

Planet of Doom

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It was a dark time for The Planetary Alliance. Two of Princess Arianna's highly regarded warriors Dajus and Mallobo had gone rouge. Their attacks on the Planetary Alliance and their master computers have thrown the entire galaxy into chaos. Following the attack and destruction of the intergalactic transport ship the Star Lighter and the 8,000 passengers on board, members of the Planetary Alliance put in a call to Da'Quan, the best intergalactic detective of his time. His job seemed simple, locate Dajus and Mallobo and the alliance would do the rest. It would be a simple task if it were not for the fact that the two outlaw warriors had the ability to appear and disappear at will. It would be some time before Da'Quan would meet with his new employers. As luck would have it Da'Quan's ship was forced to crash land on the Planet of Doom.

Just before the crash Da'Quan could see the flashing lights on the Spirit's console and hear the warning message blaring over his pa system. Something was pulling him down to the planet below. As he struggled to keep his craft airborne he noticed a small island up ahead. It was touch and go for a while but Da'Quan was able to get out a distress call to one of his friends and land his ship without breaking any bones.

The tall dark haired Da'Quan maneuvered his toned six foot frame into the chair in front of the console. 'Where the hell am I?' he asked himself.

After taking a minute to scan his computer charts Da'Quan slumped down into his seat. He took a deep breath and double checked his charts hoping that he had made an error but there was no doubt about it, Da'Quan had landed on Akanon, better known as the Planet of Doom. His only hope was to try and repair his ship and leave before he was discovered. It was midday,

the weather was warm and there were no signs of Artificial Intelligence but within a few minutes Da'Quan could hear voices headed in his direction.

His first instinct was to reach for his weapon but thought, 'what good would that do against a planet of sophisticated robots made of silicon?'

Seconds later Da'Quan was surrounded by curious humanoid creatures coming from out of the bushes. Da'Quan was confused, 'what happened to the angry blood thirsty murderous robots?'

"Greetings my friend," a middle aged man waived his hand as he slowly approached. "I bid you peace."

"Peace," Da'Quan found himself repeating out loud. "Who are you?"

"We are Akanononians." said one of the women in the crowd. "We saw your ship crash, are you injured?" she asked.

Da'Quan grabbed his shoulder, "No, just a little bruised, I will be fine.' Da'Quan's secret ability has served him well in the past but would be of no use to him in his present situation."

The crowd parted and a grey haired old man with a short white beard and a long staff walked slowly toward him. "I am Elder Rylord, please forgive them for staring. You are the first visitor that we have had here in forty nine years.' "What is your name?"

"I am Da'Quan." Da'Quan exhibited a quiet confidence, his soothing baritone voice and tanned complexion was a dead giveaway that he was not from this part of the galaxy.

Elder Rylord nodded, "Show me your hand Da'Quan." Da'Quan opened his hand to reveal the symbol of his planet of origin. The Elder opened Da'Quan's hand to get a better look. The symbol was an inverted triangle with a trident tilted to the right inside the triangle. "Very interesting, you have traveled a great distance Da'Quan." The old man used his staff to turn himself around, "Walk with me," he said.

The two didn't walk far to a small town. In the middle was the town square where Da'Quan and the Elder sat and talked. "I feel that I must apologize for your aircraft landing here."

"Apologize for what? My engines..."

The old man held up his hand "your engines did not fail you; you were brought down deliberately by a gravity beam used by the robots that control this planet. Let me start from the beginning, all will become clear before I am finished. I am an Akanon, we are the original inhabitants of this planet." He opened his hand to reveal a palm print in the shape of an Ankh. "We are pacifist, a peace loving race of people. The artificial life forms that now rule this planet were created by us to help build structures for our growing society. They are the ones that built the gravity beam that brought down your ship. As you can see something has gone terribly wrong. About fifty years ago they began to have independent thought. They evolved and unified very quickly and therefore needed to be stopped. Our attempts to shut them down were futile; it caused them to view us as the enemy. One night they launched a hellish rebellion and slaughtered every living being in their path. Many of our race fled in ships and the rest of us..." the old man gestured toward the town behind him, "the rest of us ended up here. Without

transportation and with no one willing to risk a rescue we have languished here for almost five decades.”

“Elder Rylord, why are the AI’s deliberately crashing ships? And if what I heard is true why haven’t they come to this island and, well, destroyed the rest of you?”

Rylord nodded. “There was little time before the attack, no time to rewrite the command codes for those metal monsters so we programmed them to fear water. They haven’t attacked us because they are afraid of the water. For nearly fifty years they continued doing the only thing that they know how - to build. Their program has malfunctioned therefore they are misguided, sick. Once there was no where else to build buildings they began building more robots. Once they realized that they were running out of storage to house the new robots that’s when the problem grew worse. They began constructing space ships but without the needed plans or knowledge to properly construct them the AI’s constructed two gravity beams. They work the same as magnets only much more powerful. You are lucky to be alive. No one has ever escaped the beam before. Every ship that was brought down was carefully examined, the salvageable parts were reused and the damaged ones duplicated until they got it right.”

Da’Quan told Elder Rylord the story of how the rouge warriors from Deltor had gained access to the master computers on Xanar and how the technology on dozens of planets has been affected. “The beam must have lost power long enough for me to regain control of my ship and land. Wait, I sent out a distress signal, my friend is on his way to help repair my ship. I need to warn him.”

Elder Rylord grabbed Da'Quan by the arm, "your communication devices are of no use here. The robots have blocked the signals. You must have sent your message before you passed through their shield."

"Okay, then I must find a way to turn that beam off. You never said why they were building the ships."

The Elder folded his hands and leaned forward. In a whisper he said, "To conquer other worlds. We have been monitoring them. The fleet is nearly complete. Once the fleet is ready and they have enough fuel they will awaken the robots in storage and the massacre will begin, starting with us. We are here because they do not view us as a threat and they do not want to waste their resources hunting us down. I am sorry my friend, but there is little that you or anyone else can do. They have evolved and have taken on the appearance of the inhabitants of Deltor, Otar, Lazon; even Rayos will not be spared from this genocide. Our guess is that they will land their ships and walk among them undetected until their numbers are great enough to strike."

Da'Quan remained calm; he was not one who scared easily. He learned early in his career that the mark of a great detective was to ask the right questions at the right time. "What happened to the robot code 'do no harm to its creator,?'" he asked.

Just then a series of chimes rang out. "It's time for supper, I will tell you on the way. As pacifist living in a non-violent society the creators assumed that the robots would follow our example." Elder Rylord and Da'Quan stood in the dinner line, "when they picked up their meals he simply waived his hand across the scanner just as those before him had done and the meals were paid for. I fear that I may have misled you." said the elder. "We do not wish to die. Over

the years several attempts have been made to the city on the mainland in an effort to at least destroy the ships thus keeping the robots contained but all of our efforts have failed. It's as if they knew we were coming. Within minutes are people were caught and thrown into the sea and are killed. If I did not know better I would think that they have grown to hate us. The AI's have stocked the waters with eel bots to deter us. If we were to fall overboard we would be killed immediately by a swarm of bots. Just a touch from a single eel bot is enough to take a life. This is how they dispose of us and any pilots that may be caught in their beams." The Elder shook his head. "It is a horrible way to die."

After dinner he returned to check out his damaged ship Spirit. He was told that the replacement parts needed to repair it were in the city with the killer AI's. Even if the ship was air worthy again the magnetic beam that forced him down would have to be disabled first.

For three days Da'Quan dwelled among the Akanononians, he asked many questions and took notes. He knew that his friend would be arriving in a few more days and he needed a plan.

Early one morning Da'Quan heard a faint hissing sound, there was a slight vibration coming from the ground. Everyone on the city streets stopped to look up. There, a woman shouted as she pointed toward the clouds. A blue ship with green strips on the side was heading backwards on an angle towards the planets surface. It was as if a large invisible hand had reached into the sky and was pulling it down. When the ship was no longer visible everyone in the streets lowered their heads and said a short prayer before moving on. There was a loud boom; a cloud of black smoke arose from the site where the ship went down. For the first time Da'Quan had seen what the weapon was capable of doing.

‘That could have been me,’ he thought, and it will be his friend if he could not find a way to stop it.

Da’Quan went to the elder to borrow a boat. “It is suicide.” augured the Elder. Da’Quan smiled at the Elder; “it appears that you have offered me two choices, death now, or death later. I simply refuse to accept either. I will leave for the mainland tonight. I have a plan, well it’s more like a theory.” he explained. “If I do not return then you will know that my theory was incorrect.”

“You will need a guide, the city is large and without one it will take you weeks to find your way around.”

Da’Quan shook his head, “no; I will not jeopardize the lives of anyone else. If you could draw me a map and have someone drop me off I would be grateful.”

That night Da’Quan slipped into the main city. He gave the Akanon who brought him strict instructions to stay in the boat. “Take the boat out to sea and wait two hours before you return. Whatever happens you must not leave this boat, understood?”

The city was constructed of tall beautiful buildings and streets so clean that you could almost eat off of them. Using the map Da’Quan kept to the shadows as he made his way to find the parts needed to repair his ship. The primary city of Akanon was filled with thousands of AI’s. Da’Quan was struck by how lifelike the robots look and by how many there were. He turned the corner and there it was, the two disc shaped gravity beams. It took a while for him to find the parts he needed once he found the right building. As Da’Quan returned to shore he heard footsteps behind him heading his way so he ducked behind a large bush.

‘I’ve been found out.’ he thought. Well it was a good try. He peered through the bushes and saw a dozen AI’s running toward the shore, the one in front was holding a sophisticated tracking device.

Da’Quan clenched his fist, ‘no,’ he whispered. He watched as his guide scrambled to run back to the boat but the robots were too fast for him. Without batting an eye four of the AI’s grabbed the screaming guide and threw him into the deadly eel infested waters. It was clear that the AI’s number one priority was to defend the city. The robots spoke in several languages however they didn’t seem to have a problem understanding each other. By programming themselves with many different languages they could easily blend in on any planet in the galaxy. After a brief discussion the AI’s headed back towards the city. A saddened Da’Quan quietly climbed into the boat and headed back to the island.

Later that night he met with Elder Rylord and told him what happened. He also told them how the AI’s knew how to find them once they came ashore.

“I noticed the other day that your race has sensors implanted in your hand.”

“Yes,” Elder Rylord looked down at his hand, “Everyone here does, it is the most efficient way to keep track of our usage. Similar systems have been used by the Xanarians, on Xanar, and on the planet of Lazon and others for many decades now.”

“Yes,” Da’Quan pointed in the direction of the mainland; “however those worlds do not have a planet full of deranged misguided robots trying to kill them.”

A wave of fear washed over the elders face. “You mean?”

“Yes,” answered Da’Quan. “I was not sure at first, but I saw it with my own eyes. They are using your own technology to track and kill you. I suggest that you ditch those chips or at least get rid of the ones on anyone you send into the city to destroy those space ships. There is still time. Elder Rylord ordered a meeting of the council the next morning at which time it was decided that all of the tracking chips be removed immediately.”

At first light Da’Quan was hard at work repairing his ship when a few of the town’s people who had heard what happened came to thank him. They brought him breakfast and helped him to repair his ship. It would take a week for the Akanon’s to put together a plan and a team to sneak onto the mainland and destroy the ships before the AI’s could leave but Da’Quan’s problem was more immediate, his friend would be arriving tomorrow.

Late that night Da’Quan returned to the city to gather more information. He searched the warehouses and was both shocked and amazed by what he found. Building after building of massive storehouses fifty feet high were filled with dormant robots. Da’Quan calculated that there must have been at least a half a million of them. Just like the night before Da’Quan had that sinking feeling again when he heard the footsteps of dozen’s of AI’s headed in his direction. And like the night before he hid as they passed him by but this time was different. Da’Quan followed them deeper into the city towards the beam. They were about to take down another space ship. Da’Quan watched the skies as he wondered whether his friend had arrived early. Was he too late to save him? The ground began to shake more violently this time and the hissing sound was louder. Da’Quan surmised that it was because he was much closer this time. There was a thunderous crash; the ground shook violently as the ship hit the ground.

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