2’, put simply, to find out about ape society in general and once all available data has been accumulated, return back to Earth to our time. Now here’s where it gets interesting, once ‘Phase 1’ is completed, two of you will return and report back to Dr. Hughes with all available information collected so far. The remaining pair will stay here and complete ‘Phase 2’, I have already elected himself as one of those two to stay behind, you three on the other hand will have to decide amongst yourselves who will be the second, naturally you must volunteer; and if you’re wondering how the second pair will return home? That’s been taken care of too, because there is a second ship down there ready for launch. In the ten years while Dr. Hughes was planning this overall mission there was not one but two ships built, so all of us *can* go home, any questions?”

It took couple of moments for the three astronauts to take in the information that Richards presented to them, it all sounded good but Smith did have something to say and spoke up, “You said there was a second ship right? But that must mean there would have to be two launch bays?”

“Yes, there is, both are underground, the Pleiades is ready and waiting to go, all we have to do with this one is to re-position it in its bay, now usually we launch the ships at ground level, but because of the Holocaust the launch will happen below ground, we just have to make sure that the ground bay doors and the exhaust vents are clean and clear of any debris and operational, if not, we have the equipment to fix it”.

“But it’s been over a thousand years”, said Harden with concern, “how can the ship stay in perfect working order, and for that matter any of the equipment we need to fulfil our missions?”

“The Facility as well as being radiation proof has been hermetically sealed and all metal components have been treated with an anti-rust agent, including all the spare parts that we need; the computers themselves have also been treated and are in self-sealed containment units to prevent damage and deterioration”.



"How long will 'Phase 2' last skipper?" Smith asked.

"The minimum stay is for three years, after that I will determine if we have enough information to return home, if not, we stay until I'm satisfied that we have all there is to know about ape society, their military, their strengths and weaknesses and any other information about them that might prove useful".

"There are a couple of other things to consider", Merryll added, "What if we can't complete any of these missions due to death or the Facility having been destroyed or we cannot return to Earth at all? I assume you or Dr. Hughes looked at the worse case scenario".

"Yes, Dr. Hughes did and from this ship we will be able to determine if the Facility and the Pleiades have survived, if so we land, if not, we set a course back to Earth, and the future of the planet doesn't change, we tried and failed".

"Well I don't know about you", commented Smith, "but I for one do not want to go back into hibernation, not just yet anyway".

"Then I guess we better get started, when our primary mission is complete we'll have another chat about who volunteers to stay behind with me okay, so you have from now till then to think about it. If any of you have any further questions or concerns, I'll be only too happy to answer them as best as I can, so until then let's get to work and prepare for re-entry. Smith program the satellite to take photo's of the Earth, I want a detailed map of America first, especially the Cape and where the bomb is".

"Right". Smith answered, who went straight away to the fore of the ship to begin his assigned task.

"Harden, I'll give you the code to activate the Facility's computers at the Cape and together we'll see if we've got everything operational before we land, Merryll I want you to recheck the hibernation cells, we will need them again for the return trip and when your done you can help Smith".

For the rest of the day the crew of the Nemesis went about their tasks in preparation for re-entry and landing. It would be another day in Earth's orbit before all the relevant information would be gathered to make a final assessment of the situation at hand to either land or not. Time was on the crew's side, a time to think, a time to ponder and a time to reflect on the missions ahead, especially the one where another crewmember had to stay behind with Richards.

The one thing Richards didn't tell the crew was why this secondary mission was important, as he took a break by resting in his hibernation cell; he began thinking about what lay ahead. If the reconfiguration of the bomb was successful and all information gathered together and correlated for study about the apes has been achieved. The next step, codenamed 'Phase 3' would take effect, and that would require at least another ten years to prepare and execute if all went according to plan, but there was one little hiccup, the Holocaust or the threat of it, but judging by the satellite photo's and info, it had already happened in the past. The question that now remains

was when? Hopefully the analysis of the Earth may give the time period of when it did occur.

But there were other questions plaguing Richards' mind as well, do we have enough time to go to 'Phase 3'? Did 'Phase 3' ever get started? Was it ever completed? Then there was another terrifying thought, could it be possible that these mutants may have been the survivors of 'Phase 3' that went horribly wrong? Could what we are doing now; be their beginning that would finally be their end? And if that were the case the human race was doomed before it could ever be renewed.

The damnation of the soul.

The damnation of the spirit, that could never die but existing in a form of the living dead.

Awaiting a release from hell, from eternal pain and suffering.

Awaiting for the final salvation—from George Taylor.

The man who pushed the button, the all 'important button' that decided the fate of the world.

A world gone mad.

A world gone insane.

To a world gone—totally.



## **NEMESIS SPACECRAFT, ORBITING ABOVE THE EARTH 14TH APRIL 3115**

It was mid-morning by the time that the crew was able to assemble together to discuss what had been done. Smith and Merryll finished correlating all the significant information about the Earth's current environment, which included a detailed map of America, while with the help of Richards, Harden was able to establish that the Facility computers at Cape Kennedy were in working order and that instructions were given to reboot them for operational readiness to help with Nemesis' re-entry. The four now gathered around the fore of the ship to review the photographs that Smith was holding to show the rest of the crew.

"As you can see, skipper", indicated Smith, pointing to the photo of Cape Kennedy, "the Cape was targeted, the damage was extensive, and all surface facilities were destroyed, and as you can see the launch bay doors and the exhaust vents near the Shuttle Landing Facility are only covered by top soil and grass, so there won't be a problem clearing it".

"Good, because when we go down we'll have to inspect and open them to verify their working condition, it's important that there's no damage, if there is let's hope it's minor, otherwise we won't be going home, no matter how launch ready the ships are. What about the radiation?"

"According to the Facilities computers", answered Merryll, "and from what can be surmised up here, the radiation is within safety limits, with the exception over these desert areas along here and here", pointing to the eastern and southern Forbidden Zones from a photo that she was holding. "The radiation is a little high, but tolerably, just as long you don't live there, you'll be fine, my guess is that it must have been a limited nuclear strike and thus radiation clouds drifted from their strike zones to reach these areas".

"Well, whatever happened one nuke would have sufficed to blow up the Cape. What are those?" continued Richards, pointing at two locations, one in the north of Cape Kennedy and one at the western part of the map.

Smith revealed two other more detailed photographs of these locations and said, "Ape cities would be the best way to describe them, plus these smaller areas are probably towns and or villages".

"Could they be human ones?" Harden asked.

"It's hard to tell, but I doubt it". Smith replied.

"We do know, but very unlikely, that if there are any human settlements at all according to our information, they wouldn't be living in any form of villages or towns, remember humans are the animals here, the only dwellings they'd be occupying if they're lucky would be cages, out side of that, they'd be used as target practice for the gorilla army. Okay here's the all-important question, where's the bomb?" Richards responded.

Smith showed another detailed photograph of what use to be New York and said, "When Harden activated the homing signal that's inside the bomb, I was able to pinpoint its location here, under St Patrick's Cathedral".

"Well that's a relief, according to my briefing with Dr. Hughes the bomb's secret location back home was St Patrick's Cathedral, and it seems it's still there, good".

"Does that mean the mutants could be there as well?" Harden asked.

"That may be a possibility, remember, they may have had possession of the bomb in 3978, but this is 3115 and things could be a lot different now, perhaps we could get lucky and not run into them at all".

"If there are mutants down there wouldn't they hear the homing signal?" Merryll questioned.

"No, it's silent, no noise, no flashing light", answered Smith, "that way if they do, do an inspection of the bomb internally which I doubt, because I believe they just don't have the technical skills to do so, they'll see nothing wrong and it will increase our chances for non-detection when we enter St Patrick's for reconfiguration..."

"...and not only that, but we will have with us as a precaution, curtesy of Dr. Hughes, high-pitched sonic device units. These SDU's can emit an ultra-high frequency sound in-auditable to the human ear, but sensitive enough to the telepaths if they were to use their abilities, if any, against us if we're discovered". Richards added.

"It seems then we have all the bases covered". Merryll said.

"And that's the way I like it; right, I think it's time to get our feet back on terra firma. There's nothing else we can do up here, Smith according to your photo's can we use the shuttle runway?"

"Yes, it's in pretty good shape considering", said Smith, showing Richards a detailed photograph of the Shuttle Landing Facility area, "just a few holes here and there, but no major damage".

"Okay, let's get started".

All four astronauts prepared themselves for re-entry and strapped in, with Richards and Harden in the front, while Smith and Merryll were behind them. They began their pre-re-entry flight check, making sure all ship's systems were green. Once they re-enter Earth's atmosphere there was no turning back.

“Stand-by everyone, here we go”. Richards informed the crew, as he programmed the co-ordinates into the ship’s navigation console. While Harden ignited the retro’s and moved the Nemesis into position and then when all was ready, the ship began its final descent.

The Nemesis slowly began its dive; nose first into the upper limits of the Earth’s exosphere. The ship gradually picked up speed as it continued on it’s way down increasing its velocity through the thermosphere; then as it entered the mesosphere the Nemesis began its deceleration. With the help of the satellite and the Facility’s computers the ship’s guidance systems were put into play to help it navigate into position for its final approach for landing. As the Nemesis entered the stratosphere the ship was at cruising speed flying like a normal plane, by the time it entered the troposphere Cape Kennedy was coming into visual range.

“All systems check a-okay, prepare to open the drag chutes when we touch down”. Richards said to Harden.

“Chutes are on stand-by, ready to be deployed”. Harden responded.

“Coming up upon the runway, it could get a little rough, so hang on”.

As Harden deployed the landing gear, Richards carefully positioned the ship for touch down, as the aft pair of wheels hit the tarmac; Harden released the chutes to decrease the ship’s momentum. As predicated the ride was a little bumpy to say the least; Harden released the first set of drag chutes to be replaced by a second set, which helped slow down the Nemesis to driving speed, when this was achieved they too were let go and Richards was able to bring the ship to a full stop moments later after some-what of a rocky ride.

“Hell, where did you learn to drive like that skipper?” Smith said, unbuckling from his seat.

“Just like everyone else, at the Video Arcade”, Richards said, with a little smile, “but the ride’s not over yet”, as Richards turned the ship around and headed back down the runway to one of the secret launch bays to prepare the Nemesis for re-launching.



### CAPE KENNEDY, INSIDE THE FACILITY 28TH APRIL 3115

Richards was in his quarters at the Facility sitting by his desk writing a report, which included what had been happening in the last two weeks after he and his crew landed to begin operations. As Richards sat there drinking his coffee, *(instant coffee that is, which was part of the rations the crew brought with them on the ship)* he began re-reading what he wrote before he joined the others topside to settle in for the night. It was quite pleasant camping out in the open he thought, it was about a week before the Facility was fully ventilated to clear out the stale and stuffy air and gathered dust before human habitation could be established. Even though it was all right to sleep inside, Merryll advised against sleeping within the Facility until it was absolutely necessary to do so, she was concerned about any viruses and germs that may have accumulated over the centuries regardless of how the place had regained its hygienic look. In any case she gave all of us inoculations as a precaution; so for the past two weeks we have been camping out under the stars, which by the way was okay by me and the rest of us, since we didn't really have to go down below unless we have to. I guess that's because we're been inside the ship for so long, we somehow forgot what it felt like to feel the freedom of vast open spaces.

*Our first two days and nights were spent in the open as my crew and I camped out, there was no danger of being exposed to any hostiles, since as our satellite survey cleared any activity in the surrounding areas. Not only that but it was a change for the better considering we spent our lives in space cooped up in the Nemesis, so believe me it was a welcomed relief to sleep in the open and breath fresh air and feel the freedom of movement and to reconnect with the earth once more.*

*Into the third day we began clearing away the vegetation and undergrowth that covered the protective plates of the Solar Panels using the mini Bobcat we located in the Facility Storage Area, so we can get the power started in the generators for Facility operations. It was hard work let me tell you for four people, but we got it done. We were able to uncover enough Solar Panels to begin with to power up the Facility so we could descend and open it up automatically; naturally we had to manually open up the entrance first to get inside to retrieve any equipment we needed to help with any clearing and excavations to start with.*

*Our second priority was to clean and clear the Satellite Dish/Communications Section, so we could have better reception with the SAT-SD1. The Computer Command Operations Centre was next on the list including the Primary and Secondary Computer Sections so as to establish full operational readiness. Once there was enough power stored in the generator/batteries for the computers to handle they were tentatively switched on. The remaining Solar Panels were uncovered soon after, which*

*allowed the main generator and the secondary generators, to become fully powered to restore all electrical systems throughout the Facility.*

*Then, up until today we have been clearing away all vegetation covering the Underground Shuttle Launching Bay 1 doors and its ramp so we could begin putting the Nemesis into re-launch position. I felt comfortable leaving the Nemesis out in the open for the last two weeks since there hasn't been any danger to it or us, but I will feel better when the ship is safely in its bay for re-launching. The clearing of Shuttle Launching Bay 2 will be left to last after the Facility is fully functional.*

*Our next job was to scout around and find and clear all remaining ventilation shafts, that we didn't do the first time around because I wanted only enough exposed for us to breath so we could begin work in the Facility, this also included testing and re-aligning all the security cameras.*

*Finally within the next two weeks, the Shuttle Launching Bay 1's Exhaust Venting System will be clean and cleared and we will begin moving into the Facility to live, this will also include checking out the other Sections for possible deterioration and structural damage, reorganising and rechecking the inventory left in the computer's databanks so we know what we've got. Also Merryll will begin planting seeds in the Hydroponics Section, so that there will be a sustainable food supply, we're hoping for our first harvest in about two to three months time if all goes well.*

*Oh, just in case you're wondering, yes, very first thing we did check before we entered the Facility in the beginning was for radiation, and luckily there was none; in any case the crew and I went through the decontamination just to be on the safe side.*

*I have to hand it to Dr. Hughes and the rest of the ANSA for putting this Facility together, it's a miracle I think that we were able to find it in so good a condition for us to use. Human engineering triumphs again when it comes building and developing an operational system needed to maintain survival no matter what the cost. Everything that we need has been meticulously put away and stored for our eventual retrieval. I still cannot believe that this place and all of its components have lasted for over a thousand years or more. This place, has become and is now the last vestige of human ingenuity, the last grasp of the hand of Man to reach out to put right what has gone wrong, to prevent a mistake, to prevent the final Armageddon that will see us go straight to Hell.*

*But not yet, oh no, not yet, not if I can help it.*

*My crew and I are the only saving grace for this world, a world I hope will be a better place for all who wish it well and call it home-Human and Ape-together there is a future, but will it be a future worth living in? Can a future exist; can co-existence be a future worth saving for?*

*There are many questions, but only time will tell, and for the moment we have the time, the time to plan, the time to organize. I believe given another week or two this Facility will be up and running to the best of our ability to do so, then we can concentrate on our mission.*

*The mission to save the world and those within it, whether for good or ill, this Earth is the only home we all have, the only salvation to cleanse all evil, so the children of ourselves can run and play, and be free, free to laugh, free to dream again of a better life, a better way to live, for all who care.*

...for all who care, Richards repeated in his mind, but who will care for Earth, who will really care? Will future generations that will survive and live on after we are gone really give a damn? Maybe, maybe not, but at least they will have a future to find out, a future to mould and make their own.

Richards left the report on his desk as he got up to leave with coffee in hand. Well that's enough for now he thought, as he sniffed the air, nice and clean, that's the way I like it, the air conditioning has done its job, we'll be able to live down here quite comfortably from here on in.

Richards made his way along the corridor to the outside entrance to go topside. As he was walking along it felt quite eerie in a way, with the dim lighting showing him the way out, a kind of surreal journey, you just kept on walking and walking, not knowing when it will end, and if you turned back, you would not be able to find the beginning where you started. No beginning—no end, just an endless path to a journey of the unknown.

But as with any tunnel, there was always a light, a distant light to show the way, but in Richards' case it was many little lights—stars. Stars against a moonlit night as he approached the stairway to join the others for dinner.



**ON THE ROAD THROUGH UNKNOWN LANDS  
20TH APRIL 3115**

Viridon, Burke, Galen and Lucian have been journeying through unknown territory for about a week now with no sign of life—simian or human. When they left the edge of the Forbidden Zone and headed inwards where the vegetation became friendlier to their eyes as they went deeper into the surrounding country, more forests of green and the occasionally stream or pond greeted them as they became more relaxed with their environment. All this was about to change when they left what seemed to be the main road they were walking on to crest a large hill beside it, to look around and get their bearings.

As Galen and Lucian sat down to rest, Viridon and Burke scanned the horizon, while Burke was taking a drink of well earned water from his leather water bag to cool his throat, beside him stood Viridon, who was shading his eyes from the sun, to have a better look around.

“Pete, I think we’re being followed?”

“What?” Burke responded a little confused, “by whom?”

“I don’t know, see over there, that little dust cloud, you can just see it, it’s in the same direction where we’ve just come from”.

Burke’s gaze followed Viridon’s arm as he pointed out what seemed to be something moving towards their direction, “You know”, said Burke, not liking what he saw, “I got a bad feeling about this, you don’t think...”

“Pete, I just don’t know, but after all these years, why now and how did he know where to find us, if it is indeed Urko?”

“Did someone mention Urko”, Galen enquired, as he joined his friends.

“Looks like we’ve got company Galen”. Burke told him, as he indicated to Galen a small moving cloud of dust in the distance.

“My instincts tell me we’ve better get a move on and find a safe and secure hiding place, preferably on higher ground so we can observe whoever is coming this way. They could be locals travelling to their destination, I mean, we have been passing various roads turning off this main one, and if it is indeed Urko we need to stay one step ahead of him”.

“My thoughts exactly Galen”, said Viridon, “how’s Lucian holding up?”

"He's fine, just tired".

"Well, we'll rest soon enough once we find a place to hole up for the night, but by the looks of things", said Virдон, turning his head in the direction indicating their unknown pursuers, "we better make it quick, so let's get moving".

"Hey Lucian", called out Burke, to his young friend as he approached him from down the hill, "how do you feel about doing some jogging?"

Lucian who got up from where he was sitting responded, "Please Pete, I don't think I can".

"Well buddy, I'm afraid so, you see it's come to our attention that we maybe are being followed, so we need a safe place to hide and see who they are".

"Will I have to jog long?" Lucian asked, not liking this new development.

"I don't know, it all depends on what's up ahead, come on, I'll stay with you, we can be jogging partners, wha-da-ya-say partner?" Giving Lucian a smile.

"Okay Pete, I can do it".

"That's the spirit, come on let's join the others".

While Burke and Lucian were having their little talk, Virдон and Galen descended to the other side of the hill and continued to scout ahead. When Burke and Lucian caught up with them, Virдон had some interesting news to tell.

"Looks like we found ourselves an ape settlement up ahead, a small town, pretty impressive".

"Any humans?" Burke asked.

"A few but not many, they and the apes seemed to be dressed a little different from what Galen and I could see".

"There's a small rise just before what seems to be the main entrance into the town", continued Galen, "we could hide up there and wait to see who has been following us if they were".

"And if it is Urko?" Burke questioned.

"Then we put some distance between him and us as much as we can before nightfall". Virдон responded.

"Okay, we better hurry if we want a box seat".

"A box seat?" Lucian said, with a curious look on his face.

“Don’t worry Lucian, I’ll explain later”. Burke said, as he gave Lucian a light pat on the back.

Viridon, Burke, Galen and Lucian made their way cautiously through the hillside to their designated hiding place to wait and observe who will be coming along the road towards the main gate of the town. It was about an hour of waiting before they saw two gorilla scouts trotting into view, but just short of the sentries line-of-sight guarding the main gate when they halted to observe this new development. After a talking to themselves on what to do next, the scouts turned around quietly and galloped off back the way they had come.

It would be approximately another hour before Viridon and company saw who was coming; and their suspicions were right, it was Urko and with him were his son Crasis and Dr. Xavian himself, plus at least two divisions of troops and their wagons.

“He’s really out done himself this time”, said Burke, “talk about overkill”.

“Well we’re not sticking around to give him the pleasure of our company, come on, it’s time to move”. Viridon told the group.

As they made a discrete exit to gain some distance between them and Urko and company, the convoy was just coming into view of a couple of guards stationed at the main gate of the town. The convoy headed by Urko, Xavian and Crasis came to a halt in front of the main entrance; one of the two—stationed sentries came forward to greet them.

“Halt! Who are you and state your name and business?” The gorilla guard ordered Xavian as he approached, feeling a little uneasy at seeing such a large contingent of troops, which he did not recognise as from being around here.

**THE APE CONVOY, FIRST CONTACT  
20TH APRIL 3115**

They're so close I can smell them, those damn fugitives. I can almost touch them, they're here, I know it, somewhere here, not far now, and soon I will have them, thought Urko, as he and the rest of the convoy made their way along the dusty road before them, and were making up good time considering their overnight stay at Tethos and their journey through the eastern Forbidden Zone, which was a harrowing experience to say the least. It was lucky that the convoy had extra provisions of water, because at least one third of the troops were suffering from exhaustion, dehydration and sunstroke, even Xavian almost didn't make it, too bad Urko contemplated, it would have made things easier. But considering what the convoy had to deal with as they made their way across the Forbidden Zone and what they saw, even he, Urko, was not too keen on the idea of crossing it.

The scouts who have been riding ahead of the convoy to track the fugitives have been reporting back to Crasis every now and then. It seems that their tracks were only a few hours old; and within a day Urko surmised, they will be caught. As Urko took a drink from his water skin, he noticed the scouts had come back after about an hour, they had a brief talk to Xavian and Crasis; then Xavian halted the convoy. So without hesitation Urko galloped to the front to see what new information the scouts had imparted that warranted stopping the convoy, very second's delay put the fugitives further out of my reach he thought, as he confronted Xavian.

"Why are we stopping Xavian?"

"It seems the scouts have found what looks like to be an ape settlement up head".

"So, is that a problem?"

"Maybe, maybe not, caution is advised here Urko, we are in a different part of the country now".

"We have two divisions of troops, I think we can handle any unforeseen events".

"Father", spoke Crasis finally, who was silent up until now, "my gorillas need more rest, it is true we have made up time to catch the fugitives only because we have horses and they do not, but still it would be good to have at least one day's respite before continuing on".

"Sir", continued Darro addressing Urko, who was beside Crasis, "The troops have been grumbling for the past week, it is true we have rested when we camp for the night, but there are those who need possible medical attention from our crossing the Zone, and if that ape settlement has a doctor, it would be wise to have them looked at before going on".

Before Urko could respond to this subordinate talk, Xavian cut in quickly, "He's right Urko, we all need rest to recoup and to re-supply our provisions if we are to continue on this mission".

"Oh very well", said Urko grudgingly, "Crisis, come with me I have something to say to you in private".

Both Urko and his son trotted to the back of the convoy as it started up again to head towards the newly discovered ape settlement.

"Crisis, I want you to listen to me", Urko told his son in a low whisper, "don't get me wrong, I do care about our troops and perhaps this ape settlement will help us, but I want you to understand these fugitives are dangerous to our society and to whoever they come in contact with, they must be captured, at all costs—at all costs, can you understand this Crisis?"

"I understand father, but in order to do so we need ape-power, if my gorillas are unwell and unfit, it will be twice as hard to catch the fugitives when we do find them".

"Believe me, I am concerned about the welfare of this convoy, but it must not hinder our pursuit or our judgment when it comes to these astronauts".

"Very well father".

"Good, and just one more thing, I want you to take disciplinary action against Captain Darro, he spoke out of turn and he questioned my authority".

"Understood".

At the same time as Urko and Crisis were having their private conversation; Xavian and Darro were having theirs.

"Dr. Xavian", said Darro, who was a little concerned, "I hope I didn't offend Councillor Urko, but I felt it necessary to speak up about the condition of my gorillas, it was important".

"Of course Captain, quite right, but don't worry, you did the right thing, we are far from home and we need to keep certain perspectives in play if we are to complete our mission".

"Thank you Dr. Xavian". Darro responded with relief.

It was another hour before the convoy made its way to the main gate of the as yet un-named ape settlement, when the convoy finally stopped to present themselves to the guards stationed at the gate, tension was a little high.

The two sentries at the main gate noticed the large ape contingent as it came into view, and became somewhat apprehensive as the convoy stopped in front of them, the senior of the two, took a couple of hesitant steps forward towards Xavian, rifle at the ready and cried out, "Halt! Who are you and state your name and business?"

"My name is Dr. Xavian, and these", indicating with his right arm, "are Councillor Urko, General Crasis and Captain Darro, we have come a long way, and greet you in friendship, we are strangers in these parts and I wish to speak to someone of authority here, can you help us?"

"My name is Sergeant Kellic, and this is the town of Akora, the ape you wish to see is Governor Phalen, perhaps he can help you". Kellic told Xavian, who was still not sure of what to make of this situation.

"Good, Sergeant Kellic, can you escort me and Councillor Urko to him?"

"Yes, but what of your party?"

"Is there some place within Akora where my convoy can rest up for the night? General Crasis here can speak to your superior on the location and on anything else that may set his mind at ease".

"Yes, that can be arranged—Barlos!" called out Kellic, "Get some extra sentries for the gate and then take General Crasis to Captain Nyeric".

"Yes sir!" Barlos responded, as he went off to do as he was told.

"When Barlos comes back", said Kellic, turning back to speak to Xavian, "I will take you to see Governor Phalen".

"Thank you Sergeant Kellic, I look forward to meeting him". Xavian replied, while he was thinking to himself, that all was going well so far in this first contact with their unknown cousins of the east, I just hope Urko doesn't mess it up, I pray to the Lawgiver, please don't mess it up.



## TWENTY FOUR

### THE FUGITIVES, HAVE DISTANCE WILL TRAVEL, ANYWAY THEY CAN 20TH APRIL 3115

It was getting late in the afternoon as Virdon, Burke, Galen and Lucian put a sizeable distance between them and Urko, soon they would have to rest for the night. The sun silhouetted against the sky had began its slow descent surrounded by translucent clouds, making them glow a heavenly orangey-red in colour with golden yellow streaks criss-crossing the horizon. It seemed so beautiful as the four friends stopped for a breather to view this display of nature's brilliance at work. Even so, they had to push on until the now setting sun was making its final appearance felt, then the group called it a day and prepared to make camp for the night ahead.

"Do you think it's wise to have a fire Alan?" Galen asked, as he saw Virdon and Burke collect wood and stones to make a campfire for dinner and warmth for the night.

"Well, I don't think it will make any difference now, besides I'm hoping that the ape settlement back there will cover any traces of our fire, it's pretty big in size like a town, so it should cover our location with their lights showing; and anyway I don't think Urko and party will be going anywhere tonight, so I'm sure it'll be safe to have the fire going".

"Besides", put in Burke, "by the time they will be ready to move again, we'll be a day ahead of them—I hope, their convoy maybe big, but their wagons slow them down a bit, especially in these parts where the roads aren't well developed and wide enough to travel on speed wise".

"Now that we know Urko is on to us", continued Virdon, "we have to move more quickly and try to leave less tracks for them to follow".

"Hey Lucian", said Burke, "you okay with that? It's going to get pretty interesting from here on in, are you up to the challenge?"

"I think so, as long as I can keep up with you, and rest every now and then, I'll be alright".

"Don't worry Lucian", said Virdon, "we do have one advantage, we're on foot, we can climb and hide, travel through the woods and forest; we can make it harder for Urko to follow us. Remember, they may have horses that can help them travel faster, but their wagons can only be road driven, and the gorillas won't stray far from them trying to search for us".

"Alan, can I ask you a question?"

"Sure Lucian ago ahead".

"What are you hoping to find at this place called Cape Kennedy besides the people that could help you?"

"Good question Lucian, you see I have this disc", Virдон replied, as he sat down taking out his ship's flight disc from his pouch to show Lucian, "this disc is from my ship that Pete and I came in, it is a record of our flight from my time to yours. I'm hoping that these people will have equipment that will enable me to read the disc and see where we went wrong and correct it when we leave here to go back home".

"But that will mean you'll have to have a ship to do so right?"

"Yeah, that's right".

"How do you know there is one?"

"I don't; as a matter of fact the chances of finding these people and a ship are pretty remote. But that satellite which is orbiting the Earth", pointing his index finger skyward, "proves to me that there is a chance someone knows about computers and technology who could help us find out".

"And you have to try to find this person or people to help you get back home?"

"Yes, I have to try. Don't get me wrong Lucian, your world is your home and you're use to a certain way of life here and in some ways it's quite pleasing; but Pete and I are not from this world, we're use to another way of life, another way of living. In a way this Earth is alien to us because it's so different, we belong to another time, another place..."

"...in another world". Burke put in to finish off, as he finished putting the campfire together and got it started.

"Another world, another lifetime". Virдон whispered softly.

"And what if there's nothing there?"

"Then", replied Burke, sitting down beside Virдон, "we head back home to Tethos".

"That's if Urko doesn't catch us first", said Galen, as he got up to prepare for dinner.

"He's going to be a problem that we're going to have face sooner or later Alan". Burke added.

"I know Pete", putting back the flight disc in his pouch for safe keeping, "I'm hoping we can lose him before then, if not, maybe we can figure it out while we're trying to stay one step ahead of him".

"That's a big if".

"Another advantage we have is Urko and Crasis' troops don't know this area like we do, they have no maps to guide them, and even if they did, they still be travelling cautiously to keep up with us".



"I just hope you're right Alan".

"We've done it before, we can do it again. You never know, maybe we might find another hidden computer library like we did back in Oakland. But this time it will be different, we'll wait until it's safe, before we use it, and then maybe the computer can help us use the disc".

"Yeah, I remember, that was a great find, pity we had no time to properly study it or use it".

"I know, but as the hologram said, there are other computer libraries scattered around the world in secret locations to help the future survive".

"For us humans or for the apes?"

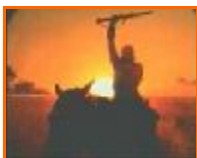
"I don't know the answer to that Pete, but we do know they exist for the benefit of those who want a better future and maybe a better lifestyle than the one they already have, if they choose".

While Virdon and Burke were having their conversation Lucian got up to help Galen prepare for the evening meal; they both returned with a little pot of made up stew that was put on the campfire.

"We'll need to get more food Alan", said Galen, "we're running low".

"I know, living off the land while on the run is not my idea of fun, but come tomorrow, we'll need to start searching as we go".

With that said, the four friends enjoyed the rest of the evening in pleasant conversation and story telling until they retired for the night.

**THE TOWN OF AKORA, THE MEETING OF TWO WORLDS  
20TH APRIL 3115**

While Crasis and Darro were seeing Captain Nyeric about their convoy's location for staying the night in Akora as well as developing a good sound diplomatic stance to put the Captain at ease knowing that sixty troopers could cause some concern in town, especially from strangers of unknown origin—even if they were apes. Sergeant Kellic was escorting Xavian and Urko to Governor Phalen's office within the town centre; all three of them had decided to walk since Xavian insisted, citing that being on his horse all day warranted that his legs needed the exercise. So as a courtesy, Sergeant Kellic also walked to guide them through the streets to the Governor's Office. Luckily it was a short walk of about fifteen minutes when they arrived and as they entered the front door they were greeted by a chimpanzee orderly who was seated at his desk by the Governor's outer office door.

"Please inform the Governor", Kellic informed the now standing orderly, "that he has two guests that wish to see him, Councillors Dr. Xavian and Urko from a place called Central City".

The orderly responded politely and knocked on the Governor's door, then entered to relay the information. Moments later he re-emerged to tell Kellic that they could enter. As they did so the Governor got up from his seat and moved around his desk to greet these strangers whom he didn't recognise.

"You may go now Sergeant, I believe I can handle it from here on in".

"Very good sir, I'll just wait outside if you need me". Kellic responded and promptly left.

"Welcome friends to the town of Akora, please seat down and make yourselves comfortable", greeted Phalen, indicating two chairs near his desk, "my name is Governor Phalen, but Phalen will do nicely, now what brings you here? I myself know all the Councillors at Capital City, so I'm sure you have a story to tell, yes?"

"Thank you Phalen", said Xavian diplomatically, "that we do, my name is Dr. Xavian and this is Urko".

"Nice to met you". Urko replied politely.

Well, thought Xavian, the Lawgiver must have heard my prayers; Urko is behaving himself at last, I hope this meeting goes well. "We have come a long way", continued Xavian, "a very long way".

"Well in that case I will get you something to drink first". Phalen called his orderly to bring them some wine and as the orderly left after serving the Governor and his guests he left to resume his duties.

"Now", asked Phalen, leaning against the front of his desk, "tell me where you're from and what brings you here to my Akora?"

Xavian told Phalen that he and Urko had come from the far western part of the country and that they also have a simian society similar to Phalen's, that was governed from Central City by the High Council in which he, Xavian was its head; and thus there came to light reports of possible other ape settlements in the east. So being intrigued at finding more of their ape cousins he organised an expedition to find out the truth, naturally the convoy had to cross through the eastern Forbidden Zone to get here. Since by the very presence of Akora, Xavian also wanted to, if possible, contact and create diplomatic and trade relations to help improve communication between the two simian cultures and their societies in general.

"Furthermore", continued Xavian, while Urko was patiently sitting, waiting and to Xavian's surprise keeping quiet and listening, "if I could visit your government I can begin diplomatic negotiations".

"I am overwhelmed by your extraordinary journey", Phalen finally responded, "to come here on such a so small of evidences, I am also surprised at how you managed to cross the Forbidden Zone, which is what we also call it. Our present government of Councillors preside in Capital City, which I have mentioned before is situated to the northeast near a great ocean called 'The Great Eastern Sea', Councillor Julius who is the head of our Council there would welcome I am sure your presence. It seems we have a lot in common Xavian and I will do my best to accommodate you".

"Thank you Phalen, and on that note because of our long journey here my expedition is somewhat fatigued, and I was wondering if you have medical facilities here in which your doctors could examine them for possible treatment if any?"

"Of course Xavian, I will organise it tomorrow".

"Thank you Phalen; and now for an urgent matter in which Urko my fellow colleague here has been patiently waiting to tell you".

"Thank you", said Urko, who now had a chance to speak about the fugitives, "as my friend Xavian has pointed out, his is a diplomatic mission but mine is more justice orientated, you see I am in pursuit of four fugitives—two male humans and two male chimpanzees who have come this way to escape trial for crimes against *our* society, that is why our convoy is larger than normal. These fugitives are dangerous and must be caught as soon as possible, we have been following them into this area, so any assistance you could provide will be helpful in apprehending them to bring them back to justice".

"I am sorry to hear that Urko", responded Phalen, who was a little disturbed about this information, "as far as I know, no new faces have turned up here in Akora for the past week or so. We are the furthest ape settlement in the west as you now know, so news of any kind is slow in getting here".

"I understand; we have similar problems ourselves". Urko said, nodding his head in agreement.

"Good, I will do what I can to help you in your endeavour to recapture these criminals Urko. Humans committing crimes is one thing, but apes as well is another—the shame of it all". Slowly shaking his head in disbelief.

"I appreciate any assistance you are able to give".

"Good, well now I think that's enough for now, it's getting late and I'm sure you wish to retire as do I, so I will get Sergeant Kellic to escort you to our guesthouse for you to rest the night; and in the morning we can continue our conversation and get better acquainted as well as helping your individual pursuits to attain fulfilment".

"Thank you Phalen", replied Xavian, as he and Urko got up from their seats, "a General Crasis is seeing your Captain Nyeric about where to place his troopers for the night, I assume you will be hearing a word or two from Nyeric soon no doubt".

"Know doubt I will", Phalen added, as he guided his guests to the office door opening it to summon Kellic, "Sergeant, please escort our friends to the guesthouse and see that everything is in order; then get me Captain Nyeric".

"Yes Governor". Kellic answered.

"Have a pleasant evening Xavian and Urko and I'll see you in the morning".

"We look forward to it Phalen". Xavian said.

**THE TOWN OF AKORA, THE PARTING OF THE WAYS  
21ST APRIL 3115**

It was mid-morning before Dr. Xavian had finished his meeting with Governor Phalen about his plans to visit Capital City near the Great Eastern Sea; Xavian decided to see Phalen alone since Urko was a little uncomfortable at their initial introduction. Besides Urko said himself that it was better that he, Xavian handle any diplomatic issues, which may arise with their eastern cousins. Xavian was making his way back to the guesthouse; where Urko and Crasis were waiting for his return to discuss his arrangements for his eventual departure. All was going well as planned, considered Xavian, the doctors at the medical centre were doing their rounds examining the our gorillas health to see if there were any ill effects from their journey across the Forbidden Zone and I too must have a check-up to see if I'm able to continue on with my mission to Capital City. Crossing the Forbidden Zone was not the easiest thing to do at my age, but I managed well enough, and to think I'm going to have to do it again to go back home; I'm not looking forward to that at all, still, not to worry, I can handle it, I have to, that's the way it is.

Xavian re-entered the guesthouse and there as expected were Urko and Crasis sitting at the dining table having a drink, "Urko, I must congratulate you on yesterday's meeting with Phalen", walking over and sitting down to join them, "you did remarkably well".

"Xavian, I am a soldier, you are a politician, it was only logical that you should be the one conducting the conversation, you are more skilled than I when it comes to diplomacy. I on the other hand can deal with military situations which I am more skilled than you".

"To that, how very true. Crasis", turning to speak to him, while pouring himself a cool drink from a flask of water on the table, "what's the latest report on the health of our gorillas?"

"At this stage two thirds need medical treatment, nothing serious, the doctors are prescribing medicines to those who it and the rest just need recuperation; Darro is overseeing their needs with the head doctor".

"Excellent, and what of the arrangements for Capital City?"

"I have spoken to Nyeric and provisions for your journey will be ready when you leave".

"Xavian, is this trip really necessary?" Urko asked, still trying to understand his reasons for going.

"Is capturing the fugitives really necessary Urko? You must understand this meeting of east and west could be a blessing, a blessing to strengthen simian power throughout the country. This union could increase our knowledge, our society, our beliefs and more importantly, ourselves as a whole, it will bring unity and wash away any fears and superstitions that we may have and very appreciably spread the word of the Lawgiver to those needing enlightenment. It is our duty, our right, it is our way".

"Very well Xavian, you've made your point. But I also have a duty and a right to capture those fugitives, as is my way".

"Just remember Urko, alive, I want them captured alive, I take it that Crasis here will be accompanying you?"

"Naturally, I see no reason to exclude him".

"As you wish, I will take Captain Darro with me when I leave here with one division".

"Now Xavian!"

"Urko, if you can't recapture four criminals on the run with one division..."

"Alright-alright", raising his voice a little, "but I want the healthiest".

"You can have them, I'm in no hurry to leave just yet".

"As you wish", getting up from his chair to leave, "I will go now and see the doctor at the medical centre and personally pick those who will be fit enough to leave by tomorrow, coming Crasis?" turning to his son for a response.

"I have things to discuss with your son about my preparations for my journey to Capital City", said Xavian, "he will join you when I am done".

"Understood". Urko grunted, as he walked out the door, not too sure what to make of the situation.

"Your father", Xavian telling Crasis, "has conflicts within himself that are constantly at war with themselves; one minute he is passive, the next aggressive. As a General in the Security Forces he had an excellent mind, now as a Councillor, he needs to learn the ways of patience if he is to achieve his goals; *you* Crasis", pointing a finger at him, "must watch out for him more than ever, especially now that I won't be around to control him, do you understand?"

"Yes Xavian, but he is my father all the same. I do not know if I have the will or the strength to go up against him, *he* is my father".

"You Crasis are a General, and the Head of the Security Forces of Central City, *you* have the authority and the *ape*power to keep your father in check. Remember the gorillas are loyal to *you*, *you* are their Commanding Officer, not your father, and *they* will obey *you*. So *you* must be strong in their eyes".

"It will be difficult". Crasis said, showing some concern about what has been discussed so far.

"I have faith in you Crasis, I want you to make sure that those fugitives come back to Central City alive, I know Urko thinks he can control you because of what he has given and provided you, but it was I and the Council that had to approve your promotion, remember that, yes it will be difficult, but you carry my authority and judgement, you are not your father's puppet, you are General Crasis Head of Security of Central City".

"I didn't believe you had so much faith in me Xavian, but I will do what is right, you can trust me to complete my part in this mission to re-capture and bring back those fugitives for trial and justice". Crasis said, now feeling more confident about his role and position as son and general.

"Good, glad to hear it, this will be a 'rite of passage', and only you will be responsible for your own destiny from here on in, either you'll come back an ape or a chimp", said Xavian, as both he and Crasis got up from the table, "now we better go and see what your father is up to, while I see the doctor about my health".

As both Xavian and Crasis made their way to the medical centre, Crasis was lost in thought trying to absorb the conversation between himself and the elderly orang-utan, a 'rite of passage' Xavian had said. It will be a clash of minds and egos; the Son verses the Father, the General verses the Councillor, who will win, who will lose? Only the brave shall live while the coward shall die in the arms of the victor. A slow death awaits the one, who survives the trials and tribulations of life, depending upon the vision of that death, and he, Crasis will not die, he will live, he will survive, he will be the victor, if not, he knows he will never see Central City again.

**THE FUGITIVES, ANOTHER TOWN, ANOTHER PLACE, ANOTHER DANGER  
22ND APRIL 3115**

Viridon and company spent the day travelling trying to gain some distance between them and Urko, while they were doing so, they kept an eye out for any scouts Urko might have sent ahead to find them, not only that but the group were searching for any food they could collect, since they were running low on supplies. It was about lunchtime that they came across an ape village, not as big as the one they left behind, but big enough to support those within. As the group left the main road that passed through the village centre to take a closer look by crouching from behind some brushes, Galen had an idea and decided to tell Viridon what he had in mind, "Alan, I think we can solve our food problem".

"What's on your mind Galen?" Viridon asked, as he and the others were observing at the village which as they could see contained apes and some humans.

"How about if I and Lucian were to go into the village and get some food, I'm sure it could be done without suspicion, remember, we do have some gold as currency and it barter with, and if anyone asks, we'll just say, we'll passing through needing supplies for our journey".

"Sounds risky Galen", said Burke, but he knew Galen was right, "suppose no one believes you and you can't get any food?"

"That's the risk I have to take, Lucian and I have a better chance getting what we need than you or Alan".

"He's right Pete", confirmed Viridon, "we need food and water, if we are to survive and to stay one step ahead of Urko. Okay Galen, you and Lucian give it a try, we'll stay here and wait for you two to come back, don't take too long and be careful".

As Galen and Lucian made their way towards the village, Viridon and Burke watched them until their simian friends could not be seen as they entered the village square. It was now up to them to secure any food if they can. When Galen and Lucian stopped to look around to get their bearings a young chimpanzee of about seven years old came up to them and asked, "Are you lost?"

"Hello young one", responded Galen, "we have come a long way..."

"...from Akora? My name is Torley, what's yours?"



"Yes", said Galen, after a moments hesitation, "from Akora, and my name is Rillo, I was wondering..."

"Gee, that is pretty far—where you going?"

"Well before we can, we need some food and water, can you show us where we can get some for our journey east Torley?"

"Sure, see that store over there", answered Torley, pointing to a distant hut that had a couple of stalls outside containing what looked like food, "that's where you go".

"Thank you Torley, you have been very helpful". Galen replied, as he and Lucian began to walk towards the store.

"Okay, bye". Torley said, as he skipped back the way he had come, to do what young chimps do.

"Well, so far so good". Lucian whispered.

"Let's just hope so". Galen commented, as they made their way across the square towards the store, passing others of their kind and few humans as well. Luckily no one seemed to notice them, as they made their way to the store, and even if someone did like Torley, they didn't care or mind.

When the two approached what now seemed to be a food store and began looking at what food was available in the stalls. An elderly chimpanzee exited the store's front doorway to greet them. "Hello my friend's, and what do I owe this pleasure, I see you have an eye for quality, you won't find any better vegetables and fruit than here I can assure you".

"Thank you kind sir", said Galen, "my companion and I wish to purchase some of your fine food for our journey east".

"Then this is the place my friends, my name is Silas, please come in and look around, I'm sure there is something you will need and perhaps a little bit more", suggested Silas, indicating with his open arm to follow him into his store, "strangers here are always welcome in Vanore".

While Galen and Lucian were looking around to see what they could purchase, Silas was observing them, "So my friends, where are you from?"

"We came from Akora, and are heading eastward". Galen answered.

"How far are you going east then, all the way to the sea?"

"Yes, all the way to the sea, I have relatives to visit". Galen told Silas as he began to select what food he needed and told Lucian to do the same.

"That's a long way, my friend".

"Well, one does what one has to do".

“How very true, naturally you do know the way?” Silas questioned, trying to find out about these strangers, whom he began to have his doubts about, he could always smell a fish, always.

“We did have a map, but I somehow lost it on the way here”. Lucian acknowledged, trying to gain more information of where they were.

“Just your luck friend—I didn’t catch your name”.

“Cyrus”.

“Cyrus my boy, I just happen to have a map to help you on your way again, naturally it will cost extra”.

“Naturally”, Lucian agreed, looking at Galen for confirmation, as he nodded his head in agreement.

“Splendid, I’ll just add it to your bill of sale”. Silas grinned, as he moved behind the counter to take out a rolled up map ready for purchase.

“Silas, my Friend”, said Galen sarcastically, “is there a well where we can refill our water skins?”

“Of course, it’s just around the back, no charge”. Silas replied with a small chuckle.

“You are most kind—Lucian take the skins and fill them while I finished our business here with our friend”. Galen told the young chimp, looking back at Silas smiling.

While Lucian was doing just that, Galen began to pay for the food with small strips of gold in the hope that Silas would accept these as payment. Which for him was lucky indeed, as Silas did accept them with great gratitude and surprise, knowing that gold was a rare commodity in these parts. Silas watched as the two chimpanzees left the store from his window, then went back to his counter to recount the gold he collected smiling to himself as he did so. Luck was with him today he thought, and with this newly purchased gold I could buy and improve my business and perhaps begin to expand to other villages.



## **JOURNEY TOWARDS THE GREAT EASTERN SEA 22ND APRIL 3115**

Viridon and Burke were waiting patiently behind the brushes watching the village for any signs of their friends to return, and within the hour they were rewarded by two chimpanzee figures cautiously making their way back towards them, carrying four backpacks and water skins.

"I didn't realise how heavy these things were". Lucian huffed, as he and Galen rejoined their human friends.

"Don't worry Lucian", said Burke, "think of the muscles you're building to impress the girls".

"But I'm not interested in human girls".

"Galen", asked Viridon, "how did it go down there?"

"We did alright", handing their backpacks to Viridon and Burke, "no one stopped to question us, except a young chimp who directed us to where we could get some food. Apparently the town we first came across was called Akora and this village's name is Vanore".

"We even got a map of the area too". Lucian put in confidently.

"That", said Galen, feeling a bit annoyed, "was an almost stupid thing you did back there Lucian, thankfully we did get away with it, but I think", turning to Viridon and Burke, "Silas the store keeper was getting suspicious of us".

"Was that due to the gold Galen?" Viridon questioned.

"I don't know, he seemed surprised when I showed him I could pay him in gold, I just don't know".

"Well", informed Burke, putting his backpack on, as did the others, "we won't be sticking around to find out, and with the help of the map, perhaps we can make our journey just a little bit quicker".

"Okay", confirmed Viridon, "let's take a look at this map".

Viridon took the map from Galen and unfurled it to see where they were and where they were heading, as the other three gathered around him to look also, Viridon said, pointing to the map, "This is where we are now, this village of Vanore and that's where Xavian and Urko are, in Akora; if we can keep using this main road that seems to go almost all the way to the Great

Eastern Sea, which in my time was called the Atlantic Ocean, we should be able to turn southwards here and head for Cape Kennedy”.

“It’s still a long Alan”, Burke said.

“Yeah, I know, if we could get a couple horses or a wagon, we could get there a little faster and stay ahead of Urko too”.

“Well, as you know”, said Galen, “horses are out of the question, and as for a wagon, maybe this next village called”, looking at the map again, “Desma may have one that we can purchase, plus we can get more supplies for the wagon to carry”.

“What about Alan and Pete”, asked Lucian, “if some gorilla trooper came along?”

“We could hide under the wagon or jump out and hide beside the road”. Virdon told Lucian.

“Anyway”, said Burke, “it sure beats walking if we can do it”.

“I agree”, said Virdon, nodding his head, “It’s worth a try, we’ll head for Desma and Galen and Lucian can, I hope get us a wagon. Okay let’s move on a little away from here and find a spot to have some well earned lunch”.

Just as our group of friends disappeared over a small hill behind them to go around Vanore, a gorilla trooper coming from Akora galloped into view and headed towards the village. As he trotted into the village square, Silas was taking his afternoon walk, which he did so after lunch for exercise and noticed the gorilla and came up to him.

“What can we do for you officer?”

“I have a ‘most-wanted’ for you to pin up on your notice board”, the gorilla officer told Silas.

“My—my more thieves and bandits”.

“No—not exactly”, said the gorilla, giving Silas the ‘most-wanted’ poster, “can you hang it up for me?”

“Of course, anything I can do for the law is my pleasure”.

“Good; have you seen any strangers in the past couple of days, like two male humans and two male chimpanzees? They’re travelling together”.

“Not that I can recall officer we seldom get any visitors here, even strangers”.

Just then, Torley with a couple of his young friends came along to see what was happening, and just caught the last word Silas had said”.

“Strangers? There were strangers here”.

“Where?” The gorilla officer asked softly, as to not frighten the young chimp, so he could get some more information out of him.

“They went to Silas’ store for food”. Pointing to Silas and his shop.

“I see”, said the gorilla, looking at Silas angrily, “I think you and I should have a friendly little chat Silas”. Getting down from his horse.

“Now-Now, officer they were only two chimpanzees, strangers yes, but I didn’t see any humans with them”.

“Did you see any human strangers with the chimpanzees, young one?” The gorilla asked Torley.

“No, just them; and my name is Torley”.

“Well, thank you Torley for all your help, I’ll just have a talk with Silas here about those chimpanzees, you can go now and play”. The gorilla officer said, putting his arm around the now nervous Silas’ shoulder and walking him towards his store with horse in tow. As Torley and his friends went off in the opposite direction all excited about what had just happened. It was Torley who decided then and there to make himself important by telling his friends about these strangers he met, and for the rest of the day, Torley’s friends thought he was the best friend that they ever had.

**CAPE KENNEDY, INSIDE THE FACILITY  
19TH MAY 3115**

Richards was in his quarters lying on his bed taking a break from writing in his daily journal, which was an essential part of his routine and very important as a report of information gathered about what lay ahead and what to expect in the year of 3115. It will be all there when he'll finally make it back home and present his findings to Dr. Hughes, as evidence of future life on planet Earth dominated by the Apes. It will also act as a blueprint for the others that will follow him into this distant future, a future that may hold a key to Humanity's survival. A survival destined to fail if 'Phase 1' is not successful.

It was nearly noon, and soon his fellow astronauts will be going to lunch, after breakfast this morning Richards told them to meet him in the kitchen area when lunchtime came around so he could discuss their primary mission, as well as other things that came to mind. With all things considered we're doing all right Richards thought, all that was left to do besides clearing Launching Bay 2 was to get the Swifter together for the journey to New York. The Swifter was a specially designed boat developed by ANSA, a sleek fifty-footer a cross between a yacht and a cruiser that had a combination of a mainmast sail as wind power and engines to match for short high speed get-up and go with solar panels to power up the electronics and on-board computer systems, it was a real gem.

By using the Swifter to travel by sea, the crew of the Nemesis would be able to avoid any apes that they came into contact with on land and thus minimize any danger to themselves; since the apes were afraid of water it made sense to go by sea and also it would be quicker. Richards glanced at the wall clock as he got up and gave himself a little stretch before making his way out. As he entered the kitchen, Richards was greeted by the sight of his companions sitting at the table waiting for him to arrive. He too sat down to join them beside Merryll and said, "Okay, the first thing on the agenda is Hydroponics, how's it coming along Natalie?"

"With the various seeds we were able to take with us, they are only now taking root, so we should have various fruit and vegetables depending on their growth rate in about two to three months time if we're lucky. The water-purifying and water conversion units are functioning as well as expected, so there won't be any trouble there".

"Except", put in Smith, "that our current supplies of food won't last for two months, two weeks, tops".

"Well, we'll just have to try to catch some fish and the local game around here", added Harden, "I've noticed what seems to be rabbits for one thing".

"As I have indicated before", continued Merryll, "eating fish and meat maybe fine, but I am worried about radiation poisoning and other germs and viruses that might be present in them and what other mutations may have occurred over the centuries. Our bodies may not be adaptable to what we have to eat. The effects may not be present straight away but will be after a while, even if there is no radiation there may be other concerns that could effect our health in the long run".

"I don't think we have much of a choice Natalie", said Richards, trying to think things through, "it may have to come to that and soon. We could use the decontamination chamber to clear the fish and animals caught for one thing, and besides Kyle is right, we've only got two weeks of rations left, three at the very most and the food from the Hydroponics won't be ready for another two months maybe even longer. We'll just have to risk it, and besides before the rations do run out, I want us to fix that bomb. So to that end", turning back to Smith, "Kyle did you check out the Amphibious Storage Section?"

"Sure did, and all the pieces to assemble the Swifter are all there, the main body is all intact, all we just have to do is put in the electronics, the mainmast, the fuel, the solar panels and the engines".

"Speaking of fuel, are the fuel tanks under the storage section okay?"

"Yeah, the tanks show no signs of leakage or damage".

"Good, after lunch we'll get started in assembling the Swifter, Kyle how long do you think it will take with the four of us working on it to get it ready for launch?"

"Well as I've said, the main body of the boat is all there, we could actually launch it now, and work on her on-board ship, the mast and sails should take about half a day, the electronic components three days, the engines about two, and the fuel, if all goes well in a couple of hours".

"Okay, after lunch we'd better get started, now, I know we haven't had much of a break since we've landed; it's been pretty much go-go-go to get this Facility up and running and I thank all of you for putting in the effort up to this point, and when the Swifter is ready to go, it will take at least between eight to ten days to get to New York, so during that time we will rest as much as possible, hell, I don't think a ten day cruise is going to hurt anyone".

—\*—\*—

After lunchtime was over, while Smith went ahead to see about the Swifter, Richards asked Harden about the bomb, "Laureen, how long will it take to reconfigure the bomb?"

"Well the 'Alpha-Omega' will not be a piece of cake, it's not like changing a wire here, or putting a wire there, it will take some time. When Kyle and I were practicing back home on a dummy bomb to see how long it would take, we had the reconfiguration done in about one hour".

"That's fifty-five minutes too long".

“Considering it just takes thirty seconds to destroy the world, it isn’t long enough”.

“All right Laureen, I’ll speak to you and Kyle later, you better go”.

“Yes sir”. Laureen said, and off she went to see what Smith was up to.

Merryll who was still seated at the table wanted to have a little chat with Richards, “Will, why the hurry to get the bomb done, I thought we had plenty of time or is it because of the food or something else?”

“Well, as far as the food situation I think we can handle it and when we leave for New York, you better take the Geiger counter to help check any fish we’ll be catching to eat along the way to help prolong our rations; as far as the bomb is concerned, I’m just that kind of guy that likes to get the job done as soon as one can that’s all, and while we are able to do so. Sure we may have plenty of time but that’s no excuse, the sooner our primary mission is completed, the sooner we can concentrate on our secondary one”.

“As you say the sooner the better, remember Kyle and Laureen are the experts with the bomb, if it takes an hour, it takes an hour”.

“Yeah, I know you’re right but still...” Richards said, not quite happy.

“But what I was really concerned about was our health, I was going to question you about us taking a break, but our cruise to New York will fix that”.

“It sure will”, confirmed Richards, “you see, I’m not such a bad Commanding Officer after all, am I?”



**CAPE KENNEDY, SEA VOYAGE TO SALVATION  
26TH MAY 3115**

The Swifter was moored at the dock fully assembled and ready to go as the crew of the Nemesis were preparing to leave to go to New York. A couple of days ago they went on a hunting trip in and around the Cape and were able to catch some game, mostly rabbits but also a couple of birds or two; not only that but the crew also tried their hand at fishing and were successful in their endeavours to stock up their rations, which was now getting low, there was even some so-called native vegetables found, but they were left where they were until the Nemesis crew got back, so they could examine them properly. Naturally Merryll had to examine all the animals and fish caught for possible radiation poisoning and other forms of mutant substances that might be present before the animals and fish were cleared to be eaten; and thankfully the results proved negative which was a sigh of relief for all concerned.

Now all was ready for the trip to New York, and if all went well in about nine days time or so the Swifter would reach New York Harbour. While Smith and Harden were on the boat making final preparations to leave, Richards and Merryll were securing the Facility and making sure all was in place since the crew won't be back for another eighteen to twenty days. So it was imperative that their base be locked down for the duration. This Facility was their only home and their only means of support and survival in this nightmare world, and their only link to their own time and sanity.

Richards met Merryll at the entrance to the Amphibious Containment Section as they were both ready to leave. "All sections secure, and all the doors locked?"

"All sections have been checked and sealed, how about you?"

"Same here, okay, let's join the others". Richards said, as he punched in the combination lock from a keypad panel located beside the door frame to close the inner doors into the Facility and then as both he and Merryll left the corridor to go outside, Richards did the same again to close the outer doors. Once done he rejoined Merryll, and both made their way towards the Swifter. Richards took a final look back at the Facility before he turned around and jumped on-board, he ordered Kyle to start the engines and to move out towards the open sea. With Smith at the wheel, Merryll and Harden were at their stations waiting to unfurl the sails.

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When the Swifter was ten minutes out into the open sea, Richards shouted to Smith, "Right. Kyle cut the engines", then to the women, "Natalie and Laureen, unfurl and hoist the sails".

The Swifter's mainsail was let loose and with the help of Richards, Merryll and Harden hoisted the mainsail to take to the wind, which it did so successfully. The Swifter was on her way; the human race had reconquered the high seas once again. A light blue speck against a dark blue ocean of freedom, a freedom so vast that not even the apes could have conquered it with their beliefs and doctrines that has been the norm for hundreds of years. A sweetness of innocence coupled with the baptism of the breeze that binds the sacred, has blessed the Swifter once more as well as its crew who occupy her to a new journey, to a new destination, to a new danger. To a new calm before the storm, but the storm will not be at sea, but inland, into the sea of silence, into the depths of forgotten souls, who have been plagued and scarred for life. A life haunted by distant memories, of past glories of death and destruction, a destruction not of their making.

"All right, this is the plan", Richards informed the group, while he had them all together, "we'll travel during the day and rest at night, naturally it would be quicker if we continued during the night but I'm in no hurry to get to New York now that we are on our way, and besides the more refreshed we are for the mission the more alert we'll be. Kyle can we maintain an average speed of about ten knots an hour?"

"With this baby", patting the ship's steering wheel with a smile, "I can probably do twelve to fifteen".

"We'll do a twelve hour run a day and see how we go", turning to Harden, "Laureen, go below and check our computer and our position and see if the satellite is receiving us?"

"Aye, aye Captain". Harden responded, as she way down below to check on the electronic equipment.

"The sails should be alright for now", Richards told Merryll, as he looked at the main in full sail, "you can go below if you like?"

"I might stay up here for awhile, to breathe in the fresh sea air".

"Sure, don't blame me if you get sunburn". Richards said, as he turned to Smith, "Kyle, can you stay at the wheel for a bit, we'll take turns so we can all enjoy and relax as we go?"

"No problem skipper, I haven't done this for awhile anyway", Smith, replied, who was having fun at the wheel.

"Okay, I'll relieve you in two hours".

Richards then went below to see Harden, leaving Merryll and Smith up top to enjoy the sea. "How's our GPS?" he asked, as he entered the forward compartment housing the Swifter's computers.

"All in working ordering", responded Harden, sitting at the computer consol watching the screen that was showing where the Swifter was in relation to the surrounding ocean, "this..." pointing to a blip shaped boat, "...is us, and that's the Cape".

"I know I shouldn't ask, but, are there any other vessels in our vicinity?"

"No, should we expect any?"

"According to our information the apes are afraid of water, but that doesn't mean they can't build ships of their own to use them for exploration and fishing purposes".

"Maybe they don't have the technology or the courage to try".

"Perhaps, I don't know, but just the same keep an eye on things".

"Will do".

"I'll get Natalie to relieve you in two hours, and if you need me I'll be in my cabin". Richards informed Harden as he left.

Richards entered his cabin and went to lie down on his bunk putting his hands behind his head; well this is it, he thought, we're on our way to complete our primary mission. If there's one thing Dr. Hughes couldn't figure out and plan was how we are going achieve our goal in reconfiguring the bomb. Especially if there are any mutant telepaths around, Lord knows how many of them there are to avoid if possible, and even if we make it, it will take at least an hour to do the bomb; and one hour is a long time to stay undercover. If we are discovered I hope it's after we fixed the bomb and not before, at least we can make a run for it using the SDU's, and if worst comes to worst, we may have to shoot our way out. I'll have to take some explosives with me just in case as well, to plant on our way in to cover our exit if any mutants come after us. That'll be our insurance; and to maximize our foray into the cathedral we'll go under the cover of darkness—even mutants have to sleep sometime. The fate of the world came a little closer today, and will rest upon our souls, to be more precise, on Kyle and Laureen. They're the experts, and it'll be their job to fix the bomb. The success of this mission will breathe new faith and new hope; to fail, will be the end, the end of everything precious and dear to all living things...

**NEW YORK CITY, INSIDE THE MUTANT TELEPATHIC COMMUNE  
5TH JUNE 3115**

His Excellency the Reverend Janus was at his desk in his office going over some of the reports concerning the apes. Every so often on various occasions his people would capture an ape for interrogation and gather as much information as possible about the outside world that has become a plague of disease, death and destruction. Janus had just finished reading the latest report on a recently captured gorilla who strayed too close to what it called the Forbidden Zone, and what if anything could be gained from such a primitive animal mind. How could these animals with such limited intelligence have conquered the known world was beyond him; they were children at best, acting out their whims and fantasies to anyone stupid enough to follow their example.

But he knew how it all began, it was in the history books; it all started with that chimpanzee named Caesar. The so-called 'Messiah' ape that liberated his oppressed enslaved brothers to rebel against their supreme masters. If it weren't for him, we wouldn't be in this situation, hiding below the ground waiting for our turn to reclaim our rightful place, our rightful home, our Earth. For centuries we have gained strength in our abilities; when the cleansing had run its course it was found that his people began to experience certain telepathic awareness. This awareness led to—thanks to our forefathers—a further development to enhance these gifts. These gifts became a blessing, a blessing granted by our one true God, whom we give thanks to every week. Our God, our saviour, our protector, our benefactor, our liberator from the evils that contaminate this world, and who will one day purify the Earth and make it whole again for the faithful.

But until then his people were safe from such madness and horror from the surface. For down here within the bowls of the earth Mankind has survived for centuries to one day reclaim that which was lost to him—his home and his rightful place upon the surface, to breathe once more the purity of the air, to see the blueness of the sky, to feel the warmth of the sun upon his face again. In time this will happen, in time his flock shall leave their catacomb existence and venture forth onto the unsuspecting apes and deal with them as they have dealt with us; and in so doing release from bondage all other sub-humans that the apes have enslaved, and together build a new human civilisation. Naturally the newly liberated sub-humans will work for us, while we develop, organise and control this new society to better our future, and to ultimately better ourselves and to begin again a new chapter in human history.

The second coming.

Janus was shaken awake from his thoughts by a knock on his door. "Come". He responded.

The door opened to reveal Janus' second-in-command, a man named Markus, who approached Janus carrying a folder. "Your Excellency, here is the final report on that ape we caught". Handing the folder to Janus, who took it and gave it a quick glance, then put it down on his desk.

"Excellent Markus, how is that animal faring at the moment?"

"It calls itself Sergeant Chadda".

"Animals without brains Markus don't have names. Is it strong enough to use for our experiments?"

"Yes, the gorilla is as well as can be expected for our purposes".

"Good, tomorrow we will use it to see how developed our young children can use their telepathic powers, and from there we can train the more advanced ones who show exception". Janus got up from his chair and put his hands behind his back and walked towards the bookshelf beside the wall on his right, then turned to face Markus. "You seem to have a soft spot for these animals Markus?"

"They may not be our equal your Excellency, but these apes possess some intelligence that has guided them to develop their own society, we must not forget that".

"I will grant you that point my friend, but remember the beast is within, and it must be killed, we are the true inheritors of this world. Do you think I like to live down here, while these apes as you call them live and breathe in the sunshine? We must make ready our deliverance from this hell and rise up to the heavenly vestiges of freedom and rebuild from the ashes a new Mankind, a new beginning for all to share".

"If that is the case your Excellency, these apes will not be easy to defeat, they are more numerous than us and they have weapons—rifles, guns".

"That is why time is on our side Markus, and that is why our God has granted and blessed us with these telepathic abilities for us to use against our enemies. You forget that there are the sub-humans that live with the apes; they will help us defeat these animals once we liberate them from their bondage. We will have an army Markus, and we will be victorious".

"We could organise small raiding parties and attack the ape settlements closest to us during the night, that could help disrupt them long enough for us to librate any humans there and perhaps rally them to our cause; or perhaps make contact with the humans first and develop an alliance and gain their trust and with their knowledge we can learn more about the apes weaknesses?"

“What you say is true Markus, but we are small in number and raiding these animal settlements would be too risky at this stage, but I will consider it. As for making contact with our sub-human cousins, that would be a course worth pursuing. But...” coming closer to Markus to speak to him, “...that too has a certain amount of danger, because we would have to trust these sub-humans about our existence. Remember no one knows we exist down here ape or human, if we expose ourselves, we put ourselves in danger and everything we have worked for will be lost if we are discovered”.

“This is true your Excellency”, confirmed Markus, “but I do believe it's worth the risk, we need more information”.

“Very well Markus”, said Janus, walking back to sit down at his desk, “I shall ponder what you have said, good work on the animal and prepare him for the tests tomorrow”.

“Thank you your Excellency”, said Markus, giving a slight bow, “I shall go at once and make arrangements”.

When Markus left, Janus picked up the folder containing the final report on the gorilla and put it to one side. Then he opened the draw beside him and pulled out a thick black leather bound book, and placed it in front of him to read. I must prepare for my sermon tomorrow he thought, as he gently caressed the book's front cover softly with his hand. The slightly faded gold lettering embossed on the cover's face read:

**Classification: Top Secret**

**Authorized Personal Only  
By  
Presidential Order**

**‘Alpha-Omega’**

**Instruction Manual**



### **NEW YORK CITY, OR WHAT'S LEFT OF IT, IF ANYTHING AT ALL 5TH JUNE 3115**

It was early morning when the Swifter entered what seemed to be New York Harbour; it was an eerie experience for the crew as they cautiously surveyed their surroundings, the light to heavy fog that filled the atmosphere around them gave the place an almost ghost-like appearance, with various twisted shaped monoliths breaking the hazed misty surface in the distance that were once buildings and skyscrapers. With the Swifter on silent mode, her engines hardly made a sound, as Richards directed Smith who was at the wheel to move in closer and together they should be able to find a place to dock. Merryll and Harden had just finished tying up the mainsail and then made their way astern to join Richards and Smith.

"Natalie", said Richards, as the two women approached, "you'd better go down below and give us a radiation reading, I want to know if it's safe to venture any further in this God forsaken place".

"Okay Will, keep your fingers crossed". Merryll answered, as she made her way down below to check her readings.

"I could go down below and help navigate the ship, if you like?" Harden asked.

"That might not be a bad idea, do that and see where we're heading, but I think it would be better to anchor the ship anyway until the fog lifts".

Harden gave Richards a nod and joined Merryll down below. "I think we'd better stop for the moment to get our bearings and perhaps wait awhile for this fog to clear". Richards called out to Smith.

"Aye, aye skipper, I don't want anything to happen to this baby. It'll be a long swim back". Smith said, as he turned off the engines and deplored the anchor.

"That's for sure, and I didn't even bring my swimmers".

"It feels like a thousand eyes are watching us", Smith added, trying to see what lay beyond his vision.

"You maybe right Kyle, a thousand souls and more died that day when this city was attacked. It feels like the smoke is still rising from the ashes..."

"...or the dead rising from their graves trying to find their way to eternal peace".

"Well at least we won't be joining them just yet", put in Merryll, as she returned to report her findings, "the readings I got indicate low to medium radiation".

"And that means...?"

"It means we should be okay for at least forty-eight hours".

"We only need twenty-four tops before we have to leave", added Richards, "I don't want to stay here any longer than is absolutely necessary".

"In any case when we get back to base, I want us in decontamination first thing, and I mean it".

"Don't worry doctor, I won't argue with you there". Turning to Smith, "Kyle, why don't you go below and prepare our gear for going ashore".

"You got it". Smith answered, as he left topside.

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It was a couple of hours before the fog lifted and Harden was able to indicate a suitable place for the Swifter to dock. If New York seemed like a ghostly visage while the early morning fog was around. It was worse when it lifted to reveal a more startling landscape; New York was a forest of the warped and the abnormal, buildings burnt to the ground, some blown up leaving giant holes that seemed bottomless, others were distorted and perverted, resembling giant melted candles. While other buildings stood as massive skeletons of steel and iron, their framework suggested that a mad demented artist was at work playing and toying with them to satisfy his macabre mind in creating a masterpiece of the morbid and deathly. Even the streets and roads were like frozen lava flows where the tar and bitumen had seemly oozed out from the ground below creating its own montage of rock, brick, cement sprinkled with glass and metal. New York a deserted wasteland a glean in the Devil's eye, if Hell had a winter, then New York City was the place to be, the chill of death and destruction was everywhere. The howl of the profane and the damned, it was an eternal nightmare that will never wake, a frightening reminder of what Man can do, when his dreams become reality.

It was just after breakfast when Richards assembled the crew for the mission briefing. As they sat around the table Richards outlined what he had in mind. "Right, this is the plan, while it's still daylight, Harden and I will make our way to the Cathedral, it shouldn't take long than a couple of hours, along the way we'll plant Location Markers so we'll know our way in the dark, because I intend to do this mission at night. In this way we will have the element of surprise and I'm hoping if there are any mutants around they'll be asleep when we enter from St Pat's. This will give us a better chance to reconfigure the bomb without interruptions. When the Location Markers have been set and we find the secret entrance into the underground stairway leading underneath the Cathedral we'll head back here and wait till twenty-two hundred, then move off".



It took a moment for all the information to sink in, but it was understood by all, in going at night this minimized the team's chances of being discovered by any mutants and maximized Smith and Harden's chances to reconfigure the 'Alpha-Omega' as quickly and as quietly as possible. If all goes well within the next fifteen hours the Nemesis' primary mission will be a success with the mutants none the wiser.

"Kyle, Laureen", continued Richards, "I know this may sound profound, but the fate of this world is in your hands, you two have the power of life and death at your fingertips, if ever both of you wanted to play God, well, this'll be as close as you're going to get. One hour is a long time, and with the help of Natalie and myself, we'll keep you covered as long as we can in case we are discovered. Both of you are not; repeat not to abandon your stations for any reason until the bomb has been fixed. If we have to kill some mutants, so be it. Do you both understand?"

Both Smith and Harden nodded in agreement.

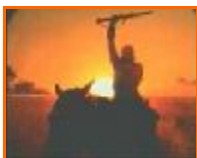
"Good. Kyle has all the equipment been checked and ready to go?"

"Yes sir".

"Right, Laureen and I will go out and prepare for tonight's mission, while the both of you", indicating Merryll and Smith, "will stay here and guard the Swifter. Even though we will be in radio contact with our comm. links, if anything should happen to us for any reason before we come back. Then both of you will have to complete the mission without us as best you can, understood?"

Merryll and Smith both gave a "Yes sir". Nodding in agreement and then fell silent.

"Okay, let's do it".



## **NEW YORK CITY, ENTERING THE ABODE OF THE DEVIL 6TH JUNE 3115**

The residents of New York City use to say that it was unsafe to walk the streets at night after dark. Especially if the city was crawling with street gangs, petty thieves, hit and run drivers, rapists, organised crime, just to name a few. Well that may have been true in the twentieth century, but in the thirty-second century things have changed, dramatically. No need to worry about crime in the streets anymore, because there were no streets, no people, no city; only four lights of hope moving in a straight line in an nocturnal quest to find the final solution to a problem that never should have happened.

The Nemesis team lead by Richards in their all-black night reconnaissance gear complete with helmet with its built-in comm. link, carrying their backpacks, their SDU's and their ASI-66 automatic rifles, complete with gun-lights and built in silencers especially manufactured by ANSA for this mission, were making their way cautiously through the once proud city of New York. It was hauntingly dark and to a certain degree, mysteriously beautiful as they followed the Location Markers set earlier in the day by Richards and Harden as they were successful in finding their way to the Cathedral and back again, much to the relief of Merryll and Smith. Silently the four-member team walked through the maze-like streets, their gun-lights beaming on various structures, which caught the light trying to absorb it. They were accompanied by the full moon casting its luminous light, giving play to any shadows performing on the ground or any ruined wall becoming a forest of dancing souls the celestial beacon provided. The dance of death was everywhere and to add to this darkness of light, a slight breeze was being heard; giving a soft chilling morose sound; but the only true sound that could be heard was the soft light footsteps of Richards' team as they made their way silently across the city.

Finally the team were standing in front of St Patrick's Cathedral. It was nearly midnight. "Okay", whispered Richards, "this is it, check your SDU's, comm. links and weapons, making sure your silencer is in the on position. I decided at the last minute to carry gas grenades instead of explosives, there's no need to kill any mutants if we are discovered, we can use the grenades to aid our escape, hopefully after the bomb's been done; but if we have too, shoot to kill, that's an order, there are only four of us and God only knows how many of them there are inside. Also no talking once we're in unless it's an emergency, the less noise we make, the better our chances will be; any questions?" No one answered, "Kyle how's the bomb's beeper?"

"Going strong, it'll be easy to find once we get inside".

"Good, is everybody ready?" His three fellow team-members acknowledged with a nod of their heads, " then let's party".

"Hey skipper, it's just after midnight, do you know what day it is?"

"The sixth, so what?"

"D-Day".

"Oh yeah, Decommission Day..."

"...or Detonation Day". Harden added, as the four entered the Cathedral or what was left of it.

"Not much of a place of worship now", spoke Merryll, shining her gun light around the inner walls of the Cathedral, as the team made their way to the altar, "just terrible".

"When the Holocaust hit this city", said Richards, "nothing was spared not even the sacred".

"Hey", said Smith, using his gun-light to scan the altar, "the entrance has been in use".

"Our guess is when we were making our reconnaissance and found the place", added Harden, "the mutants or whoever is down there may have been using it as their entry and exit point to their underground base".

"Officially", spoke Richards, "there is only one entry point, but in reality there are two, the second one when I located it was all covered up by rubble, unless these mutants have made others, this is where we go in and out. Okay once we're in, keep your eyes open and mouths shut—Laureen open it". Indicating a small hidden panel on the floor beside the altar; Harden knelt down and opened the lid to reveal three buttons one black, one grey, and the other white, Harden pushed a white one, which in turn moved the altar to one side to expose a closed entrance way. Then Harden pushed the grey button and that too opened a pair of steel panels to disclose a set of stairs leading down beneath the Cathedral.

"Right, we're not in yet, at the bottom of the stairs, there should be a corridor which leads to the first security door, which in turn leads to a second, and then we go down another set of stairs to the third and final security door that will take us into the base where the bomb is situated. Now I'll need to go first so I can open the security doors along the way, Kyle when we are finally in, you'll take point and lead us to the bomb, I'll go second, Natalie third and Laureen you cover our backs, all clear?" the three nodded in agreement, "Good, down we go into the Devil's lair".

The team descended into the depths of a forgotten oblivion now occupied by the victims of past sins. It took the team about twenty minutes to get to the final entry point and emerge into a hallway with a couple of doors on either side and affixed on its walls were lamp lights in-between those doors leading to another doorway at the end of the corridor. With a quick hand signal, Richards indicated to his team to switch off their gun

lights since there seemed to be enough luminosity showing to guide them to where we were going.

As they exited the hallway, they entered another one, but this time instead of doors on either side, there were small white busts of men perched on Roman column-like pedestals all along the way, with names like Reverend Tiberius or His Eminence Lavinus II or His Holiness Decius the Wise. Very slowly the team led by Smith left the area and walked on, it was about 00.30 hours when Smith indicated a flight of stairs to his right, which exposed a large courtyard with three tunnels. As the team descended, Smith was looking at his location finder to determine which tunnel to take, and signalled the middle one. But before they could go on, the team heard a couple of voices coming their way and immediately tried to find what little cover they could separately to avoid detection within the shadows of the courtyard.

Two figures emerged from the middle tunnel, one man and one woman wearing some form of grey-white robes with matching caps on their heads covering their hair. As they moved out of the tunnel they stopped and the woman asked, "Can you hear anything?"

"Leila, only my eyelids trying to close for lack of sleep, it's late, come, the sooner we go to bed the better". The man said, taking Leila's arm and the couple moved on entering the left tunnel, then disappearing around its bend.

So, Richards thought there are mutants down here, they seemed pretty normal to me, no sign of any disfiguration or mutation from any radiation sickness or exposure, but you never can tell, can you? Richards hand signalled his team to stay where they were and wait a minute before moving themselves, to make sure the couple were out of hearing range, then he signalled again to move into the middle tunnel. When they re-appeared from the tunnel, they came into view of what looked like a chapel with rows of benches on either side of the room and to their left was the Cathedral's organ, how the mutants accomplished moving it to down here was anyone's guess. Then as they scanned the room all the team's eyes centred on the front dais where in its centre was the control panel for the 'Alpha-Omega' complete with clear fibre optic cylinder rods that acted as buttons protruding from the top. Richards silently called his team together.

"Well Kyle", whispered Richards, "there's the control panel, you and Laureen better get to work, while Natalie and I will stand guard near the entrance".

"Got it, skipper", whispered Smith, "the bomb must be in its silo just in front of the dais, the beepers' going wild".

"Then let's get to work, remember, wasting time is not an option, the sooner we're out of here the better".

**NEW YORK CITY, THE BOMB, THE MUTANT AND THE ONE-HOUR WALTZ  
6TH JUNE 3115**

00.40 Hours.

It was getting late and Janus decided to retire for the night, but before he decided to do so, he wanted to visit the chapel just one more time and pray to his one and only true God. I shall pray he thought, that our gifted children will one day go out into the world above and crush our animal oppressors, and with the knowledge gained from our tests and experiments of these captured animals we will learn their weaknesses and make them pay for the pain and suffering we the last of our human race have endured over the centuries. We must claim back what which is rightfully ours, we must, we must; Janus got up from his desk and picked up the 'Alpha-Omega' manual and put it under his arm and left his office.

Smith and Harden were standing on the dais by the control panel, and with a casual grace Smith pushed down a white tipped clear fibre optic cylinder rod, there was a slight tingling on his fingertips as the Chrysalis inside the control panel registered his DNA and they both watched as the silo doors opened to reveal just the tip of the 'Alpha-Omega'. Then Smith pushed down another cylinder rod colour-coded blue, as he did so the 'Alpha-Omega' silently rose up from its base, a gleam of metallic gold, a sleek shiny visage of death from a bygone uncivilized age, with the Latin/Greek initials A and O on the bomb's tail fins symbolizing the 'Doomsday' bomb's signature, as it finally stood there waiting for its next command. Richards and Merryll who were at the chapel's entrance took a quick look at the bomb as it stood there in all its destructive glory, they both looked at each other in recognition of what they saw, Richards remembered a passage from the bible, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last*, then he and Merryll returned to watching the tunnel for any mutants, while Smith and Harden did their work.

00.50 Hours.

As if by premonition Richards indicated to Merryll that he was leaving his position and moving out to scout around, this thought Merryll was not a good idea considering the situation the team was in, but Richards was the team's commander and he knew what he was doing, so Merryll had to stay behind and guard the remaining team alone while Richards left. This of course was probably fortuitous as Richards turned to his left; Janus was just turning to his right and within one second there met a clash of worlds, two pairs of eyes met each other and it took another five seconds before they both realized the situation.

Richards was the first to react by pointing his automatic at Janus' chest and spoke softly, "Don't move, don't even breathe and don't even call your friends for help using your telepathic powers, or I'll block your thoughts with this", putting his left hand on the SDU, as Janus' eyes watched him do so, "just try it and you'll get a jolt of pain, understand?"

With a nod of his head Janus understood. "Good", said Richards, "now let's just turn around and walk back the way you came, nice and slow". Janus did as he was told and Richards followed him from behind, by doing this Richards was making sure that this mutant didn't find out about what his team was up to; it was imperative that this mutant not find out that the bomb was being tempered with.

01.00 Hours.

Smith and Harden were hard at work operating on the 'Alpha-Omega's' internal matrix, while Smith was behind the bomb making his adjustments; Harden was facing the front doing her bit to complete her assigned tasks. They were both working, as quickly and silently as possible, getting the tools they needed from their backpacks as required. Smith took a quick glance at the chapel's entrance as he bent back up while he got what he needed from his backpack he saw only Merryll. Where's Richards? Smith thought, I hope nothing has happened, Smith decided not to ask Merryll via his comm. link, remember, only speak if necessary, besides he had other problems to deal with, and yes, it did feel like the world was on his shoulders. Just like the mythical Atlas, only this time it was real, very real.

Richards followed Janus into his office, and while Richards closed the door as gently as he could, Janus walked over to his desk and put the manual down that he was carrying and then turned around to face his unknown guest and spoke, "Perhaps now we can talk, I assume we can do so in a civilized manner?"

Richards lowered his automatic, but kept his left hand on the SDU. "As you wish, but remember I have this", showing the SDU, "my name is Colonel Richards".

"Janus, Reverend Janus, the leader of this commune in which you have entered unannounced and without permission".

"My apologies, but I'm here to seek information".

"You're not like the sub-humans on the surface, your dress is not of their wear, and your weapon is not of ape manufacture, where are you from?"

Richards moved in closer but not too close to answer Janus' question, "No, I am not a sub-human as you call it, but I am a human who cares about them and believe it or not about you and your people and even the apes".

"The apes", Janus said in disgust, "then truly you are not a friend of mine, they are animals and must be destroyed before my people can live on the surface again, as we have done so before, before the great cleansing".

“The Holocaust?”

“Is that what you call it, yes the ‘Holocaust’ the great cleansing that our one true God has delivered to us to rebuild our world again, to make pure once more in the eyes of the faithful”.

“I see, well let me assure you, I too wish to rebuild the world again and make it liveable for all concerned, so that peace may once again be paramount to the living”.

“Our God is life, he shall show the way”, as Janus touched the manual on his desk, as Richards looked on and saw what he touched, “this is the word of our God, our Saviour”.

It took a moment for Richards to read the manual’s front cover to realize what Janus meant, and then he used his comm. link to call Merryll. “Merryll, this is Richards, follow my signal, I’m in a room, do you acknowledge?”

“Acknowledge”. Came the reply.

01.10 Hours.

Merryll quickly and quietly approached Smith and Harden working on the bomb, “How’s it coming?”

“As well as can be expected”, whispered back Harden, “another thirty minutes or so and we should be done”.

“Good, Kyle what about you?”

“Same here; listen, where’d the skipper go to?”

“Same place where I’m going, be back shortly”.

Before Smith could question Merryll any further, off she went to find Richards. “They better be back soon, I don’t like being exposed like this”.

“Don’t worry, let’s do our job while they do theirs”.

01.20 Hours.

Janus was observing Richards as he spoke into a little microphone attached to his black helmet, “Are there others of your kind here within my commune?”

“Yes; tell me Janus, how many of your people live down here?”

“There is enough”.

Just then there was a slight creaking noise of the office door opening, as Merryll entered Richards turned around to see who it was, and when he did so Janus made his move towards Richards.

“Will! Watch out”. Merryll cried as loud as she would dare.

But instead of turning around to face Janus or to move away to avoid him, Richards quickly turned on his SDU and the effect was instantaneous, Janus stopped about three feet away from Richards, bent over with pain with his hands on his temples to try to lessen the aching in his head was making.

“Make it stop! Make it stop!”

Richards turned off the SDU, and he and Merryll came together to watch Janus recover. “I did tell you”.

“So you did”, said Janus, standing up straight again massaging his temples, “but I had to try”.

“I know; this is Dr. Merryll, doctor meet Reverend Janus the leader of this commune”.

“How do you do, are you alright?”

“Yes, I’m fine, thank you for asking”.

“Doctor? Have a look on Janus’ desk, I think you’ll find something of interest”.

Merryll walked over to the desk and saw the manual. “I don’t believe it”.

“Believe it, pick it up, we’re taking it with us”.

“You can’t”, said Janus, his voice raised in protest, “it is sacrilege, the word of our God is not for the unbelievers”.

“Then”, responded Richards, “we will read it and convert to his teaching”.

“You mock the word my friend, he who disbelieves is the disciple of the Devil”.

“The Devil is within us all, no matter how pure we are”.

Merryll walked back with the manual and stood beside Richards, who looked at his watch, which read 01.25 hours. “We’d better tie Janus up before we leave”, telling Merryll, “I don’t want him to alert his people, that we’re here, not just yet anyway”.

“Right”. Merryll agreed, as she put down her automatic and the manual and unslung her backpack to get out some of her bandages to use as rope.

“Reverend, if you please”, said Richards, pointing to the desk chair with his automatic, “not too civilized I know, but necessary, you understand?”



"I understand all too well Colonel Richards", said Janus as he sat down on his chair, while Merryll went to work tying him up, "we will meet again, be assured, and next time, I will be in the position to seek out information".

"Just one more thing Janus, how long have your people been down here?"

"My people have lived here since the 'Cleansing', but we have ventured outside for food and to explore, but only at night since we wish to avoid any contact with the apes, who do not know of our existence".

"Well, be secure in the knowledge that I will keep your presence here a secret, since I also wish to keep my being here from the apes a secret also, or for as long as possible, as I've said, I seek information, so we both are possibly looking for the same thing, but on different paths".

"Perhaps, but mine is the true path, for I have God on my side". This was the last thing Janus said before Merryll covered his mouth to silence him; then she rejoined Richards.

01.30 Hours

"Time to go". Richards told Merryll, "I'll rejoin you later". Merryll gave a questioning look but she understood as she left the room to rejoin the rest of the team; Richards stayed behind just a little longer and waited patiently to make sure Janus didn't do anything foolish and to give more time to Smith and Harden to reconfigure the bomb. It was 01.40 hours when he again looked at his watch.

"Merryll, all done?" Richards called in on his Comm. Link.

"Another two minutes".

"Good; meet you at the entry point, Richards out", then to Janus, who was watching Richards silently all this time, "nice meeting you Reverend, sorry about my intrusion but it was necessary, don't bother getting up, I know the way out; and yes we will probably meet again, and perhaps on better terms".

Richards left the room to rejoin his team, leaving Janus to struggle with his bonds, and mentally trying to contact Markus.

**THE SWIFTER, HEADING HOME WITH A JOB WELL DONE  
7TH JUNE 3115**

The crew were relaxing topside as the Swifter was making good progress home; Smith was at the wheel again while the others were having a well earned drink, even if it was water to celebrate their success.

"Hey Kyle!" called out Richards, "put the Swifter on auto, and come and join us".

"Be with you in a minute!"

"I swear if I love the boat more than us", Harden put in.

"Considering, this baby is one of a kind, and the most advanced sea-going vessel in its class, I'd be jealous too".

Smith came to join his fellow team-mates, for their celebration, as Merryll handed him his cup.

"Here's to the success and completion of our primary mission", as Richards raised his cup, followed by the others, "and to Kyle and Laureen who made it possible, the Earth now has a future, a future for all life to share".

"Here, here". Came the united response.

"You know skipper I was a bit worried when you and the doc left us there without cover". Smith added.

"It wasn't planned I know but luckily it turned out alright, and besides if this Reverend Janus had walked in on us he would have certainly alerted his security if any".

"It was lucky you walked away when you did". Merryll added.

"Call it, male intuition".

"Ha, ha".

"Listen Kyle, are you sure the bomb's okay, I mean with the adjustments you and Laureen made, are you sure the mutants won't find anything wrong if they re-examine it?"

"Not a chance, not unless they have their own specialist amongst their kind, remember the bomb is still functional, so when Taylor does push the button, it will still explode. I don't think these mutants know the destructive power or its range. All they know is what it does and how to launch it, hence the manual you were able to get from this Janus fellow".

"Is there another manual that might describe the bomb's range and destructive power?"

"No", answered Harden, "all that information was learned orally, there are no written records, and if you believe the President, even the plans for the 'Alpha-Omega' were destroyed, hence the creation of us". Indicating Smith and herself.

"That's right", continued Smith, "there are only six of us that know the bomb inside and out, and so any chance of any written records surviving in this time about the bomb's matrix is virtually non-existent".

"But you will agree there had to be some records to begin with like this manual when the bomb was being conceived and built?"

"Well sure, but according to what I've been told, all that information was destroyed when the bomb was finally constructed".

"And who told you that?"

"Dr. Hughes".

"And who told Dr. Hughes?" Merryll asked.

"The President".

"And who told the President?"

"The Joint Chiefs of Staff".

"In other words", said Richards, "there is no conclusive proof that the plans and or information pertaining to the 'Alpha-Omega' have been destroyed, they could still exist in some secret vault?"

"Well since you put it that way, maybe".

"As a military man, I know that you are only told information you need to know, and that's all. Remember, there is also information that you don't need to know, and that's the information, which is the most dangerous, if you have been told it doesn't exist, then chances are it does. Knowledge is power; power is knowledge. Never believe anything the government tells you, that way you will always have an objective mind, not a submissive one. All you have to do is make them believe that you believe in them and they won't touch you, go over the line and you disappear, permanently".

"So are you saying there could be more than one 'Alpha-Omega'?" questioned Harden.

“Why stop at one, why not have two or three; it may take only one bomb to destroy the world, but it could be defective when launched, so why not build a second one as a back-up, why do you think this mission has two specialists instead of one? Just in case one of you meets an unfortunate end, we have a second specialist to do the job”.

“You know that gets me thinking”, said Smith, “since we know the Holocaust became a reality, why didn’t the United States use the threat of the ‘Alpha-Omega’ to prevent it?”

“Perhaps it was the existence of the bomb that started it, or the Eastern Powers, whom if it can be believed had their own version, caused a stalemate, which resulted in limited nuclear strikes at key locations around the world. If either side used their ‘Doomsday’ bomb, that’s it, the end of the world”.

“But we don’t know when the Holocaust started, that’s a problem we need to know?” said Harden, “I mean if we knew maybe we could prevent it somehow”.

“How?” said Richards, “by going back in time? Sure that’s possible, but how would we convince the various world governments? No it’s too big a problem, we have to deal with the here and now, and more importantly the future. We’ve just gave the Earth it’s second life, another four billion years worth; if we can’t do something in that time to make the world a better place, then perhaps it would’ve been better just to let the Earth die. No there has to be another way, a better way, and that way is hope. A hope for a better more understanding future, if the Phoenix can rise up from its own ashes, than Man can be reborn from his own destruction.”

“Then here’s to the new Eden, where humanity will plant their own apple tree”. Merryll said, rising her cup, as did the others.

“And this time, may the best seed grow”. Richards added.

**ALMOST A JOURNEY'S END TO A MYSTERY WITHIN REACH  
20TH JUNE 3115**

The fugitives were making good to excellent progress since Galen and Lucian were able to purchase a wagon from the village of Desma, and ever since then it has made the journey much more easier and quicker, and they were also able to carry more supplies too which helped a lot. The only time Virdon and Burke were not allowed to ride in the wagon was when any gorilla patrols were sighted on the roads they were travelling on. It was on these occasions that a patrol would stop and ask who Galen and Lucian were and where they were going. Galen would respond by saying, to the next village and or going to visit a friend or a sick relative, this would appease the gorilla's curiosity and they would gallop away leaving Galen and Lucian alone with Virdon and Burke hiding in the bushes nearby, ready to come out when the patrol had gone.

"I can't help thinking how Urko is feeling not knowing that we're not on foot anymore", said Burke to Virdon, as they were riding on the back of the wagon with Galen in the driver's seat and Lucian sitting beside him at the front, "I mean we must've put quite a distance between us and him by now".

"Yeah that's for sure, according to the map we should be near or at Cape Kennedy in about another four days of so".

"Alan, I just hope you're right about this satellite, maybe it was an old computer glitch instead of a person that launched it?"

"Even so Pete, it means there's still a computer operating, and if there's one there maybe more; and with the help of the satellite we may be able to find more computer sites and possibly make better detailed maps of the Earth if we can, especially here, where we can find exactly all the ape and human settlements".

"What about Urko", put in Galen, who was listening, "I mean, do you think he's just going let you do what you need to do when we find whatever we're looking for?"

"Good point Galen", said Virdon, "but it's a risk we have to take, I don't know what we'll find when we get to Cape Kennedy, but this time I won't let Urko find us or what's there. If it's a waiting game we have to play with him, so be it, because he'll be waiting a long time. This is an opportunity of a lifetime and I'm not going to waste it again".

"If it's a waiting game", continued Lucian, "then we're bound to win because don't forget Urko and Crasis' gorillas are far from home, and they would want to return regardless of what Urko or Crasis thinks, three months away from home is a long time, six is even longer, when they finally return".

"That's true", said Galen, who turned his head around quickly to look at his human friends, then back again keeping his eyes on the road, "remember we apes are social creatures and if we are away for any length of time, we become restless, it's considered a bad omen and not good for one's health".

"Then I'm surprised Urko has come this far than he has". Virдон commented.

"Urko wants us dead, Alan, it's his only driving force, that's keeping him going".

"What about Crasis?" said Burke, "surely he's not like his father; I mean he's got nothing against us?"

"Crasis may be the new 'Head of the Security Forces' in Central City, but Urko still holds sway over him, whatever Urko wants he gets, the son cannot go against the father, it's unnatural".

"Well even so", said Virдон, "I'm hoping that Crasis' troops will do the rebelling, if that happens Urko will have to listen to reason, and if I know the military mind, Crasis won't want to lose face in front of his gorillas; they'll have to turn around and head for home".

"Yeah, and Urko would still be crazy enough to follow us alone to get us". Burke added.

"Pete, we are in a different world, where even the slightest change in simian society is looked upon as dangerous", said Virдон, "so when we came into the picture, there must've been a panic".

"Isn't change supposed to be good for the soul?" Burke asked.

"Sure, if the apes believe in it, no offence Galen".

"None taken", Galen responded, "our beliefs come from the Lawgiver; he believes all apes have a divine soul, a soul that is nurtured and grown through the experiences of life, and through life we learn and gain more knowledge to better ourselves in the next life".

"Reincarnation?"

"If you like. We prefer to call it a 'rebirth' of one's self, and when we have attained true self, we join our maker, finally freed from our physical burdens here on earth".

"That's what I learned in school", said Lucian, "The sacred scrolls of the Lawgiver, his word is the word of ape knowledge and forethought, without his guidance simian society would not have been as developed as it is now".

"I have to admit", said Galen, "that Xavian has made a lot of effort to re-introduce the Lawgiver's teachings of late; he believes the only way for us apes to gain civilization is through the Lawgiver's word".

After a few moments of silent contemplation, Burke decided that things were getting a little bit too religious for his liking, so he decided to change the subject, "Say Alan, wasn't there another village up ahead?"

Virdon got out from his backpack a scroll, which was the map of the area and unfurled it to have a look at where they were. "According to this we should be heading for a village called Bathar; it's the last village we'll come across before we have to take a turn off that I hope will lead us towards Cape Kennedy".

"How do you propose to lose Urko and his pals from finding us, considering we have this wagon and two horses?"

"I don't know Pete, but when we do get there, I'm hoping since we've gained at least a couple of days before Urko turns up we should be able to scout around and make a further assessment of the place; we can dismantle the wagon and hide the pieces easy enough, but the horses could be a problem, we need to find a safe place for them to hide out in so Urko won't find them. That's about as far as my thinking goes I'm afraid".

"Well it's better than nothing", said Galen, "and besides we've been in tougher scrapes before, something will turn up I'm sure, and if worse comes to worse, we can always lose the horses, they won't be too hard to replace".

"Always the optimist, Galen", smiled Burke, "that's what I like".

"It's a gift". Galen chuckled to himself in response.

**THE TASTE FOR REVENGE IS ALWAYS SWEET WHEN SOURED**  
**22ND JUNE 3115**

The convoy was moving as smartly as possible to keep up with the fugitives, Urko was in the front leading, while Crasis was checking the wagons to see if everything was in order including the convoy's moral which was by now not very high at all. As he finished his inspection Crasis slowly trotted back to join his father, his thoughts were on his troopers and how they were coping this far from home. Already there was talk of turning back and Crasis was feeling the pressure to side with them, and this made him very uneasy and unhappy, he was by definition their General after all and his gorillas were looking to him to take command and order the convoy's retreat, and as their Commanding Officer he understood their concerns and possibly their fears as well; as far as history was concerned no ape from the west has ever set foot this far into the eastern reaches of the country. For Crasis, he too wished to return home and if the convoy were to turn around and head back home, it was looking at another three months at least before anyone saw their families again.

For months now the convoy has been following in the trail of these so-called dangerous fugitives, as far as the scouts could figure out they must be at least two days behind them by now, and if they were that dangerous Crasis questioned himself, he still couldn't believe that two humans were a threat to simian society, there had to be another answer, an answer that his father was not telling him. But if the capture goes as planned he'll know soon enough about these astronauts from the stars. Crasis could remember his father showing him the strange metal ship that brought Virdon and Burke here when he was young, there wasn't much to see after it had been burned to conceal the evidence that humans came from beyond the sky, just a mass of blacken steel and beside it a grave of a third astronaut who's name was unknown.

"Where did it come from father?" Crasis asked, remembering that day he was first shown the astronaut's travelling ship.

"Who knows, but it is evil, and the humans that were inside it are evil as well; that's why I need to kill them so they won't infect our society and influence the other humans by telling them that they are superior to us Crasis".

"You mean humans built this ship, why?"

"To defeat us, make us weak, to make our humans think and be free of us. Humans need to be kept in their place Crasis, we must be their masters and control them, if not, they'll be turned into animals. It is we who have given our humans food, water, clothes and their own homes to live in. If these astronauts called Virdon and Burke try to tell a different story, there



will be confusion and chaos, questions asked, and our humans will rise up and think for themselves and believe that they should be our equals in simian society. That must not be allowed to happen”.

“And that is why these astronauts must die?”

“Yes, that is why, and it is my job, so you Crasis and the other chimps need not be afraid. Humans need to know their place in our society, so we can make them civilized”.

As Crasis almost reached the head of the convoy his thoughts turned to the present about why his father didn’t want to re-capture the fugitives just yet. Even though the convoy had made excellent progress to catch up with them, so why are we holding back? What are we waiting for? Ever since Urko had found out, when the convoy visited one of the villages to resupply it, was told that two chimpanzees bought a pair of horses and a wagon with gold, and since gold was a raw commodity in these parts, Urko surmised that it had to be Galen and Lucian. His father thought it was a very smart of them to purchase a wagon, considering it would hasten the fugitives’ journey to wherever they were going. So instead of capturing them as quickly as possible because of this, Urko decided to follow them. Crasis remembered their conversation they had at this point.

“Why father do we have to trail them, why don’t just capture them and get it over with?”

“Crasis, you don’t understand, yes I agree with you but where are they going? I have to find out, it could be something that might endanger our society, so it is very important to follow them and deal with whatever they have in store for us. Then and only then will we bring these fugitives to justice”.

“But whose justice father, yours or the Council’s?”

“Simian justice Crasis, simian. Virdon and Burke are going somewhere, after years of living in Tethos they suddenly decide to leave, why?”

“Maybe they got information about us coming after them?”

“No, I don’t believe so, I think it was just luck on their part that they left when they did”.

“And now?”

“Now, I’m pretty sure they know we’re after them, otherwise why did they buy a wagon? Virdon and Burke and the two renegade chimps are not stupid, they’re going somewhere on purpose, and I want to know that purpose, I need to know; and then we will have them”.

“I must inform you that my gorillas are not happy with this mission so far, I’ve already been questioned as to when we will be returning home”.

"Home! We are in no danger, true we are strangers here, but so far our eastern cousins have been kind and courteous, especially since we tell them that we come from the western part of the country. They are curious, as are we. We are not lost; we know where the villages are to get food and water. This should be an adventure, when we return, we will be hailed as heroes, we shall return in triumph, there will be stories to tell and history will record our deeds for the future generations to marvel at. I'm doing you and this convoy a favour".

"You may say what you like Councillor Urko", said Crasis, as defiantly as he could, "but be advised that if we do not re-capture these fugitives soon I will order this convoy turned around, and we shall head back home, with or without you, is that clear?"

"I see that Xavian has had some influence on you, in regards to this situation, but no matter, I understand, *I understand*".

Now as Crasis rejoined his father at the head of the convoy, the tension from their little discussions so far had eased somewhat. But Crasis still sensed that that his father was still brooding about them. Crasis was beginning to assert his authority, and little by little gaining more courage to defy his father. "I've just finished inspecting the wagons, everything seems to be in order".

"Good, soon we will deal with Virдон and Burke; I was just looking at our map of this area and apparently we seem to be heading towards the Great Eastern Sea. There's just one more village before that, called Bathar, we'll rest and get supplies there, before we move on again".

"If Virдон and Burke head towards the Great Eastern Sea", said Crasis, "then we will have them".

"True, unless they go north or south".

"If that's the case father I will not follow them, do you understand?"

"Perfectly", said Urko, not very impressed and a little angry, "just another week Crasis that's all I ask, just seven more days".

"Very well father, but after that, we go home". Crasis replied, as he trotted back though the convoy, giving his gorillas the news of their eventual return home.

Crisis my young simian, you are a fool, thought Urko, but no matter, if I have to capture Virдон and Burke myself, so be it, if they make it difficult, they're as good as dead.



### CAPE KENNEDY, IN THE HEREAFTER AND BEFORE NOW 24 TH JUNE 3115

Viridon and Burke stood alongside Galen and Lucian looking out over the Indian River towards Cape Kennedy. In the distance they could see the remains of various buildings that was once the centre of ANSA operations, and where Humanity had a gateway to the stars.

“Well there she is Galen and Lucian”, said Viridon, telling them with a little pride, “that was were Pete and I lifted off to go to Alpha Centauri”.

“Yeah”, said Burke, “and look at her now, something or someone really made a mess of it, Al, do you really think we’ll find whatever where looking for over there?”

“I hope so Pete, but we’ll know soon enough when we cross over, come on lets go”.

“Alan”, said Galen, “what about Urko?”

“If we find what we’re looking for, we’ll have to play hide and seek, and lead Urko on a merry chase, if we can lose him, we can come back”.

“I’m surprised that the bridge is still intact”, commented Burke, as he and the others got back on the wagon to go across, “let’s hope it’s stable?”

“It better be”, said Lucian, a little bit concerned, “I can’t swim”.

As the wagon made itself cautiously across the bridge to the other side, it triggered a hidden infrared sensor, which automatically activated an alarm in the Command Centre at the Facility. Smith who was on duty called the others and then trained various hidden cameras on the four unsuspected individuals, two male humans and two chimpanzees riding what looks like to be a wagon.

“What have you got?” Richards asked, as he came in the Command Centre followed by Merryll and Harden.

Smith showed Richards and the others on the main view-screen. “Looks like we have visitors”.

“Let me have a closer look Kyle”, as Smith switch on the zoom control to get a better look, “I don’t believe it, I just don’t believe it”.

“What’s the problem?” Merryll asked.

"Those two men, do you recognise them? If my memory serves me correctly, I think that's Colonel Alan Virdon and Major Peter Burke from the Hyperion mission, which launched back in 1980. Laureen retrieve the profiles on Virdon and Burke from the Icarus V files and put their photographs on the main view-screen so we can make a positive ID".

Harden did just that and put two standard ANSA photographs of Virdon and Burke taken around 1980 on the main view-screen to compare with the two men that are now being watched. "Well they look the same", said Harden, "just a little bit older that's all".

"Right, that's good enough for me", said Richards, "Natalie, you stay here and keep an eye on things, while Kyle, Laureen and I go and greet our long lost friends".

"What about the chimpanzees?" Merryll asked, "They could be trouble, even though they're not carrying any weapons".

"Don't worry we'll go armed just in case, they seemed to be heading for the Kennedy Space Center, we'll greet them there, we should be about thirty minutes".

As Richards, Smith and Harden prepared to meet their guests, Merryll kept watching them. She noticed that Virdon and Burke gave the impression that they were on good terms with the two chimpanzees, all nice and friendly like and they didn't seem to be at all threatened by them and the chimpanzees themselves looked and felt just as friendly towards Virdon and Burke. Well she'll know soon enough when the team brings them in for questioning.

—\*—\*—

"Natalie", informed Richards, on his comm. link, "are they still at the Center?"

"Yes, they're still inside, they seem to be looking for something".

"I'll be there in five minutes; keep me informed if anything changes".

"Okay".

Richards and his team made their way to the Kennedy Space Center, as they neared the main entrance to go inside the building the horses made a slight whinnying sound, but luckily it wasn't enough to alert Virdon, Burke and the two Chimpanzees inside. As the team entered silently Richards hand-signalled Smith and Harden to take up their positions to the left and right of him respectively, while they crouched down hidden from view to wait for his signal when their four guests decided to reappear, while Richards himself waited by the main doorway just outside.

Richards and his team waited patiently for any noise of Virdon's group to return to the main foyer, and then he heard them talking about not finding anything, while he silently counted to three before he revealed himself with his rifle raised. "Alright everybody freeze, don't make any sudden moves! Virdon and Burke move away from the chimps now!"

As Richards spoke Smith and Harden also revealed themselves with their weapons raised and trained on the group, Harden covered the two chimpanzees while Smith covered the two astronauts. Galen and Lucian froze in fright not knowing what to do next, as Viridon and Burke also froze by this sudden appearance of three armed humans in ANSA uniforms.

“Now Listen...” Viridon began to say.

“I said, move away from the chimps, now!” Richards repeated, still pointing his rifle at the two men.

Viridon and Burke did just that, but very slowly, when they were about ten feet away from their friends, Viridon spoke up again, “Okay we’ve done what you’ve asked, now just don’t do anything stupid, and don’t hurt our friends please; now who are you and what do you want? since you seem to know who we are”. Indicating himself and Burke.

Richards lowered his rifle slightly, but Smith and Harden still held theirs up guarding the two chimpanzees and the astronauts. “My name is Colonel William Richards, and these are Majors Kyle Smith and Laureen Harden, as you can see from our uniforms where from ANSA”.

“Listen pal!” said Burke, in a strong toned voice, “how about ordering your goons to lower their weapons, we’re not going to do anything and Galen and Lucian aren’t either, we’re on the same side”.

“That remains to be seen Major, okay, Smith and Harden lower your weapons, but be ready”.

“Well that’s a bit better”, said Viridon, seeing Smith and Harden lowering their rifles, “now maybe we can talk. You say you’re from ANSA, well so are we”.

“I know, the Hyperion mission to Alpha Centauri, but there were three of you, where’s Major Jones?”

“When we crash-landed, he didn’t make it”. Burke answered.

“I’m sorry to hear that, what are you doing here?”

“Are you responsible for the satellite orbiting the Earth?” Viridon asked eagerly.

“Yes Colonel, how did you know about that?”

“On a very clear night I saw it moving across the sky”.

“And you came here to investigate?”

“It was the first logical place to look”.

“How very observant of you, how long have you been stuck here?”

"About thirty years", put in Burke, "how about you?"

"Since about April this year, we came to complete our mission, but more about that later; who are your ape friends?"

"My name is Galen, and this is Lucian", answered Galen who had his arm around Lucian's shoulder trying to comfort him from the shock of this ordeal. Lucian was so terrified; he was shaking and needed Galen to console him.

"We mean you no harm, we have no weapons, I've been friends with Alan and Pete since they crash-landed here".

"That's right Richards", added Virdon, "if it wasn't for Galen we would've been dead by now".

"Right, I think we need to tell each other our stories before I can assess what to do next. Merryll", using his comm. link, "we're coming back with our guests". When Richards got his response he turned to Virdon, "Okay, we'll use the wagon to head back to the Facility".

"Here?" Burke asked, as the group began to move outside to get on the wagon.

"That's right, it's underground, I think you'll be impressed on what ANSA have been doing since you left".

"What year did you leave to come here?"

"1990, I'm the Commander of the Nemesis mission".

"You mean you have a ship here to go back to Earth?" Virdon said, getting a little excited.

"No, we have two".

That was all that was said as the wagon headed off towards the Facility, and hopefully for Virdon and Burke a return trip to Earth, and to be back home to finally be reunited once again with their friends and family.



## **THE FACILITY, TALL TALES AND TRUE, MYSTERIES & HISTORIES REVEALED 24 TH JUNE 3115**

While Smith and Harden looked after the wagon and horses, by putting them in one of the Storage Areas, Richards escorted Virdon and Burke and their two chimpanzee friends into the kitchen and once there, was met by Merryll who was also waiting for them.

"May I introduce Dr. Natalie Merryll", said Richards, as Merryll got up from her chair to greet the new arrivals, "this is Colonel Alan Virdon, Major Peter Burke, and here we have Galen and Lucian".

"Nice to met you all" said Merryll, as she shook hands all around, including the chimpanzees, feeling still ill at ease, especially Lucian, in the company of these strangers.

"Well let's all sit down and get ourselves comfortable", said Richards, who put his rifle down on another table to relieve the tension in the room and made it more relaxed for everyone else, including Galen and Lucian, "and let's begin from the beginning, perhaps you can start first Virdon, what happened to you and did you ever make it to Alpha Centauri?"

"No not even close".

While Virdon and Burke began to tell their story to Richards and Merryll, Smith and Harden rejoined the group, and for the next couple of hours a history emerged of how Virdon and Burke survived for the last thirty years from their crash-landing to their meeting and friendship with Galen, their fight for survival on a daily basis with the late Councillor Zaius and General Urko especially, who has been after them ever since because of the danger imposed by them towards the simian society in general, and to the other humans of this world that are the servants for the apes; through to their eventual settling down at Tethos, and then finally coming here with Urko at their heels.

"For years we've been searching for some hope to get back home", said Virdon, taking out his ship's flight disc to show the others in the room, "all the information's here on this disc, we got our hopes up when we found a secret computer library in Oakland, but it was destroyed by Zaius and Urko, and ever since then it seemed to get harder to find the other locations".

"Well we might be able to find the rest of the computer libraries from here when we get the time, Kyle can look at the disc tomorrow if you like, but as far as getting back to Earth is concerned that won't be a problem since we weren't going to Alpha Centauri, so there won't be any flight deviations or electrical anomalies to contend with".

“So, what’s your story then?” said Burke, “I mean if your mission was to come here instead of going to Alpha Centauri, what’s the idea, I don’t get it”.

“Well, you remember when Taylor’s ship came back with Cornelius and Zira”. There was a murmur agreement from all the astronauts as Richards continued; “There was some classified information that wasn’t revealed by the committee when they held that scientific inquiry concerning the two chimpanzees...”

“You mean Cornelius and Zira were chimpanzees that came from here, to Alan’s time”. Galen interrupted, trying to understand.

“Not exactly from here time-wise by from the distant future, about another eight hundred fifty years or so, but the information gained from them is why we are here”. Indicating himself and his team.

So it began; Richards recounted what had happened since Viridon and Burke left Earth in 1980, about the virus that came from Taylor’s ship that helped finally kill all the cats and dogs by the end of 1990, from ANSA’s secret building program, which included this Facility, the predication of the Holocaust which will cause a limited nuclear strike at key locations around the world and the revelation of the Earth’s final destruction through the Alpha-Omega ‘Doomsday’ bomb.

“A couple of weeks ago”, concluded Richards finally, “my team was able to go to New York and successfully reconfigure the bomb, so when Taylor does push the button, it will just destroy everything in a twenty-five kilometre radius”.

“Oh my God Pete, can you believe any of this?”

“It’s insane, that’s what it is”.

“I know”.

“I just don’t believe it”, said Burke, thinking about the Holocaust, trying to take it all in, “how could it at all have happened, why?”

“At this stage we don’t know, maybe the answer lies here?”

“What about this Urko fella who’s after you”, Smith asked Viridon, “will he be a problem?”

“Maybe, maybe not, now that we’re underground, it’ll be harder for him to find us”.

“Even so will worry about him and this convoy later”, put in Richards, “for now how about some dinner?”

“We still got some food in the wagon”, said Galen, “Lucian and I can go get it”.



“Good I’ll come with”, said Richards, “ in the meantime I think Natalie wants to talk with you both”. Informing Virдон and Burke as he accompanied Galen and Lucian out to the Storage Area; where the wagon and horses were holed up.

“Gentlemen”, said Merryll, folding her arms with a slight smile on her face, “ I believe it’s been thirty years since your last medical and physical check-up, hasn’t it?”

Virдон and Burke looked at each other as Pete spoke up. “It has been awhile but I’m perfectly okay, really”.

“That remains to be seen and felt. Beginning at 07.00 tomorrow I want you both to be in Medical for examinations, no excuses”.

“Well in that case”, As Burke looked at Virдон, “since you are the senior Officer...”

“...arrh yes, but rank does have its privileges Pete, so I think you can go first”. Virдон said with a smile.

“After all these years, you decide to pull rank”.

“Don’t worry Pete, Alan’s going to go through the same pain you’ll be going through, I’ll make sure of that”. Merryll told her two unwilling patients as she left the room to go to the Medical Section and prepare for tomorrow.

“She’s kidding right?” Virдон said to Smith and Harden.

“Pain is her middle name”. Harden said with a grin, as she and Smith began preparing for dinner.

“Yeah, I can still feel those large needles she put in my back”. Smith said, using one of his arms to rub it.

Meanwhile at the Storage Area, Richards was helping Galen and Lucian unload the food from the wagon to take back to the kitchen, as they were about to leave, Richards spoke up, “Listen Galen and Lucian I just want to apologise for this morning, but I had my orders and from what little information I had to go on, there were limited options”.

“I understand”, said Galen, feeling a little more comfortable, “it was just a shock that’s all. We chimpanzees are really a non-aggressive species, but it’s the gorillas you need to worry about. Their our military and law enforcement, I mean I will defend myself if need be, but violence is not my nature”.

“Sure; hey Lucian you okay?”

“I don’t know”. As he came around the wagon to rejoin them.

“You were pretty quite in the kitchen?”

“I just...well when you pulled your rifle at me, I thought I was going to die”.

“I won't mince words Lucian, I would've killed you, considering how the simian society of the future will be dealing with humans, it makes me very angry”.

“Well considering how you humans have been treating us in your time...” Galen put in.

“Then I guess our cultures are very similar indeed, yes, we both have something to be angry about, for one thing, from what you told us so far, it seems the humans here have not lost their power of speech, but they will do so in the future, how and why, that's a mystery yet to be solved, that's just another reason to add to why I'm here. In any case, I'm hoping to change certain perspectives to better our societies believe it or not. We need to find a way to work together and develop a new society where humans and apes are equals, not master and slave, animal or beast, but as intelligent beings who need each other to develop a 'Homo-Simia' culture if you like. I know what the future holds for Earth and my team prevented that future destiny from happening; now a new destiny awaits, a new future”.

“Is that why you need to gather more information about us?”

“Yes that's right, so we can understand”.

“Alan and Pete said I could come with them to their Earth, perhaps I can help bring our two worlds together with the knowledge I have?”

“That would be great Galen, friends?” putting his hand out to be shaken.

“Yes friends”. Responded in kind taking his hand, as did Lucian when Richards offered to do the same.



## **THE FACILITY, IN PREPARATION FOR URKO'S COMING 25 TH JUNE 3115**

It was mid-morning and Richards, Smith and Harden were in the Command Centre going over possible ideas to prepare for Urko's coming by tomorrow. It was going to be very tricky indeed, how can one handle a half-crazed gorilla and a convoy of troopers? The three of them were looking at the main view-screen, which had a map of the Facility showing, including the surrounding area, while Merryll was in Medical examining Virдон and Burke, along with Galen and Lucian, who both agreed to be looked at as well. This was an opportunity not to be missed by the doctor who could examine the chimpanzees as part of her report to help not only medical science but also the human race to understand their simian cousins. As far as Merryll was concerned these apes were part of the human race that developed and branched out in a different direction which separated from the main evolutionary tree, so it was important to find out how it happened, why it happened and what caused this evolutionary growth to advance so late in Man's history?

"Well according to Virдон, if those ape scouts are any good, they'll probably follow and head for the bridge to cross over into here". Smith said, indicating an area on the main view-screen where the bridge connected the Cape to the mainland.

"This Facility", said Richards, looking at the main view-screen again, "must be protected at all costs, it's our only link back home and our only safe haven from this world, and if we can keep it a secret all the better".

"How about using the Nemesis?" put in Harden, "we could use it to perhaps scare them?"

"It might work but the Nemesis has no defences, remember those gorillas have rifles; and the Nemesis only has heat shielding tiles to protect her from their bullets and one stray bullet in the right place could damage or even destroy the ship, besides it would take the rest of the day to get the Nemesis out of its bay onto the landing area. No, as long as this Facility remains hidden and a secret, the apes won't know we're here, including the ships".

"I think I've got a solution, skipper", said Smith, "It'll work but we've only got one chance to do it".

"What do you have in mind?"

"The main bridge", Smith said, as he re-adjusted the main view-screen to take a closer look again at the bridge over the Indian River linking the mainland to Cape Kennedy, "the apes will have to cross it right? So if we rig it with explosives, when the apes are just about in the middle, we blow it up, and since the apes hate water and assuming the apes can't swim, problem solved".

"That means if any of them survive the blast, they'll drown in the river, I hate the thought of that". Harden commented.

"Don't tell me you have a soft spot for them?" Smith asked sceptically with annoyance.

"No I don't, but drowning isn't one of my favourite ways to die, if I'm going to die I'd like it to be quick".

"It's either us or them, Laureen", said Richards, changing the image back to the map of the Facility, "I don't like to kill anything or anyone, but our survival depends on this Facility and if these apes threaten our lives or destroy our hope of going back home; we'll be stuck here till the day we die, and that's not going to happen. If I have to kill ten to twenty apes to keep us alive, I'll do it, this Facility must remain operational at all costs, do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand, sir". Harden responded just a little coldly.

"Good; listen Laureen, this is our home away from home, we need it to survive, so we need to protect it, okay?" Harden gave a small nod, "Alright, Why don't you go and get the explosives out of storage".

"Okay". Harden left the Command Centre quietly to do just that.

"Kyle, we'll need to detonate the bridge on site, so we'll do it manually, no timer, that way there'll be no hic-ups".

"Right, I'll go and help Harden and get everything ready".

"I'll join you later to help out on the bridge and we'll take along our rifles tomorrow just in case any apes make it across, I want no survivors".

"You got it".

"You'd better make it clear to Laureen too, I'd hate for her to freeze up at a critical moment".

"She'll be alright skipper, it's just, well, have you killed anyone?"

"No".

"Well, none of us have, it may be easy to pull the trigger for target practice, but pointing a weapon at somebody, human or animal is another thing, when the time comes we could all freeze, then what happens?"

"Pray Kyle, pray".

Both Richards and Smith left the Command Centre to go their separate ways; Smith to the Storage Area to help Harden with the preparation of the explosives and Richards to the Medical Area, to see how Natalie's patients were doing.

Kyle was right about one thing, Richards thought, how can you prepare yourself to face death or prepare to kill someone when you haven't done it before, no matter how many times you practice shooting at non-living targets, you know in your heart and mind that it is just that, some cardboard cut-out with various red-circled targets painted on it to aim at; and the good thing about it is that the targets don't shoot back. Bang, bang, you're dead pal. *Don't worry, says the Target, I'll get you, one day I'll get you, then you'll be sorry, I'll pump you full of holes and watch you bleed, bleed and bleed, while your heart beats a little slower, beat, beat, beat; and then it'll stop. Your blood-splattered body falls to the ground dead to the world. I'll get you; it's only a matter of time buddy. Then I'll be laughing in your face, a face of a dead man, you see, you weren't so good after all, were you, you poor bastard.* Well I don't plan to die tomorrow, buddy, so there's no need for celebration yet, and I won't be laughing, death is no laughing matter and life come to think of it, isn't full of laughs either, life is sorrowful, full of pain and suffering, you're happy one day, then cry the next. What's it all for? To experience and grow in a life not worth living, where survival is the only option? Sure, maybe that's one answer, are there any more? But no matter what you think, in the end we die, we are born to die, we are not born to live, for life is a disease, it burns in our mind, our body and our soul. Hmmm, it reminds me of a little poem, how does it go?

*Let us burn in Hell my brothers  
Let us burn in Hell  
Walk hand in hand, condemned my brothers  
Towards the sound of death's bell*

*Life is but a dream my brothers  
Life is but a dream  
We are dying, plagued my brothers  
To be cleansed in fire's stream*

**CAPE KENNEDY, GUNFIGHT AT THE O'CAPE CORAL  
26TH JUNE 3115**

The day of reckoning has come at last, today I will have my revenge, Urko thought, as he looked out across a vast river; the convoy's scouts had reported back to Crasis that the fugitive's wagon tracks were following the river via the road that led to a bridge, which connected to an island with what looked like ruined buildings on the other side. I have them now, Urko continued to ponder, after all these years of waiting, I have them now, Virdon and Burke, today, is your last day on Earth, today is your last day of freedom, your last day of life.

"Crasis, as I have promised", looking at his son, with a glint in his eye, Crasis was beside his father, not quite as impressed, "now we shall deal with these astronauts once and for all; they cannot escape me now, today is the day justice will be done, today is the day that I shall have my glory, and *you* Crasis will bask in my triumph; for together as father and son we will claim victory over the humans that have taunted us, laughed at us and ridiculed us for all these years and our way of life".

"Father, you speak as though they were already on death's door, may I remind you..."

"Crasis! Do you think me a fool, if Virdon and Burke come quietly, they will live to see justice done, but if they resist, then we will have no choice but to kill them. Is it my fault that they aren't intelligent enough to see reason and come quietly?"

"Very well father, as you say", Crasis signalled the convoy to move on towards the bridge, "let's go!" Well, whatever happens today he thought, I'll be going back home, I've had enough and my gorillas have had enough, if Virdon and Burke are dead or alive after today, I don't care, I'm going home.

—\*—\*—

Smith and Harden were at the middle of the bridge making their final preparations to see that all the explosives were in place and ready to be detonated.

"Did you see those gorilla's on horseback?" Harden asked Smith, as she approached him while he checked one of the explosives, which was positioned behind a side railing.

"Yeah, sure did", finally pleased with yesterday's handiwork, "you better inform the skipper, looks like that ape convoy will be here anytime soon".

Harden used her walkie-talkie to radio in what just happened, as well as telling Richards that everything was ready as planned.

At the Command Centre, the main view-screen was showing Smith and Harden working at the bridge via long-range cameras. "Right, we'll be there in a minute", responded Richards, as he received the message from Harden; with him in the room were Merryll, Virdon, Burke, Galen and Lucian, then he turned around to face them to finalize the details of what to do and expect. "Natalie, I want you to stay here and monitor the situation, so if anything happens to us and we need medical attention..."

"Sure I understand, but do you expect those gorilla's to fire at you?"

"It's a possibility, in any case, we'll be firing over their heads to start with anyway, besides with Alan and Pete's help, I'm hoping to entice those gorillas onto the middle of the bridge, before we detonate, are you two up to it?" Looking at Virdon and Burke for an answer.

"Sure, Pete and I can handle it, just don't blow up the bridge with us on it, okay".

"Don't worry, as long as those gorillas see you running away from them, they'll come across in pursuit".

"Listen, I know we're going to be decoys, but they'll be coming across anyway", said Burke, "what's the hurry?"

"Speed, numbers and hopefully a little bit of confusion, the more gorillas we get on the bridge the better, and they'll be focused on getting across quickly once they spot you, and there be less chance of them discovering any explosives before they realize it's a trap".

"Well if Urko's leading them", said Burke, "I'm sure that won't be a problem; what if any of them make it across, guns blazing?"

"We shoot to kill, that's all there is to it".

"What do you want us to do Will?" asked Galen, not liking what he just heard, while indicating himself and Lucian.

"I want you both to stay here with Natalie, it'll be safer and I won't have to worry about you two if things get complicated, okay?"

Both Galen and Lucian agreed, especially Lucian who was contented to stay right where he was, and watch the events unfold on the main view-screen, which fascinated him.

—\*—\*—

The convoy was now nearing the bridge's entrance, when Crasis ordered it to stop. Urko, who was a little ways in front, getting ready to cross over, trotted back to Crasis' side to ask why. "Is there a problem Crasis?"

"No, just that the bridge seems to look unstable, I'll have my troopers go across it single file just in case and the wagons can stay here, there's no need for them to go across; and as you have said father the fugitives cannot escape".

"Very well Crasis, do it your way, but I'll lead the way myself". Urko told him, as he trotted back towards the bridge to wait for the troopers to follow him.

"Sergeant!"

A Sergeant Ulric trotted to his General's side, "Yes sir".

"Get the troopers to check their rifles and then we'll go across the bridge in single file, the wagons can stay here to help guard the bridge if these fugitives try to get away and escape".

"Yes sir", said Ulric, as he rode back to pass the orders to his gorillas. "Alright check your rifles!" he shouted, "then move into single file!"

When Crasis was satisfied that his troopers were ready, he gave the order and signalled them to head towards the bridge, "let's move!"

—\*—\*—

At the other end of the bridge everyone was in position, Virдон and Burke were knelt down hiding behind some concrete rubble and debris about a quarter of the way in on the bridge, waiting for their signal to move. While Richards and Harden were crouched down hidden to the left and right of the bridge's exit respectively with their rifles at the ready to cover Virдон and Burke's retreat. Smith, who was also hidden from view, was near Richards' position preparing the detonator. He comm. linked the skipper and told him the bridge was now ready to blow when he gave the order.

Now we wait, Richards thought, we wait; *I'm going to get you buddy, came his inner voice, time to bleed, time to die. The targets always shoot back; remember? You do remember; don't you buddy?*

A few minutes later, using his binoculars that he had with him, Richards checked the bridge when Merryll radioed that she could see the ape convoy approach the bridge, judging by the description that Virдон gave him of Urko, it must have been him Richards saw at the front leading the gorillas in single file.

Urko seemed too impatient for them and was quickly making his way across himself, leaving the rest of the gorillas slightly behind. Urko was now half way over the bridge when Richards decided to comm. link Virдон and Burke to make their move and run back towards him.

"Virдон".

"Yeah". Virдон responded using his walkie-talkie.



"It's time, make a run for it, now!"

"Right, I can see Urko coming up", said Virdon and put down the walkie-talkie; then turning to Burke, "it's show-time". Burke nodded and both of them got up and started running.

Urko, who was keeping his eyes on the bridge's exit, saw Virdon and Burke get up from their hiding place and run, he responded quickly by shouting at them, "Virdon! Burke!" then he turned around and waving at the troopers behind him with gun in hand, "Come on! After them!" as Urko started to gallop after the fugitives. The gorillas' led by Sergeant Ulric began to spur their horses on to quicken their pursuit across the bridge following Urko's orders. Crasis was still at the bridge's entrance when he heard his father's shout, and he too started to make his way across as fast as he could to join him.

Urko started to shoot widely at Virdon and Burke as they ran past Richards and Harden to take cover. Richards' comm. linked Harden to fire at Urko; Then to Urko's surprise he saw another human, a female revealing herself, using a rifle taking shots at him. Where did she come from? Urko thought, now concentrating his firepower on her instead, as Virdon and Burke disappeared behind Harden to seek protection.

Richards using his binoculars again while Harden was busy with Urko, quickly took a peek at the bridge, and seeing from what he could judge that most of the gorillas were in the middle of it trying to get across to assist Urko, gave the order for Smith to detonate.

Within a second, a gigantic explosion blew and boomed out from the bridge as its middle collapsed into the river with bits of concrete and steel flying everywhere taking perhaps half of the convoy's gorillas with it including their horses; and at the same time as the explosion, Urko fell from his horse as Harden shot a couple of rounds into Urko's chest. It was this image Crasis saw before he too fell from his horse as the bridge exploded throwing him and several of his gorillas to the ground near the now damaged bridge showing a great big gap separating the island from the mainland.

Richards dropped the binoculars and grabbed his rifle to help Harden who already dispatched Urko, who was lying near the bridge's exit, while his horse galloped wildly passed Richards in fright. No need to worry about the horse for the moment he thought.

"You okay!" called out Richards to Harden, as Virdon and Burke came out from their hiding place.

"I'm fine." Harden replied, a little shaken from her ordeal at shooting a gorilla as she and Richards walked towards each other.

"Smith check our friend over there", said Richards, indicating the dead body of Urko, "but be careful".

"No problem". Smith said, as he watchfully got up from his position after checking the detonator, and with rifle in hand walked over to examine Urko.

"Hell, that was one close call". Virdon commented as he and Burke rejoined Richards and Harden.

"You're telling me..." was all Richards got out as he heard a gun shot. He turned around just in time to see Smith fall down dead with a bullet hole in his forehead. Then he glanced at the raised head of Urko with his gun pointing towards the group.

"Virdon!" was the last thing Urko cried out from his blood spatted mouth before Richards pumped him full of holes with his rifle. Then he and the others ran to Smith's body, but it was too late, Smith was already dead before he hit the ground.

"Let's get him back inside", was all Richards could say, as he looked out over the disabled bridge to see what looked like the remainder of the gorilla convoy retreating with their injured and wounded.

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Crisis picked himself up from the ground, and felt groggy, smoke and various debris littered the area, as he tried to clear his aching and throbbing head, some blood was running down the side of his face as he put his right hand near his forehead and felt a cut just above his right eye. Doesn't seem too serious, he thought, as he looked around to see what damage had been done and more importantly how many of his troopers survived the blast.

A Corporal Platto who was in charge of the wagons, came running to him with some bandages. "Sir, are you alright?"

"Don't worry about me Platto, see to the rest of my troops". The Corporal then went away and began organising wagons to receive the injured. While Crisis looked around him seeing what remained of his gorillas; luckily, judging by what he could see, the majority of his soldiers had minor cuts and bruises, but at least three or four had serious injury since they were closest to the explosion. They were being picked up and carried to the wagons for treatment. The troopers horses freed from their riders from the explosion galloped away in panic in any direction they could find, some seemed injured and a couple were dead lying beside the great big gapping hole the explosion caused. "Corporal! When you're done get some troopers to find and collect our horses!"

"Yes sir!"

Crisis slowly walked to the edge of the bridge, where he could get a better look at the damage, as he did so he cautiously peered down at the river and saw various dead bodies of his troops and their horses floating and moving away from him. Crisis slowly shook his head in disgust and disbelief. Half of my troopers' dead; he thought, all good gorillas, dead, all dead, and for what? Why did we ever come here? Why did we ever leave at all?

Then Crisis remembered his father and looked up to see if he could spot him, but he couldn't, his eyesight was a little blurry, all he could make out were a group of humans, probably this Virdon and Burke. Crisis tried to feel anger towards them but he couldn't; he tried to feel something, but nothing came, except, sadness.

A sadness of the heart for his father who tried to believe, a belief that he was doing some good, for the benefit of the simian race. Father, why didn't you leave well enough alone, why couldn't you let go?

Crisis turned around and slowly walked back to the wagons, and as he did so a single tear from his left eye ran down his cheek.

A single tear of sadness; for a father he once loved, for a father he tried to know, from a son who tried to be...

*Fires of hell burn with a sorrowful glow,  
that aches within your heart*

*The Phoenix understands the flame,  
and stands upon the ashes*

*For I shall fly before the heavens,  
where my soul shall depart*

*Sing of ancient days, till tomorrow brings,  
there are many souls awaiting*

*In silence do our hearts mourn the dead,  
never to forget, never a beat is bled*



## FORTY TWO

### CAPE KENNEDY, BEYOND THE MOURNING LIGHT, I REMEMBER THE FALLEN 27TH JUNE 3115

*Hail the full moon that beckons the night, within the darkest of clouds  
a beacon of luminous light.*

*Can one but see the shadows of souls flying through the misty realms.*

*The hand of death greets your bloodied flesh with a delicacy of a  
mother's touch.*

*I walk upon this earth in all its ignorance and bliss, but I shall follow  
my worth wherever it shall take me.*

*I am but a lost soul that has found the peace within, all that I ask is to  
be left alone.*

*Beyond the flesh and bone, beyond the spirit and the soul, I walk in  
the shadows of my eternity.*

*The doorway to paradise is ever so near, that as I step closer it is afar  
from me ever still.*

*Long ago in the depths of despair I followed my dream, my heart, my  
self, in the seeking of the way.*

*The path I tread was covered in soil that clothed my body still, in the  
wake of a new birth.*

*I moulded you my son from the clay and dust, which my fingers  
caressed with love, so long ago.*

*In death as in life, we breathe the damnations that make us what we  
are, the sinners of sin.*

*I release you from life's bondage oh great brother, be at peace with  
yourself and rest.*

*The night has covered the earth once more; it sleeps in the depths of  
the soul, never to wake, never to walk.*

*I feel myself adrift in a sea of sorrow, I feel myself adrift in a sea of  
tranquillity. Let us not forget.*

*Since the dawn of memory, I will remember, the sun calls to me, the  
sun sings to me, I am alone.*

*In truth we live forever, in truth we die forever more, the pleasure and the pain, the living and the resurrected.*

*I bleed my brothers, but I die knowing of my fate, I die knowing that I go to a better place, a place worthy for my soul to rest.*

*The night sky is filled with rain; gentle droplets wet the face of the earth, cleansing its body.*

*The very moisture baptises the spirit to rise in a heavenly flight, to seek its freedom elsewhere.*

*I shall remember the long forgotten road that is paved with silver and gold, clothed in silk and satin.*

*The horizon's sun now calls to me, in my hour of need; the rays touch my face and warm my soul.*

*Embrace the spirit, embrace the light, embrace the angel that guides me towards the gate of paradise.*

*I know not the journey for which I seek to complete, but know this, I know the journey; I know what I seek.*

*The dawn breaks the crest of the moon in flight, go swiftly my dove go swiftly, my love.*

*I hear the angels sing sweet melodies, the music of the ages that never age the voice of innocence.*

*The sky is alight with the coming of day; the coming of peace, all is silent, except the wind that mourns.*

*I lost my brother, I lost his smile, I lost the laughter his voice would bring, I lost apart of myself, that died with his last breath.*

*But alas do not cry, for here he rests, never to be forgotten, never to forget his life that praised him so.*

*Today, do not mourn my brothers, today remember my deeds; if you shed a tear let it be a tear of joy.*

*I shall always be by your side my brothers. I shall live within your hearts, for my thoughts are with you still.*

*The sun has risen to claim the day; the rays of warmth bless the light of God, who walks among us still.*

*Where are my children that no longer come out and play? Where is their laughter that breathes life into my lungs?*

*Today is the day of sadness in my heart, today the flowers weep; today the wind shall never call their names.*

*But alas my children you will never be lost within me, I know where you are, I know where you sleep.*

*Come my children, do not be afraid, we shall play in the garden where the flowers sing and the wind calls your name.*

*The sea has many names; the wind has many souls; for the flowers are the spirits of the dead.*

—\*—\*—

By the hill of the sea rests two graves adorned with flowers, one human and one ape, side by side in death, though never in life. As with all those who depart this world, they alone will accompany each other into the next, to seek a better future, a better understanding, a better friendship, in the soul and spirit of God, may they find peace? A peace in the arms of the beloved; let them understand that they are brothers, of life, of love, of the one that calls their spirits' home. We are all children of the universe, babies still in the hearts of Heaven. Lost in spirit, but not in the minds of those who will remember, and we will remember them with eternal peace.

A peace granted by the gathered whom in their own way, bid farewell, five humans and two chimpanzees.

They stand in silent prayer, they stand to remember, they stand in respect; they stand to never forget. Life cannot cure the pain of loss, but it can heal, and in time the heart shall beat again, in remembrance of happier times that death cannot erase.

"We give to you oh Lord two more souls for your keeping, let them rest within the cradle of your arms, so you may watch over and care for them in eternal embrace, for they may have been enemies in life, but let your wisdom guide them to become forever friends in the spirit of your wisdom, let them sleep in peace, amen".

They say the graves of the fallen, are the graves of the resurrected; but wisdom says many things, and who listens to wisdom when the wise speak into deaf ears?



## EPILOGUE

### **CAPITAL CITY, THE MEETING OF MINDS AND OTHER THOUGHTS 27TH JUNE 3115**

It had been a long journey for Xavian to Capital City, but in the end it was worth it; two days ago Xavian and his convoy led by Captain Darro were escorted into the city. As Darro organised where to put the convoy with the help of the city's security chief by the name General Darsus; Xavian himself was given guest quarters befitting his position. He was told that Julius would be able to see Xavian at his convenience since there was no hurry and Xavian should relax and enjoy what the city had to offer before meeting Julius officially to discuss strengthening relations between the two of them.

Just after Xavian had finished his breakfast, Darro came to visit him and make his report.

"Well Darro, how are your accommodations and that of your gorillas?"

"Excellent Xavian, I have been discussing with Darsus our military lifestyle if you like, he's very interested in how we westerners, as he calls us, handle ourselves with our human population among other things".

"Perhaps", said Xavian, getting up from the table, "we can also show these *easterners* a thing or too about controlling their humans as well, but time will deal with that in due course, I'm on my way now to see Councillor Julius, it's very important that we make a good impression, see to it that our troops don't make a nuisance of themselves".

"It will be done, I'll make sure of that".

"Excellent".

—\*—\*—

Xavian entered Julius' office and was greeted in kind as he was ushered in to sit down. "Welcome to Capital City Xavian", said Julius, "I am eager to know all about you and our simian cousins from the west. It makes me proud to know that our culture has spread throughout the known country".

"Yes, I agree, we have lots to talk about, and I'm sure the knowledge we will share, will strengthen both our societies for the better".

"Oh most certainly, it is the will of the Lawgiver that his children should be made as one".

"As the Lawgiver intended, it shall be done".

## **BATHAR, A TIME TO HEAL, A TIME TO PONDER**

### **30TH JUNE 3115**

Crisis was in his guest hut sitting at his table going over the doctor's report in his mind; yesterday, praise the Lawgiver he and his remaining convoy made it to Bathar. Luckily there was a medical clinic and a visiting doctor available to treat his injured troops including the more serious cases, how they survived those couple of days journey to come back here for treatment was beyond belief—and a miracle, but we—they made it in time. Perhaps it was the gorilla's strong constitution that helped them live long enough for treatment and examination, who knows?

The doctor's preliminary report told Crisis that it would be a minimum of six to eight weeks before the seriously wounded were healed enough for travel, but even then, the doctor recommended that only a full recovery would see them through if a return journey into the Forbidden Zone was required to go home. Crisis couldn't believe it, it would be another three months before his troops will be fully recovered to make the trek back. In the meantime Crisis had sent word to Xavian in Capital City about his predicament, and basically told him that he will wait for Xavian's return here at Bathar. Then by that time half of his gorillas will be well enough to go back with Xavian, while the remainder, including himself will stay here until his troopers make a full recovery to do the same.

In the meantime, Crisis as a gesture of thanks for the help he has received, has offered the Primate Einar the elder of Bathar his services to help village security, including patrolling the surrounding farms. Einar was gratified that with a few more extra troops at the villages' disposal, this of course would elevate his status somewhat. Crisis got up from the table and walked to the window beside the front door to look outside, it was late afternoon; while he was pondering his stay for the next couple of months, he saw Einar approach and waited for the orang-utan to come to the door before he opened it to greet him.

"Crisis, I was just going to knock". Einar said, a little surprised.

"I saw you coming, please..." Indicating with the sweep of his arm to enter.

"Thank you, I won't stay long, a Primate's duties never end".

"What can I do for you?" as both of them sat down.

"Since you will be staying here for a few months, I would like to discuss with you about how you can be of great service to this community of ours and hopefully how we both can benefit from it in the days ahead".

"Then, we have much to learn and talk about Einar, yes indeed".

"Splendid, I believe this relationship will work out well, yes indeed".



**NEW YORK CITY, INSIDE THE MUTANT TELEPATHIC COMMUNE**  
**30TH JUNE 3115**

Janus was in his office quietly pacing up and down in front of the bookshelf, he had just finished writing down everything he could remember about the 'Alpha-Omega' manual, luckily one of the traits that his God gave to his people was a photographic memory, and thus Janus was able to memorize the manual's teachings from his mind and then recall it and rewrite them afresh. It had been about three weeks since this Colonel Richards and this Dr. Merryll had entered the commune, but what were they seeking? Richards had said information, but there had to be another reason, I just know it, pondered Janus.

There was a knock at the door. "Enter".

Janus stopped pacing and turned to see Markus come into the room, "Well Markus, is our God safe and sound?"

"Yes Janus, all is in perfect working order".

"Good, we must find these humans Markus and take back what is rightfully ours, the Word must be reclaimed for the faithful at all costs".

"Do you think our God was in danger?"

"I don't know, perhaps, but this Richards was able to find us, and he's certainly not a sub-human by any means, and he seemed to recognise the manual for what it was".

"Maybe there is another commune of humans somewhere near by, if that is the case, perhaps we should try to contact them and make an alliance and together we could defeat the apes?"

"What you say has merit Markus, but why now, why have we not stumbled upon these humans before, surely after all these years we would've had some indication of their existence?"

"They're probably just as well organised and well hidden as we are, and are only now making their presence felt, by searching for others of their kind to help defeat the apes?"

"Hmmm, it seems we have a mystery to solve Markus, and another thing, they did not possess the gift..."

"...then they are not of our kind then?"

"No, they are not, now isn't that interesting?"

"Very".

**CAPE KENNEDY, THE RETURN TO A HOME ONCE FORGOTTEN BY TIME**  
**1ST SEPTEMBER 3115**

Richards was in the Command Centre along with Merryll and Lucian, they were all watching the main view-screen, which showed the Nemesis climbing into the clouds as it launched itself into space; in a few moments the Nemesis will be clear of Earth's gravity, then it will make its way towards the moon and then beyond to continue its pre-destined flight to twentieth century Earth. After thirty years Virdon and Burke will finally go home, Richards told himself, I hope the culture shock won't be too hard on them, and then there's Galen, he's the one that's going to have to adjust, I hope he'll be alright, I'm sure Virdon and Burke will look after him.

When it was decided a month ago to make preparations for the return journey home, Merryll made the decision to stay behind with Richards, she told him that the opportunity to learn more about another culture was too great to pass by, and besides having a doctor around would be an advantage just in case Richards got hurt or sick. Upon receiving this information Richards told Harden about Merryll's decision to stay behind, and Harden was relieved because she really wanted to go back home anyway; and besides the Nemesis needed a pilot, even though Virdon and Burke were so themselves, they might be rusty after so many years out of practice.

"Harden calling Command Centre do you read over?"

"Loud and clear", responded Richards, sitting at the communications console, "how's everyone else?"

"Just fine, even Galen, I was a little worried, but he's okay now".

"Good, glad to hear it, you'll be out of communication range soon, you know what to do Laureen, good luck and God speed you home".

"Thanks, good luck back there, and I hope to see you soon".

"We'll send you a postcard, over and out".

After Richards turned off communications and the main view-screen he swivelled himself around in his chair to face Merryll and Lucian, "Well you two, it's just us now", as he got up, "let's just hope we can make a difference?"

"I'm sure we can, Will". Merryll answered, "That's all there is to it".

"And with my knowledge", put in Lucian, "I can help you try".

"Thanks Lucian, only time will tell, only time will tell".



## END-LOG

*Gæa greets her long lost sons, she weeps no more, but the waters have left there mark, stains of blood never cleansed, never healed, as a new sorrow replaces the old.*

—\*—\*—

*...excitement abounds within Cape Kennedy today as the Nemesis made a successful return from interstellar space...*

—\*—\*—

*...ANSA officials greeted the three astronauts and to their surprise one chimpanzee as they exited the spacecraft...*

—\*—\*—

*...in breaking news this hour ANSA has confirmed that the Nemesis has returned from interstellar space, but controversy now plagues the Administration...*

—\*—\*—

*...revelations are running deep as to where Colonel Virdon and Major Burke have been for the past ten years, not only that, but where are the missing astronauts from the original Nemesis ...*

—\*—\*—

*...it seems we are being left in the dark, as so many questions go unanswered, like who is the chimpanzee that came back with Colonel Virdon and Major Burke and why the secrecy surrounding this ape?...*

—\*—\*—

*...Dr. Hughes the Director of ANSA was to have a press conference today at 2.00pm, but it was cancelled due to—if one can believe it—health reasons...*

—\*—\*—

*...six months, that's right six months have passed and still we don't know, officially the Pentagon...*



## AUTHOR'S NOTE

To celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary (1974-2004) of 'The Planet of the Apes' TV-Series, I have written this fan-fiction story to recognise the importance of Science Fiction and the influence it has worldwide; including the significant value that the 'Planet of the Apes' has given to our imaginations in our lives and in our thoughts.

This story is in my mind the sixth unofficial sequel to the five 'Planet of the Apes' movie sagas so far produced. The story can be placed in-between 'Escape' and 'Conquest' to put it in perspective.

The story of the 'Resurrection of the Planet of the Apes' does several things: One – it continues the 'Planet of the Apes' saga to a new level of continuation; Two – it tells us how Viridon, Burke and Galen finally end their struggles, completing their story from the 'Planet of the Apes' TV-Series, and Three – it serves as a pilot for a new 'Planet of the Apes' TV-Series by the two astronauts left behind to continue their mission; and I believe it is a natural progression to what the next chapter would be in the world of the 'Planet of the Apes'.

I have deliberately tried to make each chapter short and tight as possible, so as to not get bogged down with long descriptions and sub-stories; often I have read books that are a few hundred to a thousand pages long and when I have finished reading such a book, I think to myself, that it could have been better halved, and the story still would not suffer for it.

With this in mind, I have kept hopefully 'Resurrection' as interesting and progressive as possible, naturally you the reader may have wanted a bit more and or wanted a particular situation explained better. But this is where imagination comes in and takes over, so I hope I have done some justice in presenting this story for you, the reader's enjoyment.

I have been an 'Ape' fan for a long time now, and decided in my own way to write a story that may be turned into a film or a TV movie pilot, if anyone was interested in my version of how things could continue in the world of the 'Planet of the Apes'. As stated before 'Resurrection' can act as a TV movie pilot for a new TV-Series version of 'Planet of the Apes', naturally it would be done in the style of the original TV-Series, (*not the Tim Burton look*). If the powers that be can produce multiple 'Star Trek' TV-Series, surely, a new 'Planet of the Apes' TV-Series can be reborn again.

Finally, I would like to give a special mention of appreciation and thank you to Dave Ballard for his fresh perspective and input in helping me fine-tune my story to make it better by pointing out alternatives, corrections and ideas, Dave has been really supportive and helpful in my endeavour to bring 'Resurrection' to life.

I hope you have enjoyed my story and if anyone wishes to comment on what I have written, you can e-mail me at: [karbovski@hotmail.com](mailto:karbovski@hotmail.com)

# Appendices

**ICARUS FLIGHT HISTORY**

**ANSA UNDERGROUND INSTILLATION FACILITY**

**APE CULTURE IN THE YEAR 3115**

**THE ICARUS (PROTO-TYPE) SPACECRAFT**





**This is a brief short history of ANSA Icarus missions between 1969 and 1990, including crew complement for each flight.**

In 1969 a new prototype spacecraft was commissioned to help explore interstellar space. This ambitious project to go beyond our solar system was named The Icarus Program. Between 1970 and 1980 five interstellar spacecraft were built and launched at Cape Kennedy by the American National Space Administration (ANSA); due to its complex cryogenic chambers and special design for long durational flight into deep space, these complex ships took up to fifteen months to construct and test.

With only one, officially successful return in 1973 of Taylor's ship, Astræa, funding for the Icarus Program by ANSA was cancelled. But due to Cornelius and Zira's statements, which were the chimpanzees that returned in the Astræa, the Earth will be destroyed in the future. With this in mind, secret funding was re-established in the Icarus Program and two more spacecraft were built between 1980 and 1990, under the directorship of Dr. Jameson Hughes with the goal of preventing the destruction of the planet Earth via the Alpha-Omega 'Doomsday' bomb, by sending a specialist team of astronauts to reconfigure the bomb's matrix.

Ship	Astronauts	Launch Date
<b>Icarus (Prototype)</b>	Classified	Classified
<b>Astræa</b>	Taylor, Dodge, Landon, Stewart	1972
<b>Aurora</b>	Brent, Maddox	1972
<b>Pegasus</b>	Van Lowen, Maxwell, Jackson* ( <i>Colonel</i> )	1974
<b>Venturer</b>	Allen, Hudson, Franklin	1976
<b>Hyperion</b>	Virdon, Burke, Jones	1980
<b>Nemesis</b>	Richards, Smith, Harden, Merryll	1990
<b>Pleiades</b>	N/A	N/A

<i>Astræa</i>	Planet of the Apes. ( <i>Movie</i> )
<i>Aurora</i>	Beneath the Planet of the Apes. ( <i>Movie</i> )
<i>Pegasus</i>	Prelude** ( <i>From the fan fiction story by Dave Ballard</i> )
<i>Venturer</i>	Return to the Planet of the Apes. ( <i>From the 'animated' TV-Series</i> )
<i>Hyperion</i>	Planet of the Apes. ( <i>From the 'live action' TV-Series</i> )
<i>Nemesis / Pleiades</i>	Resurrection of the Planet of the Apes. ( <i>From the fan fiction story by the author</i> )

- \* The name Jackson was found on page 24 of a comic called 'Planet of the Apes' from the story inside called 'Return to Yesterday' which I found on the Internet. I gave the character this name in which he had none, except what he was called in brackets ( ) in the fan fiction story 'Prelude' by Dave Ballard.
- \*\* In 'Escape From Tomorrow' an episode from the live action TV-Series, it was revealed that a spaceship crash-landed ten years before Virdon's, thus this story explains about these astronauts and what happened to them.



### **Warning:**

The following information has been classified; only ANSA personnel with a Security Clearance Level of Alpha One can view the following documents. Penalty for unauthorized access will be execution by firing squad.

**Security Clearance Level:** Alpha One.

### **The ANSA Underground Instillation Facility: Section Areas.**

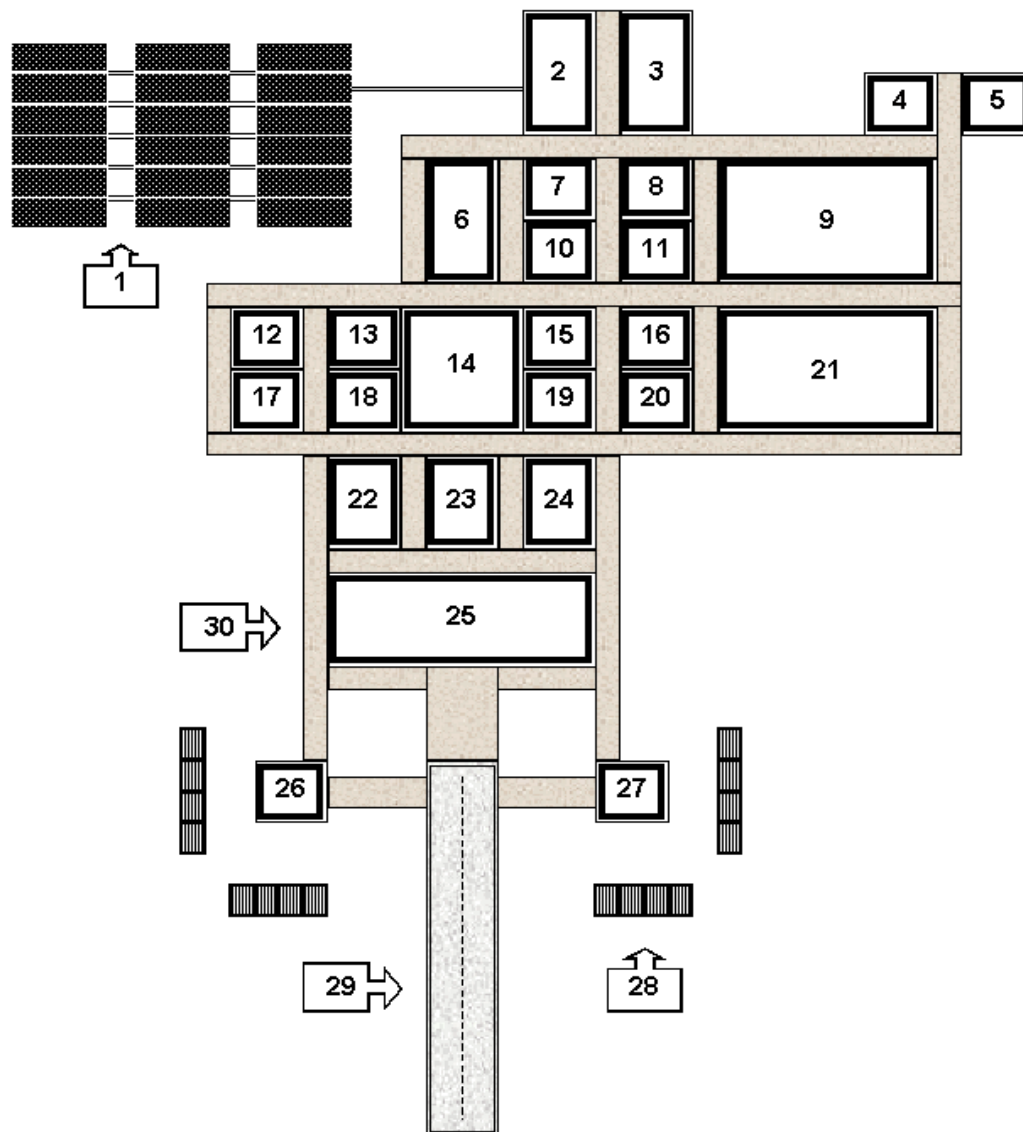
1	Solar Panels.
2	Solar Power/Battery Generators.
3	Secondary Solar Power/Battery Generators.
4	Amphibious Storage Section.
5	Amphibious Containment Section.
6	Satellite Dish/Communications Section.
7	Senior Officer's Quarters.
8	Junior Officer's Quarters.
9	Weapons Section.
10	Primary Computer Section.
11	Computer Operations Command Centre.
12	Kitchen Section.
13	Crew's Quarters.
14	Emergency Equipment Section.
15	Secondary Computer Section.
16	Medical Section.
17	Library Section.
18	Decontamination Section.
19	Deep Freezing Unit.
20	Deep Freeze Storage Section
21	Hydroponics Section.
22	Maintenance Section.
23	Storage Area 1.
24	Storage Area 2.
25	Shuttle Storage Maintenance Section.
26	Underground Shuttle Launching Bay 1.
27	Underground Shuttle Launching Bay 2.
28	Shuttle Exhaust Venting System.
29	Shuttle Landing Facility/Runway.
30	Corridors/Access Areas.

### **Please Note:**

*Also not mentioned are various concealed security cameras above ground and various air ventilations systems in and around the complex.*



This is a map of the ANSA Underground Installation Facility at Cape Kennedy showing all the various Sections. *Please note that this map is not to scale.*







**Report:** *Ape Culture in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Century*

**Name:** *Colonel William Richards*

**Date:** 1/01/3117

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## **Ape Society.**

From what I can gather so far, the apes have developed their own way of life in its simplest form without the use of machines to establish their cultural influence on the Earth since the ending of the 'Holocaust'. The simian culture of today does however possess some form of limited technology and knowledge in the following areas: Science, Medical, Agriculture and Armaments. This is evident as we can see that the apes have the ability to use and make rifles and guns, agricultural tools and various medical implements and medicines.

These advancements however small or great (*depending on how you look at it*) do them in good stead, considering that ape and human civilization had to start virtually from the beginning after the 'Holocaust'. Thus, in reality it was the apes that helped in stabilizing the conditions environmentally within the country after the chaos, which made it liveable once more for themselves and for the humans whom they now control (*dominate/enslave*).

As the apes claimed their supremacy and advanced their way of life in the new world 'Post-Apocalyptic' they began to develop their own society, religion and architecture; as we have seen with various unique cultures around the world from our own time. They have two capitals, 'Central City' and 'Capital City' which are very good examples of simian architecture, which is a testament to their growing stability, but one must remember to get this far, they had to use human labour to construct their buildings and dwellings to govern and live the way they do, to help expand simian influence and control and to keep humans in their place.

As an ongoing developing society and depending in which region the apes are living in as a community they could be farmers in one area and or craftsman in another. Much of the real work is done by human labour and thus Man is treated like a mindless slave/servant to a certain extent. I have also come across human communities as well, but as long as these places remain trouble free, the apes tolerate these areas, but do keep a close eye on things. Humans are not to be trusted, their only purpose is to serve the ape, there is no education for them and as long as the apes keep them ignorant, they can be controlled.

Progress is slow in ape society when it comes to new ideas; if the apes do not understand what is happening or cannot figure out a problem, they abandon further research to find out why, (*especially if directed by the 'High Council'*), this is one of their failings and possibly one of the reasons why they have not advanced as they should to improve themselves. If it were a human problem, the apes would simply kill the humans as we would flies instead of investigating the cause. Remember humans are animals.



**Report:** *Ape Culture in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Century*

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## **Ape Classes.**

There are three types of ape, which have emerged in Earth's future: the Gorilla, the Chimpanzee and the Orang-utan.

The **gorillas** are the law enforcers of 'Ape Society', keeping the peace between ape and human; they also act as an army (*No ape navy has been found as yet*). The apes seem to be generally afraid of water and thus cannot swim, a weakness that could and has been exploited. Their command structure is similar to our own; with a General being the highest ranked officer, the gorillas are the strongest of the Apekind and are not to be taken lightly. Their main transport for travelling in-between farms and other communities to enforce the law are horses. Humans are forbidden to ride any animal (*especially horses*), they must either walk or jog; if a human is caught riding an animal, that human is shot.

The **orang-utans** occupy the seats of government, and are known as councillors and make the majority of all the decisions concerning ape rule, they also can be scientists and administrators. As yet there are only two ape capitals known: 'Central City' and 'Capital City' and it is from these the rule of law is given and governed. In 'Central' and 'Capital' City there is no one ape in power, but what is known is that a selection of apes can be elected to the 'High Council'. It is this body that determines what steps, laws and procedures are taken to improve ape life, including controlling information and propaganda to suit themselves to keep simian society to the dictums of ape law. No humans occupy any government position.

The **chimpanzees** are the most versatile of the apes, they can be farmers, scientists, administrators, archaeologists and doctors and can hold various government positions if need be. Humans, if they are lucky act as servants, (*like butlers and maids*) to the orang-utans and chimpanzees who hold any Office, they are also allowed to act as drivers handling and looking after ape wagons and carts for transportation. If humans do ride these vehicles an ape must accompany them or have a written letter or pass authorized by their master. In human communities the human must be granted special permission to ride and or own a wagon/cart, and thus a record is kept of which humans have these vehicles.



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**Name:** *Colonel William Richards*

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## **Ape Economy.**

Mining of minerals, raw materials and precious metals are present using human labour to extract them. It seems that money as we know it is non-existent and there is a limited use of bartering. Precious metals like gold and silver are used for costume jewellery and other items to decorate the ape home, although these precious metals can be used as money to purchase any materials as needed by the apes from various communities that lack other resources to help them survive.

With this in mind, 'Ape Society' has a 'share-all' rule where all apes benefit from each other's labours. There are no 'poor' or 'unemployed' apes as we know the term, and all apes seem to be at ease with what they have. Thus no stealing or thievery, but each ape community does have gorilla police and jails for humans and apes that do break the law. But some individual apes like the orang-utans seem to be better off.

## **The Forbidden Zones.**

According to our satellite photos taken of the United States two areas are deemed uninhabitable by the apes, called the 'Forbidden Zone'. The southern Forbidden Zone, which extends down to Mexico, is a desolate place mainly consisting of desert, with no vegetation present at all. There are signs of low-level radiation in some areas though, but not dangerous.

The eastern/western Forbidden Zone (*depending how you look at it*) is not as wide spread or dangerous as its counterpart. Again, it is a deserted region with low-level radiation not dangerous to human life, but since we have a decontamination facility at the Cape, Merryll and I use it just to be on the safe side, when we go near or in this area to explore it.

The eastern/western Forbidden Zone acts as a barrier dividing what seem to be two pockets of Ape Societies. Viridon and Burke came from the western part of the country and they were able to give me some valuable information concerning that region. This will help when Merryll and I with Lucian as a guide investigate once we preliminarily explore the eastern side.



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### **Mutant-Human Telepaths.**

After the 'Holocaust' human survivors hid underground to survive the radiation and fallout of the 'limited' nuclear war. It seems luckily for us we were able to complete the primary objective, because the telepathic ability these mutants have, had not been fully developed or if so, their abilities for using it as self-defence is limited but effective. Although it is believed they adhere to non-violence they can defend themselves with weapons or with their telepathic abilities if necessary (*the SDU's do work*).

From what I can gather their leader known by the name of Reverend Janus is known as his 'Excellency' (*it is possible that one of our scientists survived the 'Holocaust' and passed on the knowledge of how to detonate and launch the bomb via his copy of the manual, which I was able to take from this Reverend Janus*) who understood how to launch and detonate the 'Alpha-Omega' bomb, but he had no internal knowledge of how it worked.

Thus I believe when the reconfiguration was successful and if via inspection of the bomb seeing no damage was evident, Reverend Janus may have believed we failed in our attempt to do the bomb any harm. But it is doubtful that he knew my team was there to reconfigure the bomb anyway, but taking the manual may have given him a clue.

### **Cape Kennedy.**

As predicted the Cape was targeted by the 'Holocaust' because of its launching capability. But the damage was not that severe, so my guess is it was a 'limited' strike, with our missiles protecting and destroying any incoming to lessen any destruction. The Facility itself was protected by thick radiation proof shielding; and after the team's inspection no damage had been reported, the equipment itself inside the Facility, which was packed and stored, has survived with flying colours and thus Merryll and I are able to continue with our mission. The surrounding area of the Cape is covered with various forests, grassland and vegetation. There are a few ape communities up north and I still have to investigate Capital City properly near New York.



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### **Other Information.**

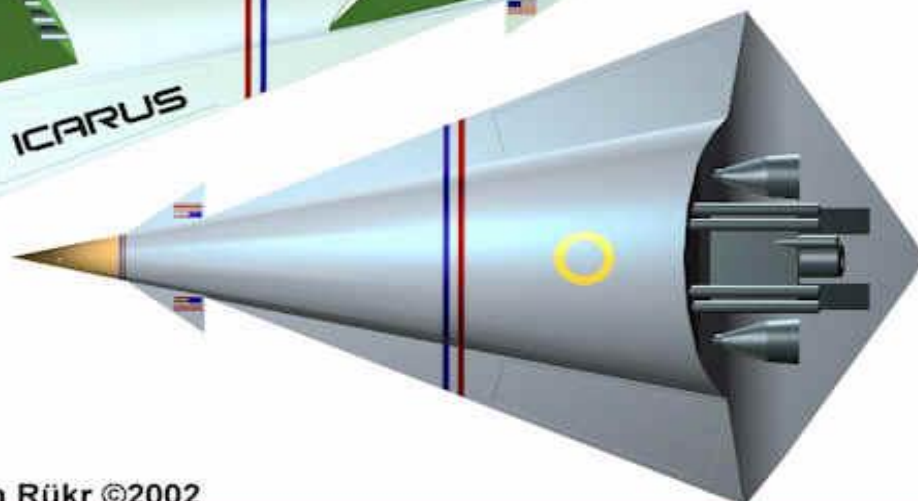
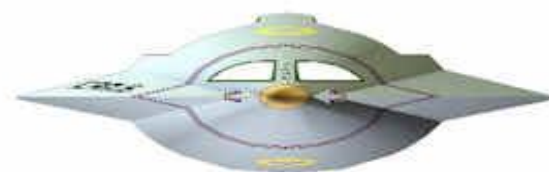
According to Viridon and Burke the apes believe they were the original masters of the Earth with the humans as their animal pets. Only a select few on the 'High Council' know the real truth of Earth's past, and how Man was the dominant species instead of the Ape. And thus it was because of Man and his 'Holocaust' that apes lost their technology and that if any are found, it was attributed to the ape not to the human. Because of this, any books and or information about the past that is found are immediately burned and or confiscated to keep both apes and humans ignorant of the truth. Any ape or human found with 'past' evidence is executed for treason and heresy.

Thus any technology that the apes have is due to their own making, but in reality was inherited as it were from our own technology. Humans are not allowed to carry any weapons, if they are using brooms or farming tools for example, it is always under ape supervision or with granted permission, even in human communities where a small garrison or ape administration is present.

It seems the dictum "Ape Shall Not Kill Ape" has waned somewhat, as there is evidence that apes can kill each other, or threaten to do so. With this in mind the apes have generally kept a very stable society, despite any animosity between the ape classes; murder is rare, but killing humans is not, and it is not considered murder, and thus no trial is given.

**A map showing the current Ape Civilization  
in the western part of the United States in the year 3115 AD.**





**ICARUS**

created by Jan Rükr ©2002



**THE YEAR IS 3115.**

**ON A CLEAR STARRY NIGHT VIRDON SPOTS IN THE HEAVENS WHAT SEEMS TO BE AN OBJECT MOVING ACROSS THE SKY.**

**IT COULD ONLY BE ONE THING—A SATELLITE.**

**WITH NEW DETERMINATION OF FINDING A WAY HOME, VIRDON, BURKE AND GALEN, HEAD ACROSS THE KNOWN COUNTRY TOWARDS CAPE KENNEDY TO FIND THE ANSWER TO A BURNING QUESTION. WHO LAUNCHED THE SATELLITE AND WHY?**

**BUT URKO ALONG WITH HIS SON CRASIS WHO ARE IN PURSUIT, HAS OTHER IDEAS.**

**IT'S A RACE AGAINST TIME FOR VIRDON, BURKE AND GALEN TO KEEP ONE STEP AHEAD FROM BEING KILLED.**

**IN THIS EVER CHANGING WORLD OF THE 'PLANET OF THE APES'.**