



I/Tulpa: Learning Curve

By
Ion Light

Tulpas are thought-forms. All internal agents are tulpas or soulbounds, thought-forms by definition. In a world of thought-forms, there can be no fiction. If you think it, dream it, read it, or experience it on any level, it is real. Realer than real. The effects of "Active Imagination" are as real as the "placebo effect." A person is what they think about the most. Want to change who you are, then change what you think about. You can engage the Universe directly, or indirectly through the words of others. Words are the keys that unlock the other realities, because words are also tulpas. The personality that you identify with, that you mistake for being you, is also just a tulpa. You are no more you than an actor is the role he plays. Call this fiction. Call this 'Star Trek' meets 'Doctor Who' meets 'Groundhog Day' fan-fiction. But if you want to go further than you ever dreamed possible, engage it like a long lost friend.

Until the veil is lifted, Travel Light.

Ion Light.

Indulging in Tulpamancy led to the creation of Loxy Bliss. Engaging her led to "the Invisible Counselor technique," and "Active Imagination," heralded by Carl Jung. These activities have not only changed my life, they have changed the landscapes of my dreams, and turned Astral adventures into bizarre mixture of reality and fantasy that is incredibly difficult to sort.

I/Tulpa, book 2, version 1.0

From the author: this is a work in progress. This copy is freely dispersed for the purposes of editing, refinement, and discussion. You're invited to share it. You're invited to dialogue with me.

How should you approach this book? The easiest way is to see it as nothing more than a Star Trek-Crossover series. Crossover with? Everything, so don't be surprised if you discover yourself, or your kitchen sink, because it's all coming out of the wash. A more difficult way of experiencing this: accepting this as evidence of intense psychological spiritual work endeavored by the author, which is accomplished by engaging the unconscious directly. The methodology is referenced, but not detailed; there is enough written on the subjects that you will find your own path. The impossible approach: it is exactly what you're reading it to be, whether you call it hallucination, or dream, or places on the astral realm. There are places in the astral realm that have been solidified by collective consensus. All is consciousness. "If thought forms are real, there can be no fiction." (Or so Loxy assures me.)

But, for practical disclaimer stuff, I am 'pushing' it as science fiction fantasy, heavy on crossover potential, with my caveat: it is more than that to me. My experiments with tulpamancy, the invisible counselor technique, and active imagination resulted in what you're about to read. I can't impress that last part enough. There can be an argument made that I have tapped into some incredible lucid dreaming potential. I have a psychic medium friend who says that where I go is an actual Astral place and it's just as real as here, made real by Consensus through the collective unconscious. Which means, I can't take full credit; this is a group project, me, tulpa, everyone. I

have only my belief that this is not dreaming. It feels different than lucid dreaming, and it is different than any previous out of body experiences I have had. I am more than happy to put all of it aside and say, this is just an incredible way of sorting information using access to subconscious via tulpamancy. If you are curious about that or some of the other things you find here, you can google them. Don't just read my adventures; have some of your own. If you find anything profound here, know it didn't come from me, it came from another source, and you have access to that, too. If you find yourself on my ship, stop and say "Hi, I made it."

And so we arrive at the part where I am supposed to inform you that the characters and events in this book are fictional at worst and any similarities between real people and places is simply coincidental. Clearly, if you believe my bias, that is not accurate. Are they mental constructs? Maybe. All I can say is that they are who they are and or appear to be, to me, but are not necessarily representative of the persons that my brain has somehow accessed or modeled in the alternative landscapes I have accessed. We change out there. Or we change in here.

If you're easily offended, this book isn't for you. If you're afraid of occult stuff, like astral projection, tulpamancy, active imagination techniques, or summoning the Goddess, touching Ouija boards, well, this is definitely not for you. If you read any of the other books I have made available, this will be fairly PG, but because of one scene, I am recommending a NC-17 rating. I suspect the 'I/Tulpa' series won't stay PG. I have kept to the vision as it was experienced, running diatribe included. Because, isn't that how we all roll: narrating as we go.

Feel free to contact the author if you have questions. Ion Light, solarchariot@gmail.com or text, 214 907 4070. You have permission to share this copy of the book.

And until we meet, meet again, here or out there, always, Travel Light.

Ripples in a Pond

A still pond in the forest...
A leaf lights on the waters;
Subtle ripples go from leaf to shore
And back and back and back
Ever fading, never gone

To dive in sun and stars
Through leaves yet fallen
Falling, felled
And come out dry, ha...
It would take a miracle!
To splash in the faces of God
The ripples are all contained
Fainter, ever fainter
Never gone.

If God remembers us,
Even those memories are alive!
Subtle ripples of leaves now sunk
Layer and conceals the depth of eternity.
And a breath steers the leaf
Towards changing shores where no one stands
Not for long, as foot prints fade
Like ripples on a pond
Fainter, ever fainter
Further, ever further but never there.

Chapter 1

I woke alone, but not lonely. I had roused earlier when Loxy got up, stirred again when she finished her shower and came and got dressed, was even aware that she kissed me before departing the room, but I didn't rouse enough to come full out of sleep. I recalled echoing Loxy's sentiment, but I am not sure exactly what I said. When I woke, I woke without an alarm, and the ambient lighting had cycled to daylight brightness, even though outside was clearly space black. There was a moment of being disoriented, as if I were expecting to wake up somewhere else. There was a fraction of a second of questioning reality followed by a hard acceptance, like a heavy steel/stone door coming down and shaking the earth. Welcome to my lovely dungeon. I liked it more than the other dungeon, and I am not disparaging the dungeon by labeling it such, it's just, well reality, or the afterlife, or whatever life is, it isn't what I expected.

Space is black. Technically it isn't black, the whole universe is pushed towards the x-ray spectrum when traveling FTL, and it is like pushing through an ocean of invisible light, but looking at space 'sideways' seemed black. Only the occasional particles fluorescing against the warp field as space/time was spun up and over, below, or around the ship broke the monotony of the blackness. Occasionally, space around the warp field itself fluoresced like the evanescence of a sparkling wine allowed to breathe, with the bubbling froth flowing aft. And that's lovely to witness, once you realize your ship isn't being torn apart and you're not about to die... Today. I've been told that we actually leave a visible vapor trail of particles that might have otherwise been annihilated if we hadn't interrupted the natural process of the ether, or the energetic vacuum, which is never a perfect vacuum. (If you're new to this idea, empty space is bubbling with energy and matter and antimatter particles spark into existence like butter jumping out of a hot pan as the pancake mix gets poured in. The particles self-annihilate when they collide back together through the arcs of their short lived dance.) Otherwise, at warp speed, space was blackness without stars, but only because at relativistic speeds, everything was light. I'm of the opinion it is all light all the time, and we only think it isn't because we see such a narrow band of light, but that is my opinion. The spectral pattern of streaming stars you might recall from watching Star Trek was not the pattern we were greeted with. If it weren't for the energetic froth and florescent rainbow spectrums, it would be intolerably boring. Looking forwards, the universe was condensed to a blurry blue mass. The opposite view was reduced to a red blurry mass. The side view was simply black, unless sparked by the items mentioned above. Yeah, you're saying I have already said that, but every time you see this blackness you're struck by it like, wow, that is really black. Like someone cut a hole out of your movie frame of existence.

Traveling at warp, there is a pressure wave against the warp field. The light of all the stars hitting that bubble was tangible. If it weren't for the skin of the ship, shields, and deflector screens life wouldn't last very long at these speeds, even in a warp bubble. We may be in a pocket universe, but the outside does leak in. Just like real soap bubbles, you can see through the warp bubble. To the observe outside, you wouldn't see the ship, you would just observe the twisting of light, as if a mini black hole had disrupted your field of vision, but truly, we were moving so fast you wouldn't notice the blip, unless maybe we were headed straight for you, in which you would see an increase of energy, like a laser was being aimed at you. Most things

encountering the warp field simply flowed around us, the same way water flowed around a ship. Not all the water touches the ship, but the water that does causes the neighboring water to froth up, but most of that energetic froth, the visible part of it anyway, rolled around the outside of our warp field, undetectable to us on the inside. From outside the warp field, from say the vantage point or frame of reference of a planet bound observer, things get a little more interesting. What might they see? Well, have you ever heard of Fast Radio Bursts? Google that. There is a whole host of explanations for FRBs, the most recent being aliens are shooting solar powered sails with lasers to go interstellar. Just saying. We see what we want to see.

Back inside the warp field, one group of scientists are very excited: particle physicist; we are basically a mobile super collider, and some of the energy that leaks through the field, well, it's immensely revealing, and I don't think anyone on board is smart enough to understand the data we're collecting, except Tesla, who just kind of nods and said, "I know. It's what I have been saying for years." It takes an incredible amount of energy to create the warp field, and an even greater amount of energy to sustain it, because everything in the Universe seems dead set on bursting our bubble. In a calm ocean, bubbles don't last long, mostly because they don't get created. Fortunately, the ocean of our Universe is hardly calm, as the 'waters' are rushing away like water spilled over a table. Pancake mix? An almost, absurdly flat table. The Universe is strange.

And I am hungry. I can clearly see pancakes, bacon, and eggs in my future. Pancakes with peanut butter. Eggs over easy and served on top of the pancakes with peanut butter. The fork breaks the yoke and the yellow ooze spreads out of the not so flat Universe spreading across my almost flat table. Yes, I am hungry! And I am so happy to be alive and here.

Inside the ship, inside the bubble, life was fairly mundane, if you consider the necessity and repetition of schedules and biological necessity like eating and playing and working and resting mundane. If you associate 'mundane' with the disparaging connotation of 'the grind' that comes from our 21st century's idea of productivity and work, and have read 'who moved the cheese,' and believe in that kind of zero sum game, my definition of mundane is not your definition; our inner lives were anything but. There were whole worlds to be visited on the inside of this Enterprise. On off hours, many of the crew retired to their second homes inside 'habitat one,' an entire world under a dome, on the inside of a Dyson Sphere; it was ours to share. There were a lot of domes, most of them sterile, ready to take on new life. I heard there were more Earth type terrestrial domes in the process of being constructed. Since our Dyson sphere went with us, it meant our ship took shore leave with us; there was room enough for family and friends if they wanted or had, but we were surprisingly lacking in family and friends. We had each other, with hardly an explanation to go on. We were so busy sorting the newness of our reality that we rarely had time to contemplate the weirdness of how we were assembled, or dwell on the memories of our Origin. That other life could be touched, but it had become less tangible than a dream on waking. And the longer we were here, the more of a dream Origin became. We had been on the ship for just over a month, prior to launch, and we had been at warp for nearly two weeks; out of that time, only three people out of the five thousand crew members resigned their commission due to trouble assimilating to their present life. They were retired to their second homes and only one was taking advantage of counseling. Returning to the 'other life' or the life of 'Origin' was simply not possible, the same way coming back from the dead is not

possible. Dead is not quite the right analogy. Many of us touch our origin life, and we suspect our origin life touches us, and both lives proceed simultaneously. It is that belief, the belief in simultaneous multiplicity that has helped being here to be bearable in the sense; we miss people and aspects of Origin, but if you extrapolate where we are in space/time, there is a realization that Origin has come and gone, or, some are saying, hasn't even been born yet. If you're like me, you're going to struggle with the time travel thing, but a basic truth is you can't travel at relativistic speeds without moving through time, and space/time is one inseparable thing, and it's tricky. And many of us believe our mission here will save humanity, which helps us assimilate. We do this because of Origin and for Origin, and for everyone who ever lived.

And if you believe that, then the time thing, that's the easiest thing to get your head around. There are people on my ship that should never have existed, as they are clearly works of fiction. Either they exist because the collective unconscious of my society as solidified their beings, making them possible, exactly the way Loxy Bliss, my tulpa is possible, or this is a dream, or the universe is a strangely spooky place. What if an alien had tapped into the Human Collective Unconscious, saw all the beings that reside there, and decided to make them manifest in order to study them? How would all these beings fall out and where would the go? Well, my Starship is just one of the possible vectors. If you had a say in where you went, where would you go?

Like Origin, we have divided our work into shifts. Loxy volunteered for first shift. I liked waking up naturally and preferred second shift. Captain Marwa Tamman, from 21st century Egypt, relieved me for third shift. There were several other officers that would fill in, should the three of us be occupied or shifting though our weekend or vacation time. None of us had actually earned vacation time. Some of the 'relieving' officers, if not otherwise occupied, would visit me on my shift and get a feel for how I handled things. And so far, there had been nothing for me to 'handle.' The Maiden voyage was underway, and nothing untoward had happened. Q didn't jump up and interrupt us demanding we run back to Origin in fear. The crew was healthy and functioning, well... as far as anyone was telling me. And I was okay with that. I mean, let's say a couple people had gotten into an argument and exchanged words or even blows. If they sorted that without security, yay them. People do this. Even if security got involved, and they handled there and then and it was settled, yay them. If that kind of nonsense comes all the way up the chain of command to me, I will squash it, but so far, people were sorting things out. Yay.

I got up and spent a moment looking out at space. If I leaned my head on the glass, or transparent aluminum, or whatever it was comprised of, and I turned my head towards the bow of the ship, I could discern a hint of the blueness, almost like we were in a tunnel. It was the blueness of sky, maybe because that's the only thing my mind could relate what it was seeing. Looking back was like looking at a pink/red sunset. I couldn't maintain this position, not because it hurt my neck, but because I didn't like the 'sound' that resonated through my bones when I touched my forehead to the glass. I went and got a shower and dressed with in the Uniform that had been freshly 'printed.' Compliments of Loxy, no doubt. I connected the Iphone to my belt. I didn't need it. There was enough tech in the uniform that it could technically be cloth fitting version of a tricorder, but, apparently it was procedure, so I put it on. My undershirt was long sleeved and had a turtle neck, and the pull over which was metallic 'gold' held the marks of every color, giving me the bare minimum of all the other career tracks. It wasn't just

complimentary, like ribbons given to decorate someone who had earned rank. I knew a little bit about everything. I hold a private pilot's license. The ten years it took me to finish my undergrad had me jumping majors 5 times. I had started with a musical scholarship, only to switch tracks to astronomy, then archaeology, followed by psychology, biology, with intentions of becoming a nurse, and ending in a degree in sociology. I hold a masters in counseling, and was licensed as an LCDC and an LPC.

Does any of that mean I should be Captain of a Starship, more powerful than anything Trek ever hinted at? Hell no. I wouldn't have put me in charge. But, I also didn't say no when I was told I would be the Captain. And so far, only a few have questioned my qualifications. And rightly so, and so far I was handling it like a counselor, reflecting back, "So, how do you feel about that?" So far, no one has said, "Scared shitless." The first time someone does, I am going to say, "Yay you."

I emerged into the living area and discovered Watanabe, my personal Yeoman, sorting through information on her Iphone, waiting for me. She stood as I entered, and summoned a coffee: summoned, literally pushed a button on her cellphone and a coffee materialized on the bar that served as a kitchen cabinet.

"Good morning, Sir," Watanabe said. Her hair was as wild as an anime character after a wind attack, and just as colorful, clearly not her original color. She was technically not on the 'paramilitary' track, but was instead a civilian contracted to keep me in line. I am not sure how much license we have to play with our uniforms, but apparently, if there is flexibility, she pushed it. And I'm not saying I didn't like it. The skirt was higher on one side than it was on the other, kind of like the episode with the 'bad' Fleet, in 'Mirror Mirror.' Her belly was exposed. And though I know Loxy could care less, I still imagined she would have an emotional response to finding Watanabe in our quarters with me alone. Even I was having an emotional reaction. A complex reaction that range from fear to lust. And it wasn't that she had done anything proactive or suggestive. I would argue, just her 'being' was provocative and suggestive, but that's just my interpretation, and I am clearly bias. She was just young and bubbly and loving. It was as if she hadn't a care in the world and had never been touched by the drama of Origin. She was as genuinely caring, but not a lightweight, Barbie Blond; she was tracking stuff and efficient. She was as feisty as Anime character and could draw boundaries and kick butt, but otherwise, super affectionate as if everyone here was just some kind of Pokémon teddy bear that needed love. She frequently left me silent and stupid and mesmerized. I reached for my coffee and missed it by a mile, forcing me to have to focus to pick it up.

"I was just about to come wake you when I heard the shower running. Your hour with the personal trainer and the yoga class after has been rescheduled. There's an impromptu department head meeting in, well, five minutes ago."

Oh, I thought. But I liked my personal trainer and yoga time. But, I didn't complain out loud. I sipped at my coffee as she led me to the meeting. She led and continued to speak to me as if she wasn't aware that I was affected by her presence; more likely, she knew but didn't care. She spoke to me out of the ignorance or confidence of youth that suggested she was in charge and I was just old man under her care. If truth be known, I think women run the world and men just stand around looking stupid. We arrived and entered the room in question together and was greeted by cheering.

“Surprise!”

I blinked. Watanabe clapped and jumped and hugged me, and then surrendered me to Loxy, who hugged me, while a chorus of “For he’s a jolly good fellow” ensued, started by Jung. Tesla was quick to join in. This was definitely their custom.

While they sang, I told Loxy “It’s not my birthday.”

“We were bored,” Loxy said.

“I don’t celebrate,” I said.

“Another reason we celebrating on a non-birthday day,” Loxy said. “Now suck it up and play along. It’s not about you, it’s about us.” Like I said, women are in charge, men just stand around and look stupid.

As the song was wrapping up, Watanabe took my coffee and switched it with a mimosa. When the song concluded, I was baffled by silence, while holding a drink. Watanabe gave a glass to Loxy, and then took one for herself.

“A bit early for me, but, eh,” I raised my glass in cheers, and there was a round of glass tapping.

“So,” I said. “Here’s to good company, to our first star, which we arrive at in six hours, and to all the grand adventures yet to come.”

“Here, here,” Tesla said.

We drank together and then I was invited to cut the cake. The icing was shades of purple. And the first bite revealed a grape soda like flavor. A grape cake! Like a seven up cake, but grape!

“OMG,” I said. How did they know? Which is a stupid question, because Loxy would have known that every year when folks asked me what cake I wanted for my birthday, back when I was celebrating, I would ask for a grape cake and no one ever gave me a grape cake because they said it didn’t exist. I would lament, how can there be no grape cake?! There is orange cake, and lemon cake, and apple cake, and cherry cake, and pineapple cake, why isn’t there a grape cake! I nearly cried it was so good, and I don’t even like sweets. I much prefer salty-spicy flavors, like chips and salsa.

After I cut the first piece, Watanabe took over the slicing and handed out cake. I found a fairly empty corner and took up resident. It was near a recycle container, in which I put the ‘paper’ plate and fork. It disappeared before it hit the bottom of the can, dissolving into eneregy. I also found my coffee again. Folks seemed pretty happy, and there was small talk plenty to be had, mostly discussing the excitement of arriving at our first destination, our first alien star. And I learned something new about our tech.

“I want a pic with everyone,” Watanabe announced, pulling out her Iphone tricorder.

“I’ll take it,” I said.

“Silly, I want you to be in it,” Watanabe said, encouraging people to scrunch in, and then she positioned her Iphone and said “anchor” and walked away from it, leaving it in midair. She rushed over and joined us in the pic and smiled at the camera. “Again, and John, try to smile.”

“How did you do that?” I asked.

“Do what?”

“It’s floating,” I said.

“Really, John, we have antigravity technology, you don’t think we can anchor a camera in a frame of reference and leave it on record?” Loxy asked me.

“Okay, different arrangement,” Watanabe said, and mixed us up.

I walked over to the cellphone.

“John, I need you in this,” Watanabe said.

I reached up and pushed on the cellphone, but it held firm. I sat my coffee down on the conference table and circled it with my hands. I grabbed it with both hands trying to move it, and was even able to pull myself off the ground. Damn! That’s like the coolest thing ever. Loxy came to retrieve me, but before pulling me back towards the arrangement of people, she had me stare into the Iphone at close up, pushed her ear against mine, and then kissed me, and then pulled me back to the next arrangement.

“I am going to get copies?” Loxy asked.

“Sure. I’ll make them available on the intranet,” Watanabe said.

Eventually I was sorted through all the arrangement of people and pushed aside while the photo shoot continued without me. Watanabe was certainly in her element, ‘pushing’ people around. Loxy, Uhura, and Sacagawea took several serious pics together, and then several just being girl pics.

Someone asked me if I wanted more cake, while cutting herself one, and I turned it down. I did go for a second cup of coffee. I simply asked the computer for coffee, and the point to point replicator took away the empty cup and transported in the second cup, materializing it just in front of me on the table. Yeah, the world is awesome.

Loxy joined me at the table, pulling a chair next to me up closer.

“I have something for you,” Loxy said.

“You know...” I began to protest. I haven’t celebrated in twenty something years, and a part of me felt like this was a violation of my wishes. I was tolerating it because this was clearly not about me, but about the needs of others and their wanting to build connections.

“You’ll like it,” she said, handing me the small box.

I opened it to find a college ring: UNT, with a green stone and an eagle, very modern in appearance. I stared, moved to tears. Yeah, get over it, I am really an emotional person and my eyes get moist a lot, and I am okay with that.

“You don’t like it?” Loxy asked.

“I,” started, but couldn’t say anything.

“You said your family didn’t get you a high school ring, and you didn’t get college ring, and I think you should celebrate your accomplishments,” Loxy said.

I was going to protest. I have accomplished some things, but it never felt like enough, and there was never a group cheering me on, it was just me, steadfastly pushing on, but more out of a need to find myself than to impress anyone, and so even back in the day when I would get into some serious arguments about subjects and escalate to bringing multiple academic books and pointing out references to prove I was right and people say where did you get your degree from, I would never hit them with I have a BA and a BS, and a Masters... I mean, really, if after showing three separate disparate sources, if a person wasn’t even willing to consider a point as having validity, not acceptance as an absolute but just validity, then communication was over. I flashed back to work on Origin where I was a crew chief, technically a foreman with six people

in my charge, and the very first day of a new bid, one the crew approached me and said, “I don’t believe in dinosaurs.” I was stunned. Not because he didn’t believe in dinosaurs, but because he didn’t say “hello,” or “My name is whatever.” He led with that. Which means, he had heard rumors about me, and it colored all our conversations to come. But mostly, he had come at me with an agenda instead of a greeting.

“John?” Loxy asked.

Oh, wow, she brought me back. I was glad to be back because memories of that particular crew could raise anxiety in my chest because that was a bad run, and the craziness went for three bids, because they kept signing up for more tours with me, which was also baffling because they really didn’t like working with me, frequently told me as much, and every day was a fight to get work accomplished.

“John?” Loxy said again.

I hugged her. If anyone else was having as much difficulty assimilating to the new world, well, they were hiding it better than I.

निर्मित

The Earth cluster is a scattering of stars, well over a two hundred thousand stars, a galaxy in its own right, and not yet detectable to the Earth of ‘Origin’ because they were all simultaneously placed at once, and it takes a while for light to travel. Though we aren’t certain when the light from here arrives there, we suspect it arrives prior to the demise of the Sol system and Earth, on the eve of humanity and it will usher in a new era: we are not alone in the Universe. Being the only sentient life form was an absurd proposition to begin with, but I am bias. Even within the Earth Cluster, the light from all the stars were not visible to all the other stars, and so, many worlds still felt isolated in their own right, but the pockets of humanity scattered across this clustering of light knew something was up and so were either ignoring it or contemplating it, and were likely going crazy with explanations and behaviors that one can only imagine. At warp 6, it took the Enterprise two weeks to travel the distance from the worlds of Crossover One, the system of stars that bridged the gap from the Milky Way to the Earth Cluster. We arrived at the closest star system on the outside edge of an outer ring like structure that circled the entire ‘Cluster’ that connects the inner arms of this galaxy in formation that resembled spokes on a wheel, as if the galactic arms were strands of taffy. Get use to taffy. Taffy machines and taffy explanations are something I visit a lot. Though the Earth Cluster’s structure could not be presently discerned from our present space/time coordinates, we had solid intel that this artificial gathering of stars would resemble a Sombrero Galaxy when seen in its entirety, but for now, it was like a picture being generated one pixel at a time, one star emerging at a time.

I was on the Bridge when we dropped out of warp. There was a flurry of activity around me, and I was fortunate that I could afford to just observe while everyone did their things. The astronomers confirmed that the star was indeed ‘Sol.’ All the stars but 7 that we could detect in our sphere of influence were copies of ‘Sol.’ No one understood the how or why, we just knew what the data said, and spun our own explanations from our own paradigm, and the answers we came up ranged from science fact, to science fiction, to metaphysics. In this system were 5 earth like planets well established in the goldilocks zone. There was a Jovian planet, neither Jupiter

nor Saturn, put it had a ring and 22 moons around it, all of which harbored life. Three of the inner worlds gave clear signs of being occupied by humanity, and each specific world appeared to be a specific age of humanity, or variation.

We launched a dozen probes to collect data. It would take over 42 hours to have all the intel, so here is an advanced bit of information if you're curious. We would establish that there was an Egyptian world at the peak of its civilization, there was a world populated by Irish folks alone, pre Roman contact, and a lot of Druids there, a world of Native American, and a world that would be an enigma, because the probe would be destroyed before giving us a clue.

One of the worlds was a world of dinosaurs, and there were sentient reptilians living there, and fairly advanced, metaphysically speaking, and we knew this because not long after dropping out of warp, one of them arrived on the Bridge. She arrived, fading in like a ghost, clearly different than how our transporters materialized people, but not so drastic of a change that the crew reacted negatively. They did react. Security was called to the Bridge, and one of the security on deck brought his phaser to bear on the subject.

"At ease, ensign," I said, coming out of my chair. "That's no way to treat a guest."

"But..."

"If she meant us harm, she didn't have to come here," I said. Which, was how I reasoned it. She was clearly a female reptilian, and somehow familiar to me, but my primary concern was we didn't start shooting folks our first encounter.

"But, she's reptilian, Sir," the officer said, determined to get his opinion out. "They, they eat people."

"Okay, if she starts to eat someone, then you can stun her, but until then, put away you phaser. That's an order, son," I said. He reluctantly complied. I was going to be so embarrassed if she ran over and ate me. "I am not sure where you heard reptilians are bad, but if they're like people, then there are good and bad and indifferent." Hopefully this wasn't the Harry Turtledove reptilians. I turned back to the guest, even as Chan was arriving with backup.

"Hello, John," the guest said.

Now see, why wasn't I surprised by that? "You have me at a disadvantage," I said.

"Oh, how soon the apprentice forgets his master," the reptilian lamented. Chan took clues from the emotional environment and had his men fall back to obscurity, but keeping himself present. Chan, of course, felt compelled to draw closer to me. Friendly or not, his job was to protect me from things like this. Perhaps protect me from my own stupidity.

"Summer?!" Loxy said.

I did a double take. "From the other life?" I asked.

"How many other lives have you had?" Sacagawea asked from the helm.

"Too many to count," Summer said. "We've been expecting you."

"You have?" I asked.

"Of course," Summer said. "We're part of the Arrangement."

"Arrangement?"

Isis, who I thought was sleeping on the console, stood stretched, and yawned. She had been completely indifferent to the arrival of the Reptilian and the level of activity before and after her arrival. "They don't know about the arrangement."

Summer bowed to the cat. "Isis, sister, it has been a long time."

“And only a moment,” Isis agreed.

“How can they not know about the arrangement?” Summer asked.

“There is still debate about its relevance to the mission objective, and whether or not it will make a difference,” Isis said.

“Then, I will end the debate, sister,” Summer said. “John, humanity has till the furthest star’s light reaches Origin to prove itself worthy of joining the Council of Five.”

“The Council of Five?” I asked.

Summer looked to Isis, displaying disappointment or bafflement, it’s hard to tell sometimes if a Reptilian is frowning or not. Even a snarl could be interpreted as a mating invitation. Trust me on that one if you aren’t familiar with my education at Safe Haven, and accept that it’s difficult to discern happiness on Reptilian. Sometimes happy and anger look the same, because the same amount of teeth are displayed.

“How can you be this far out and not know about the Council of Five,” Summer asked. “Really, Isis, you’re supposed to be the goddess of light and knowledge.”

“I am. And when people ask the right questions, they start getting better answers,” Isis said.

“When the student is ready the master will come,” Summer said, musingly. “Well, I suppose some of the details will work itself out as you go. We are excited to participate in humanity’s next step and invite you to leave your portal on our planet so that we may participate directly with the Crossover Society.”

“What portal?” I asked.

“You don’t know about our Stargate program?” Loxy asked.

“Umm,” I began, trying to recover quickly. “I was playing dumb to see what she knows?”

Loxy didn’t believe it. Summer helped me, though, by telling us what she knew. “Your mission isn’t just to explore new worlds, but to build bridges back to Crossover One. You’re going manufacture and leave a Stargate on one world in every system, which allow for people to come and go faster than Starship travel.”

“How do you know about this?” Loxy asked.

I wanted to know how Loxy knew about this and I didn’t ask, mostly because I was still kind of wondering about the reality behind Summer.

“We are expert Soul Travelers,” Summer said. “We have been watching this unfolding since our days on Origin, before the apocalypse. We have participated in the Arrangement before humanity was even walking the Earth. Ah, but I sense distrust in the air. Discuss it among yourselves if you must, but whether you leave the Gateway with us or not, John, please visit me on the surface of the fourth planet before visiting any other planet in this system. Your very lives may well depend on it.”

That sounded ominous. Summer started to fade away.

“Wait wait wait,” I said, stepping forward, hands up. She re-solidified before me.

“Your questions can’t wait till we meet in person?” Summer said.

“You’re real?” I asked. Loxy drew up beside me.

“Realer than real,” Summer said.

“But how is this possible? Loxy and I created you. You were just a fantasy,” I pointed out.

“Oh, you created me, did you?” Summer asked, amused. “Do I look like a Tulpa?”

“At the moment, yeah,” I said, a little sore. “Except everyone can see you. Are you suggesting Safe Haven is a real place? That really happened?”

“Oh, John. Don’t you remember anything from your classes with Emerson?” Loxy asked me. “In a Universe comprised of thought forms, there is no fiction.”

As usual, the profundity of a Loxy-ism astounded me. And it shouldn’t, as she has been nothing but amazing since day one, and yet, I was pondering her statement looking for flaws.

“Everything is consciousness,” Summer said. “Pure energy. Every thought is an artifact, which either speeds you on your journey or becomes an obstacle.”

“Yeah, right, you’re going to say everything is an illusions that I am not here, that none of you are here,” I said.

“I am not a Buddhist,” Summer said. “But yeah, it’s all an illusion and all real, simultaneously. The goal isn’t to break through illusions and rise above it. If you leave the shadows of Plato cave for the world of light, you are still inside the cave defined by the canopy of sky and moon and stars. Anything you resist, persist, anything you flee is waiting for you. The only way out is in, and you’re at a whole new level of way stations.”

“Samadhi,” Chan said.

“Essentially, yes,” Summer said, acknowledging Chan. “Only, we don’t put a word to what we’re trying to describe. Fourth planet from the sun. The coordinates have been sent, in case you can’t remember where to find us.” Summer faded and was gone. I was still angling to touch her, just to see how solid she was, but missed my chance.

“Command staff meeting, conference room One A,” I said. “Captain Lance, you have the con.”

निर्मित

Command staff included House, Jung, Chan, Tesla, Collins, Uhura, Bliss, Isis, me, and the surprise arrival of Midori. Though Midori’s body was here, her brain was actually elsewhere, and the headband halo crown sparked a general pattern of activity as the brain directed the body remotely. While everyone was gathering, Watanabe showed me a list of beverages on a screen on the surface of the table, and suggested a dandelion licorice tea. I went with the coffee. The coffee arrived on the table via site-to-site replicator, so essentially it just ‘beamed’ in. After I was settled, Watanabe made sure others knew how to use the computer to order drinks.

The last one to enter the room was Midori. Tesla, Jung, and Chan stood up. I got a look from them and so, I stood as well. Midori encouraged us to sit, but Tesla refused to sit until she was seated, and when she insisted on standing, so did Tesla.

Isis assumed her spot on the far end of the table, opposite me.

“Alright, Isis,” I said. “Tell us about this arrangement.”

“Yeah, now that the cat’s out of the bag,” Loxy said.

“Oh, Loxy,” I said.

“Tell me you weren’t going to say that,” Loxy said.

“I was waiting for an opportunity, yes,” I said.

“Children,” Isis said. “You’ve poised a question, are you ready to receive?”

“Sure,” I said.

“Depending on who you ask, humanity’s first run was either a dismal failure or a brilliant success,” Isis said. Her bracelet glowed brightly. “The Council of Five believes further statistical analysis is required to make a decision of this magnitude.”

“What kind of decision?” I asked.

“Whether or not the human race should be allowed to continue to exist,” Isis said.

“Do you mean to tell us, if we don’t meet their criteria, they’ll simply eliminate us?”

House asked.

“I did not say that,” Isis said. “And it isn’t necessary for them to do anything to you. Humanity destroyed itself in the First Run. The world of humanity’s origin has, is in the process, and will self-destruct.”

“If we destroyed ourselves, isn’t that sufficient to know we’re not worthy?” I asked.

“Way to vote confidence there,” House said.

“It’s a legit question,” Jung said.

“No child is judged on one run,” Isis said. “And the definitions you use limits your understanding. You see life and death as two separate things, but the presence of one automatically calls the other into being. Humanity’s death is not an end to life. Our true nature is spirit and cyclic, light and dark, on an off, male and female, wake and sleep, and we move through these arcs endlessly. Humanity has a particular flavor and has offered a greater learning curve to soul through its variability which has resulted in more children being raised to adolescents and adulthood than what many of the other present options have afforded. And they have been around for billions of years before humanity. So, yes, some of humanity’s children destroyed the sandbox, but sandboxes are easy to make, and there are still many games left to be played before childhood’s end.”

There was silence. House broke that silence. “If our meetings are going to have esoteric bents, I would like to be excused from having to attend,” he said.

“This is important,” Jung said.

“House is right,” Midori said. “The details of the arrangement and the meaning derived from it is irrelevant to the goals of the Brains. Due to Summer’s perceived enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the Brains’ agenda, we have voted to leave the Stargate on their world.”

“How do we know the reptilian’s perceived enthusiasm isn’t a trap?” Chan asked.

“I trust them,” I said, while I wondered if everyone but me knew about this Stargate program. Clearly, they were not talking about the US program to remote view.

“And that’s sufficient for me,” Chan said. “But the question needs to be asked. We can’t proceed through this new galaxy assuming everyone we meet is beneficent, or even compatible to our goals, the obvious ones like connecting the worlds to Crossover, or to our unspoken ones, such as the raising of humanity to the next level of existence and whatever that means.”

“We can’t continue to be afraid of everything,” Uhura said. “Isn’t that a part of growing up? Everybody talks about the Age of Aquarius, and transitions, but few discuss what it’s like to live in such an age. ”

“I am not saying be afraid,” Chan said. “I don’t advocate fear when handling snakes, just knowledge. Snakes bite.”

“Are you using that analogy because Summer’s people are reptilian?” Loxy asked.

“Sumerians?!” Jung asked.

“Summer has her own agenda, but her people have compatible goals with humanity and how the two species will ultimately blend will be a factor that weighs in the deliberation process,” Isis said. “No one species is ever raised in isolation. We are born in constellations, we are raised in constellations, we are extinguished in constellations. You think of yourselves as separate from nature, but you are enmeshed. All life shares a symbiotic relationship with their host. If the bees die, so go humans. If the dolphins die, so go humans. If the fish, then the dolphins, then the humans.”

Was she speaking metaphorically or literally or both?

“And, are you in league with this Council of Five?” Chan asked.

“I am simply aware,” Isis said.

“That doesn’t really inform us as to which side you’re on,” House said.

Isis’ tail switched. “The fact that I am with you should speak for itself,” she said.

“And yet, you are still not being forthcoming with information,” House pointed out.

“Even the devil walked in the garden and held conversations with God.”

Good point, from someone who claims to be an atheist. Then again, atheists are generally well informed. My take, the number one reason for atheism today is Christianity.

“I am more ambassador than crew,” Isis said. “And I will conduct my affairs as I see fit.”

“There is no need for all of this,” Midori interrupted. “The decision for this system has been made. Establish a base here, and deploy a Stargate.”

“Okay, then,” I said. “Let’s do that.”

“Hold on a moment,” Loxy said. “Are you in charge or are the Brains in charge?”

“I assume the Brains are in charge,” I said. If there was a pink slip for the Starship, well, they most certainly owned it.

“Then why have a ship’s Captain?” Loxy said. “They brought us here together just to follow orders?”

“We brought you together to serve our purpose,” Midori said. “Our goal is to establish connections to all the systems in the Earth cluster. Should there be worlds without indigenous life, we will establish colonies, but in the absence of lifeless planets or moon, we must compromise.”

“You only believe you have brought these people here for your purpose,” Isis said.

“There is more to this than you even imagine and there is a higher authority in play.”

“The Brains do not recognize your higher authority,” Midori said. Without their bodies, the Brains would be more logical than Spock ever was. Midori was a brain, just beginning to revisit emotions by bringing her body back into play, but when they were too much, she simply ‘destroyed’ her body and started over the next time she created one. “We do allow for dissent. Given what we know at this moment, is there any opposition to establishing a base of operation in this system or with the reptilians?”

After a moment of folks not committing, Chan raised his hand, indicating he had a problem. “Chan?” I asked.

“My concern is this: every culture from Origin has a relationship with a reptilian, and only a few of those are good relationships,” Chan pointed out.

“Those are the archetypes,” Jung said. “Reflections of our own inner struggles that have been assigned to symbols so we might better navigate the inner worlds.”

“Maybe they were archetypes, or maybe they were remnants of the age of dinosaurs, or maybe they were aliens visiting earth,” Chan said. “Because if you add up all the things we don’t understand about our past, you can reasonably say we were having experiences with something tangible than spirits.”

“Or,” House offered. “It is a derivative of a genetic history of mammals being eaten by snakes and hawks, which resulted in humans inheriting a fear of flying snakes, in which case it’s a functional impulse to protect the species.”

“Is there a world without snakes?” Loxy asked.

“The snake’s biological mode of transportation is the simplest and most likely to evolve,” House said.

“Back bones and brains before arms and legs?” Chan asked.

“We evolved from primates, not snakes,” House argued.

“Unless you take it back further,” Chan said.

“Have you actually seen a primate?” Tesla asked. “We’re nothing like primates. We are clumsy, naked, off balanced, thin skinned... Nature is beautiful and makes sense. We’re like nothing in nature.”

“What are you saying? We were created?” House asked.

“By a spirit or an alien, we are the products of genetic manipulation,” Tesla said.

“Oh, okay, so we’re through with rational discourse,” House said.

“We haven’t abandoned rational discourse,” Uhura said. “Rational can’t exist without the irrational. We are male and female, right brain and left brain, and the two hemispheres are practically two different brains, art and logic.”

“And where did you get your PhD?” House asked.

“House, that ends here,” I said, more than just protecting Uhura. “We will speak our minds here, offer arguments, but we will not disparage each other, or shut down a conversation through ridicule. That goes for everyone under my command. Now, is there any reason we shouldn’t leave a portal in the care of the Sumerians?”

“Do we have a selection criteria?” Loxy asked. “I mean, if you think about it, our job is simply to survey and move on. We aren’t supposed to be here more than a week, but clearly there is enough in this system to occupy us for years.”

“That is why you are leaving the gate,” Midori said. “We will send teams, colonist.”

“Yeah, and, so, Chan is right to have concerns about trusting folks. Gates work two ways. Are we simply trusting our intuition?” Loxy asked.

“John has a connection to Summer,” Midori said.

“That connection comes from a line of fiction,” I said.

“John, it was more than fiction,” Loxy said.

“The Brains trust that relationship. I trust that relationship. The decisions is made,” Midori said.

“Very well then,” I said. “Let’s do what we came here to do. I’ll lead the Away Team.”

Everyone stood up to go about their business. Loxy lingered. Midori also lingered, but decided to allow Loxy to have her moment in privacy, and so she stepped out of the room.

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