

GOOD SEEDS AND BAD TIMING.

(Inspired by Drake's Equation and Murphy's Law)

The winged alien scouts are on a quest. They leave their home sun sphere to search for intelligent life with the ability to participate in galactic matters. Eventually they come to Earth, a jungle planet of steamy greenery and many volcanoes. It is still a young planet, but life has already evolved. What kind of life? It is time to find out. They land, cloaked, and are disappointed by what they see – yet another planet dominated by enormous reptiles. Again. There are several verdant and beautiful planets in the galaxy where reptilian or insect life forms of no great intelligence are the dominating life forms. This seems to be the rule rather than the exception. They observe, document, and then move on. Not long after they leave, a giant asteroid slams into the blue planet, shrouding it in fire and death clouds.

Aeons later, the descendants of the first visitors return, out of curiosity. The planet is now blue and white, colder than the previous records related, but still very life-sustainable. They fly around and they see ice all over the northern hemisphere. They land, cloaked. The huge reptiles have all disappeared. Other, warm-blooded life forms more similar to their own seem to dominate the planet now. This is a wonderful surprise. They see sabre toothed tigers – intelligent, but future communicators? No. They see mammoths. No. They see something frightening a herd of them – a hairy creature, two legged, vaguely like themselves, but shorter in height, and lacking wings. The creatures are white skinned, clad in furs and animal skins. They appear to be good hunters and good co-operators. The scouts witness a burial ceremony and see great love and protection within family groups.

The alien scouts continue their trip around Earth and move on – to the ice-free areas where the climate is warmer. Here they see another creature, similar to the hairy white one of the north, but taller. These are dark skinned warriors. They hunt the gazelle and the bear. The aliens see their cave paintings, their depictions of gods and goddesses. These creatures also show good promise but there are signs of over-aggression within tribes, territorialism, and a hierarchy based on fear. Priests and holy men monopolise rituals and beliefs.

The aliens decide to come back a few thousand years on – maybe the white hunters of the woolly beast will prevail. Maybe the dark skinned cave painters will prevail. Both show promise, although the short life span of the earthlings seems to be a factor against their favour – at the most they seem to live for about

60 of their earth years, too short a life span to acquire wisdom and tolerance. The alien scouts can live for many thousands of the same years, using regenerative hypnotherapy. Earth appears to be changing towards a warmer climate. All the signs seem favourable. The winged aliens move on...

Many years later they come back. They land, cloaked. The ice has receded. The white hairy hunters have disappeared, as has the mammoth and the sabre toothed tiger. The taller race has prevailed, the gazelle hunters. But now they have spread almost all over the planet, a very promising sign. They speak many languages, and have several different skin and hair colours. Their technology has advanced, so that there are farms and vineyards and cities and towers and temples. But there are also vast armies, and enormous injustices. Slavery is rife, as is cruelty. A privileged few live in great luxury, while the greater masses live in poverty and fear.

All seem to share a love of music, which fascinates our aliens. They have not encountered music before. It is unique to Earth. All seem to feel a devotion to their many different gods. The winged aliens see a future problem here. Different gods create conflict. They know this through long and hard experience. They have seen so many promising civilisations disintegrate because of this. They decide, against the better judgement of some of their elders, to interfere.

One of them uncloaks. He appears to a frail and beautiful young girl in a little village. She is chosen because of her telepathic abilities, lack of fear for what she does not fully understand, and beautiful voice. She sings each evening as she goes to the well to draw water. She sings as she sits at the loom, weaving her robes. She tells stories and sings to the children of the village, and they sit around her, wide eyed with awe. She is even persuaded to sing for the winged one, unafraid and fascinated, when he visits her.

She becomes pregnant with his child. The child, partly from the stars, partly human, will spread his message of love and understanding for humanity. The aliens take a long look at a city called Rome, the centre of power at that time. The message of love and understanding is sorely needed. They move on...

They have hardly left the planet when the Great Elder among them becomes deeply troubled. They return. They land, cloaked. Their hybrid child is dying, tortured and maimed on a wooden cross. They take his grieving mother with them; she is their only link with the child they lost. They hypnotise her into longevity sleep, keeping her in a warm dreamy world. Then they leave, horrified at what they have put their own child through. But the council on board debate it and they decide to come back one more time.

Earth is such a promising planet, so unique in the vastness of space. There are many enormous uninhabited gas planets in the galaxy and some smaller planets harbouring life, but only 3 other known technological civilisations. Each one is rare and precious. Their own is the oldest one of the three. Maybe there could be one last chance for the blue planet. Nowhere is there such music, unique in the galaxy. They decide to return to Earth one day. But they will wait because there are other matters to look into first. Give the Earthlings another 3000 of their own years or so...

Time passes and the little blue planet in the corner of the Milky Way exceeds their expectations. They are monitoring it now, as well as the green one on the opposite side of the same galaxy. At least 1000 years earlier than their calculations, they start receiving radio messages from Earth. Nonsensical trivial messages, not designed to SEEK CONTACT, only transmitted for the amusement of the earthlings. But they are signals nonetheless, and they are a magnificent step forward. The signals increase, beautiful sounds and pictures radiating out from the little blue planet. Once again it is the music that the winged aliens are fascinated by. They filter through the nonsense and they find it. It is so diverse and beautiful. It expresses the joy of life like no other civilisation they have ever encountered.

They come back, full of hope. Now could be the time to make themselves known and to invite the earthlings to join the interstellar federation. Now could be the time to teach the earthlings how to travel from star to star, how to cure most of their illnesses, live for aeons and discover the reason for their own existence. Now could be the time to make friends.

On the way they see bad signs. The planet appears to be seriously polluted, it's atmosphere turned poisonous. They decipher signals of unrest and distress and of religious strife. To their horror they realise that a great conflict of beliefs is about to consume the planet. On the one side are the descendant supporters of their own star child – his philosophy converted over the centuries into a crusade, and on the other side a head on battle with the crusade philosophy of another religion, that of a man called Mohammed.

Suddenly, the music stops and the signals disappear. They see the beautiful blue planet engulfed by yellow grey clouds, darkness, fires and radioactive waves. It is no longer the vibrant jewel in its solar system, but a dark globe of death. The aliens shield themselves against the poisons and land on the surface. They no longer need to cloak – there is no one left to hide from. They swoop down on their wide wings. What has happened?

They land. Their elders remember the first time they arrived. Then it was a jungle planet, dominated by enormous reptiles. The second time it was an ice planet, harbouring many possibilities. The third time it was full of promise. The fourth time it is shrouded in death. No sunshine reaches the surface. Dark radioactive clouds blot out the sun. The once green forests and jungles are all twisted and dead. The oceans are cold and empty. The mighty cities and empires are all ruined or disappeared. The radio signals have stopped and the music has died. The only creatures that are thriving are the cockroaches and the organisms that live below ground. If only they had arrived back a little earlier, maybe they could have stopped the cataclysmic war. But they were too late, and Earth has to start all over again. It will take a long, long time....

So now there are only 2 of them left in the galaxy. Loneliness is everywhere. The other civilisation, less hopeful as it was, must not be allowed to disappear. The winged aliens set course for it. The other civilisation is also on the brink of self-destruction. They must do what they can to prevent it happening again. The winged one strokes the brow of his beloved and the only survivor from Earth is gently woken up. They have much to do on Planet X. This time their star child will not be murdered. They will station cloaked scouts on the planet to guard the fate of the child. Their message of love and understanding will prevail. And if they are lucky, the girl with the golden voice will teach this, and other planets to sing...

Dedicated to the memory of Johannes Kepler, who saw the mystery of the universe in the perfection of music.

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