The Fate of One Planet

by Ian Dow

Chapter 11

Access

Jay appeared on the Spiky Ship. The walls had a soft glow to illuminate the room for Jays' benefit. He suspiciously sniffed the air, "Like I could smell the lack of oxygen," and rolled his eyes.

"Ok," he addressed the Spiky Ship. "I don't know if you can understand me, but I need a rant! Firstly, the Black Ship shot at a version of me. I understand the four of me on the Lumpy Ship have just walked into an airlock. Although I was being respectful and, for want of better words, was your mortuary assistant, you reduced the oxygen to try to stop me from completing the task. Just open the bloody airlocks and flush us out if you don't want us. If there's one thing I've always done, it's not staying when I am not fully welcome. Anytime I have done, I've fully regretted it. So, with that, fuck you and flush away."

The Parallelogram flashed, and a spiky object was made. Jay picked it up, and it started to sound like a camera's flashgun powering up. This built and settled on a high hum. An area on Jay's side of the spiky object lit up and showed an image of the room.

"Is this a gun?" Jay walked around the Parallelogram and said, "I don't want a fucking weapon," and threw it back into the Parallelogram.

A large curved metal band that would have fitted onto the alien was produced and returned. The Physical Ship told the Ship's AI unit that it may have reproduced the new Master, but he was still unhappy and would still jettison the AI unit into space.

The AI pleaded, "I made a mistake on the last item. Let me try and correct it. I will give the drone everything." It then produced the same metal band, but smaller, for a Pupa. Jay picked it up.

"What's this, a big hair band?" Jay put it on his head, went wobbly and sat down. "That's weird. I can see the room even with my eyes closed."

The band on Jay's head ran the pupas' first lesson. He laid down, shut his eyes and watched. In his head, Jay saw two of the aliens meet in a tunnel. One alien's scales flashed a pattern of light and the other flashed the same way. Then they went past each other. The same scene repeated until Jay took out the torch and tried to copy the light pattern. He got a sharp flash, and the first scene was repeated. Jay took two more attempts until he received a much longer and softer pattern.

"So," said Jay, "This pattern is 'hello', this pattern is 'No' or 'Wrong', and this pattern is 'Yes' or 'Correct'."

"There," said the AI to the Physical Spiky Ship, "The new Master is happy and learning fast for a drone."

After an hour, Jay got up and said, "Learning band," and threw it into the Parallelogram. He went to the receiving side and said, "Ready for work," four times and "learning band," five times. After finally saying, "Yep, I'm ready." The five Jays picked up their learning band, laid down and put them on. Five Jays were learning at the same time, at way more than five times the speed of one.