

Earthwatch
A Hucow Story
by Violet Kirkwood

Inside the suspension gel, Captain Helshent roused from the stasis sleep. With a thought, small turbines sutured into his back and feet propelled him to the top of the chamber. The murky brown fluid slipped away, and he was pleased to see his flight deck in full operation. “Master of the Watch, report.”

A sallow man turned on his heel and snapped a salute at the massive tank centered on the flight deck. “Lord Captain, we have emerged from hyperspace. Our current coordinates are on display to your feed now. In brief, we have arrived in the Ulster System. Preliminary scans have indicated that colony designate Delta-Zero-Three has survived initial founding. All ship systems are operating at optimal levels, and we have prepared for real-space engine burn. Crew rotation was completed three hours prior to hyperspace emergence. We stand ready for your orders.”

“You are relieved, Lieutenant Jesseth. I have the con,” Helshent’s eyes raked over the various screens flickering inside his suspension tank. With a real-space burn, it would take several hours to arrive at Delta-Zero-Three, but it ran a significantly lower risk of detection. Most of the generational colonies failed to maintain any sophisticated technology, but after the *Listerix* disaster, a safe approach was protocol. Helshent peered around the flight deck. “Is Chancellor Vanis with us?”

Jesseth tapped a screen at his station, “My lord, the chancellor is currently being briefed regarding the observational reports. She begs your patience.”

Helshent waved his hand to dismiss any further explanation. “Very well. Senior Helmsman Cordin, can you explain to the crew the details of the *Listerix* and colony designate Beta-Three-Seven?”

Cordin looked mildly annoyed to be interrupted from his governance over the six junior pilots charged with the ship’s navigation. “Of course, lord. The *Listerix* was a Centurion Class destroyer on mission to oversee the developing worlds of Bravo Sector, including Beta-Three-Seven known to fourteenth generation colonists as Entretha. At the time, the engagement protocols did not specify the method of approach for colony evaluation. Captain Signis believed that appearing out of hyperspace in orbit above Entretha would save time and, more importantly, fuel.”

With a rumble of his throat, Helshent cut off Cordin. Chancellor Vanis had arrived on the bridge. Helshent didn’t actually mind having to wait, but it wasn’t prudent to allow the chancellor to set the parameters of their mission, even with good reason. “Jesseth, continue from there. Cordin return to your duties.”

As Cordin gave a bow of acknowledgment, Jesseth glanced at Vanis’s exasperated eye roll and continued the story. “Unknown to Captain Signis, the colonists of Entretha had not only maintained their founding technology, but in some cases improved upon it. The crew of the *Listerix* was shocked to find their systems disabled moments after translation to real space. The people of Entretha believed a hostile force was preparing to attack and responded in kind. Short range craft launched from rudimentary orbital platforms managed to disable the *Listerix*’s main

engine while also causing orbital destabilization.”

“Very good, lieutenant,” Helshent said. “Please continue with your duties. Chancellor, perhaps you would enlighten us as to the fate of the *Listerix*.” He made sure the bureaucrat had a full view of his patronizing grin before turning his attention to the incessant data feed of reports on ship conditions.

Vanis stepped up to the open area in front of the captain’s tank and smoothed out the elaborate folds of fabric that denoted her rank. “At your pleasure, Lord Captain. With the *Listerix* in a failing orbit, Captain Signis and his crew were thrown into disarray. They made attempts to establish contact with the attacking natives of Entretha, but the language translation would take a further few hours. As damage to the ship increased, Captain Signis chose to quell the resistance in order preserve the ship’s integrity. Launching fighters to deal with the skirmishers, he ordered the primary battery to take a firing solution on the nearest orbital platform. Tragically, he did not understand that Entretha’s technological advancement had been enabled by a local element that we now call Isterixium in remembrance of the *Listerix* and her crew.”

Helshent grunted loud enough to interrupt the chancellor. “We call it that to smooth over Signis’s incompetence and recklessness rather than let his failure blight our grand history. The damn fool caused an explosion that caused the *Listerix*’s orbit to decay to critical alongside a massive orbital platform. The destroyer crashed into Entretha, which would have been a tragedy in itself, but the real damage occurred when the *Listerix*’s hormonal bombs detonated prior to proper atmospheric adjustment. Please, describe what happened then, Chancellor.”

The woman clearly didn’t appreciate being lectured. She limited her displeasure to a frown and answered, “When not coded to a specific local genome, the chemical compositions have no predictable pattern. However, in the case of Entretha, rather than causing the intended effect, the hormonal bombs caused extreme levels of aggression and fear. The detonation of the *Listerix*’s magazine, which included a full compliment of traditional ordinance, caused the hormonal cloud to spread rapidly, covering the whole of Entretha in a cloud of pure rage. The result was uninhibited carnage that culled a population of four billion in under forty-eight hours.”

“And that is why we make a silent approach from deep space,” Helshent concluded. “While of course employing the chancellor’s clever scouts. Lieutenant, scans indicate a heating leak in sector thirty-four. Have a repair crew sent to evaluate. After that, advise the governor of deck four to prepare a report on the crop blight. If we need to resupply nutrient production, this system will need to suffice. Cordin, adjust to the flightpath I have sent to your terminal. We don’t wish to disturb the orbit of their moon. Go on then, Chancellor. What awaits us on this blue orb?”

The chancellor offered a small bow to accept the captain’s acknowledgment and perhaps to placate him. Helshent considered her punished enough, but made a mental note to not goad her further. Vanis brought out a tablet and sent a data stream to Helshent’s screens. “Delta-Zero-

Three appears to be on the precipice of the fourth tech epoch. We have arrived at an opportune time. Gene spectrum shows specialization in prolonged aerobic activity, not especially suited for space travel, but highly adaptable to planetary environs. Above average visual sensory organs, highly specialized olfactory and auditory sensory organs. They have followed the pattern of similar generation gene seeding in forgoing niche evolutionary roles and rising to dominance through high adaptability. Population is estimated at seven billion, though distributed erratically across the available landmass. Physiologically, they adhere to Nero's Theorem of Convergence."

"Excellent. I have received your report chancellor, and I commend you and your staff on a swift and judicious analysis. What then is the recommendation of the Hierarch Council?" Helshent asked in a lazy tone and only for the benefit of the log keeper.

"The Heirarch decrees that we must spur our cousins to join us in the stars. I have dispatched chemists to prepare the ordinance."

"So be it," Helshent said. "Jesseth, ship-wide please." The lord captain waited as Jesseth turned on the communication channels and announced the captain would speak. With Jesseth's nod, Helshent spoke, "This is the Lord Captain. Our long mission continues today as we bring the gift of life to another world. Know that you stand witness to another civilization's moment of emergence, when they confirm their suspicions of life among the stars and begin their arduous journey to follow after us. All batteries stand at the ready. At my order, let them know the thunder of the gods to be merely the echo of the Hierarch's will."

The captain closed off the broadcast and spent several minutes entering orders that relayed out to various parts of the ship. On one of the many displays, he passively absorbed the archived information about the system. Eventually this provoked a frown, and he turned his attention back to the chancellor. "Vanis, you did not mention this system had a dual seeding. What has become of the other, Delta-Zero-Four?"

"A failed effort, my lord," Vanis answered. "Elements of the seedgene remain, but the planet became non-viable."

"Why?"

Vanis fumbled and looked entirely out of her element for the first time in her many years on Helshent's ship. "It would require a much closer study, my lord. However, if you will accept a cursory guess. Chemical compositions within the crust likely shifted, resulting in an imbalance of magnetic fields which then led to a leeching of atmosphere and the loss of liquid water. That is, at least, one of the many possibilities. As you know, the success rate for these smaller planets is incredibly low."

"All the more reason to ensure the ones who have made it this far survive, chancellor," he agreed. "What is this one's local name?"

Vanis checked her tablet, "The most common moniker is Earth."

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Roughly five billion miles away, Eddie Buchanan spilled his coffee down the front of his slacks. Across the room, Julia peered over her screen with a smirk. “You know, you’re really not meant to have open drink containers in here.”

Eddie glared back, “Fuck off, Julia.” He was upset for a variety of reasons. His pants were wet and, despite the stifling temperature in the room, the spot had turned cold almost immediately. Secondly, he hadn’t even gotten the chance to drink the coffee. At a very close third, he’d been scheduled alongside Julia. The two of them had been at odds since Eddie took the job, but that wasn’t unique to him. As the only female coder, Julia was the personification of barbed wire. At first, Eddie assumed it to be a defense mechanism created to fight back against an overwhelmingly masculine field and that she would soften after realizing that he wasn’t her enemy. After three years, he was pretty sure that Julia was misanthropic lizard. An attractive misanthropic lizard, but a lizard nonetheless.

They were part of a six person team working to keep software stable at the Very Large Array. It sounded glamorous when Eddie first read the job offer. He imagined hitting a few keystrokes and causing the massive satellite dishes to swivel at a new point in space where they would detect something important. He didn’t know the first thing about astronomy, so he had no idea what important things waited to be found. The actual astronomers seemed to like pointing out that none of it was aliens, though. That little kick to the idea of a grander universe of intelligent life was one of reasons the job turned out to be less fun than he imagined. Another was that he never even saw the big satellites. His job kept him in a facility a hundred miles away from the array where he worked in a cubical reviewing and writing code. The code didn’t even have an affect on the big satellites. It was software that helped process some of the data the array pulled. Fancy math, as his college professors put it. In the end, it all boiled down to fancy math.

While dabbing away the spilled coffee and considering that his version of fancy math could be rewarded with better pay and less hostile coworkers, a light on one of the old panels lit up. Beside it, a dot matrix printer roared to life, spitting out a sheet of yellowed paper with numbers on it. Both Eddie and Julia looked at it with a frown. The different systems that kept the facilities running dated back to the 1970s. Much of it had been replaced with more modern tech, but some systems kept backups running on the old interfaces as they awaited refurbishment. The new systems could send out an email to every researcher around the world if something of note was detected, but once upon a time, the signal panels were watched by technicians who would then make phone calls according to what the panels told them. Eddie tossed the used paper towels into the bin and went to look at the printed sheet. “This is coming from the Leonards Reader,” he said.

“It’s on our list to be archived,” Julia answered as she went back to her screen.

“What’s it do?”

“I don’t know, Eddie. Maybe read the print out.”

He ignored her and went back to his own terminal. A few minutes later, he found a wiki that detailed all the different uses of the VLA. “The Leonard Algorithm was originally designed to detect patterns in gamma radiation bursts. Advanced into use as a method of early warning for nuclear detonations, after superior methods of monitoring potential nuclear threats emerged, the Leonard Algorithm was reworked to monitor detonations in the far reaches of space and report data that would help scientists better understand the formation of stars and other heavenly objects.” He looked over at Julia, “Should we call someone?”

“We don’t have a red phone to NORAD,” she answered, but she went over to check the print out for herself. “These are coordinates, obviously. Not sure what these other numbers mean.”

Eddie’s phone buzzed on the top of his desk. “It’s Ray,” he said to Julia before answering with, “Hello.”

At the other end of the line, their boss sounded irritated. “Are you two running some kind of test or fucking around with the alert system?”

“No,” Eddie answered as he put the call on speaker. “I’m on the sorting algorithm. I think Julia is working on cleaning up the base on that sound wave analyzer stuff. Why’d you ask?”

Ray sounded more annoyed. “I just got a call from some astrophysicist half out of his gourd. Wanted to know if we were messing with something we weren’t supposed to. If you’ve been poking around, tell me now Eddie and it won’t be nearly as bad.”

“Honest boss, the only thing I’ve actually accomplished today is spilling coffee on myself. But, hey, we did have an old machine start clunking out a report. I checked it out and it’s a defunct nuke early warning system.”

“Have anything to do with gamma radiation?” Ray asked, his voice shifting to unease.

“That’s what it says. Something going on we need to be worried about?”

Ray didn’t answer for a while, but finally said, “That’s six levels above either of our pay grades. Tell you what though, you two pack it up for today. Whatever this issue is, it’s gonna swamp up everything until we track down where it’s coming from. Take something to tinker on, but clear out of there before some military nerd shows up and starts bossing you around.”

Eddie went to protest, but Julia had already crossed the room and snapped her laptop shut.

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Julia had the keys, so she had to wait for Eddie before she could lock up. Eddie didn’t

see the point of it. Three dozen people had keys to the basement levels, but Julia was a stickler for protocols. She looked irritated to see that he'd waited on her at the foot of the stairs, but they walked up together. The stairwell led them to the main floor of the building, a big open lobby with eight foot windows that provided a gorgeous view of the New Mexico desert. Eddie heard two sounds when they entered the lobby, first the murmur of excited voices talking in hushed tones and second, a distant percussive thump.

The other office workers stood at the windows on the southern side of the building. A few of the pointed, but most only glanced up occasionally while keeping most of their attention on their phones. Julia and Eddie joined the group, each of them harboring an uneasy feeling as they saw what was causing the commotion. The sky was pink. Not because of slanted light from the sun because the sun sat right where it always did at that time of morning, but because of whatever was causing the thumping noise.

A quick eyed woman in the gaggle pointed at something streaking through the sky. At first, Eddie thought it was a plane and grimly imagined it emptying out a payload of nuclear warheads. He couldn't see a plane at the tip of the stream of white smoke, though. As soon as it appeared, it vanished in a sudden flash. Seconds after that, the area of sky looked pinker than the rest. As their eyes adjusted to the bright light, both Eddie and Julia saw the zipping streams of light, a daytime meteor shower, as more of the strange projectiles flew through the atmosphere.

"Something blew up?" Eddie thought aloud. "Space station? All that stuff is debris coming back to earth?"

A cute woman in a tight skirt looked over her shoulder, "No, it's not that. The news is saying that it's something coming from space. Fucking aliens." She said it as if the main concern was how it would affect traffic. "Aliens dumping stuff in our sky. What's that going to do other than distract people? It's hard enough getting bred, you know, *without* stuff exploding in the sky. I mean, look at you, jabbering at me instead of pumping hot spunk into my pussy." The woman rolled her eyes, made an *ungh* noise of disapproval, and sashayed away to where one of the custodial staff stood pressing his face against the window.

Eddie was so hung up on the idea of aliens that it took a while to register the back half of what she'd said. "Did she just say something about her..." he trailed off as he glanced at Julia. She had dropped her bag and folded her arms underneath her breasts, forcing them up and out to strain against her blouse. Eddie couldn't help but look at the proffered cleavage. Julia was an unpleasant coworker in all respects except in her appearance. Most of the women who worked in his field took an approach of fitting in with the guys to help mask their gender for the workplace. Julia took the other route, doubling down on her sexuality like a Lipstick Engineer. Eddie figured it wouldn't win her many friends among her female colleagues, but since there weren't that many of them in the first place the whole thing was a wash. He thought he'd become immune to her enticing figure, but maybe he simply hadn't bothered to look in a while. *Odd time to be looking at Julia's tits with alien bombs going off in the sky*, he thought.

"Oh, fuck me," Julia said.

“Sorry, what?” Eddie asked, remembering in the nick of time that she wasn’t giving instructions. It further confused him when the top button of her blouse popped off and pinged against the window.

Julia glared at him, apparently unaware that her breasts had become squashed inside her clothes. “The sky, idiot. Can’t you figure it out? It’s obviously not poison cause we’re all still alive. So, what else can it be then?”

Eddie looked at the pink powder drifting down over the landscape. He saw some of it swirling into a cyclone above the intake fans of the building’s ventilation system. Higher up in the sky, the stuff had thickened to a darker shade of red. “It could be anything,” he said while shifting his stance to relieve a pinched feeling. “Even if we’re not dead right now, maybe it takes a while. Or maybe it’s like that stuff from the old *War of the Worlds*. The nutrient growth stuff that the Martians use to cover the planet.”

“And that explains the local phenomenon?” she asked before taking his jaw and turning it roughly to look across the room.

His gaze went to the tight skirt woman and the custodian first. The woman’s skirt had ripped and put her wide ass on full view. Her front was pressed against the glass while the custodian, naked from the waist down, railed into her from behind. Eddie watched the rutting couple and wondered what Julia wanted him to understand. All around the room, others had found a partner and started fucking like rabbits. He saw Suzy, the building’s receptionist, on all fours with some guy humping her from behind as her nipples dragged on the floor. To Eddie, this all seemed in order. Except, he didn’t remember Suzy’s breasts being that big. “I’m not getting it,” he said to Julia.

“It’s doing something to our brains, too. Obviously, it is,” she said, but he didn’t hear her. She stripped off her blouse and let her breasts swing free. Eddie’s eyes widened, he reached out to grope her, and she made no effort to stop him, even gasping slightly as his clumsy fingers dragged across her nipple. “If you can pay attention,” she hissed, “it might be worth remembering that ten minutes ago seeing people fucking in public wasn’t normal. I’m pretty sure it was illegal.”

The idea flashed in Eddie’s head like a bell clanging out a discordant note. The more he tried to focus on it, the more it felt like his head might explode. The pinched feeling was getting worse by the second. Julia’s tits looked huge, maybe even bigger than they had when he first saw them. The room was filling up with the wet slaps and moans of people fucking. Suzy was screaming for her unknown partner to splatter her insides with baby batter. Eddie tried to focus, but the throbbing ache was too much. He stopped, and one second later couldn’t remember what he was trying to think of in the first place. A new, pressing thought had taken full ownership of his mind. “My balls hurt.”

“Cause they’re fully of cum?” Julia asked, uncertain but hopeful.

“Probably. Hey, how come we’re not fucking?”

She bit her lip and shifted her weight anxiously. At some point, she’d finished undressing, or her clothes had simply given up. The previous slim blonde bombshell had been replaced by a voluptuous golden haired sex goddess. She wasn’t quite an hourglass, but her hips and boobs easily outsized her flat, if broad stomach. Her eyes had taken on a glassy quality, and her mouth hung open. She stood with her feet wide enough apart to allow some light between her thickened thighs, at least enough to show off her bald pussy gleaming with her juices, and beyond that the underside of her gravid ass cheeks. Her uncertainty passed with a shrug. “Cause you have on those thingies. I can’t get your cock in me through them.”

He looked down and realized she was talking about his pants. Seemed an odd word to forget, but she was right anyway. He pulled off the belt and hurried to undo his zipper as he realized she might wander off to one of the other males. Keeping an eye on her to make sure no one scooped her away, he watched her lift her breasts in her hands and sigh with pleasure. The nipples had gotten hard and a good bit longer, enough so to make Eddie’s mouth water at the idea of rolling his tongue around them. He shucked down his pants and realized why he’d been feeling pinched. “Oh, these aren’t nearly big enough,” he muttered.

It was Julia’s turn to gawk with disbelief. Unwilling to deny herself a moment longer, she stepped close and yanked down his boxers to free the monster that had grown between his legs. Eddie watched it bob up and smack the underside of her right udder. *Udder?* The word didn’t feel right, so he looked around. The tight skirt woman was still bracing herself against the glass, but now at a right angle. A different guy was behind her, happily thrusting into her dripping pussy, but what really held Eddie’s attention was the sway and jiggle of her udders. Every time the guy slammed into her, the woman’s udders lurched toward the window. At the peak of their momentum, they were jerked back as the woman pushed herself back onto the cock. The sudden change caused a spray of white fluid to spatter onto the window, joining the many other streaks of her milk. *Udder, course, cause that’s where their milk comes from.* Nearby, Suzy had turned the tables on her partner. She sat astride him, rocking her luscious hips to milk the man’s cock. The final stage had hit her, too. Her swollen boobs dripped steadily down as the man’s mouth lapped eagerly at the squirting treat. Eddie needed no further evidence of what was normal.

One of Julia’s hands wrapped around the top side of his girthy cock. She pressed against him and purred, “God, you’re fucking hung like a bull.” Her other hand snaked underneath his shaft and gently squeezed his balls. “They feel tight. Swollen with all that hot cum. You’re going to breed me, aren’t you? You’re going to sheath this massive dick in my tight pussy and make me a mommy? Oh, but then you can keep fucking me. With a cock like this, I’ll never get tired of it. You can pump all your thick spermy loads into my cunt while I’m getting fat with your baby. Then you can do it again.”

“Really?” he said, though it was more of a grunt than a word.

“Yeah, who better to breed me than the owner of this big, fat dick. God, you’re so dumb. I have a hot, slippery tight pussy that is supposed to be bred as much as possible. That’s why you have big balls full of cum. Gosh, don’t they teach you anything. Here, see? My udders are already making milk.” She stood back, grabbed his hand, and pressed it against her soft flesh. His thumb went to her nipple immediately and with a single flick, caused a stinging spritz of milk to wet the front of his shirt.

“Huh,” he said, “I guess you’re right. Guess I better give you a creampie then, huh?”

“About fucking time,” she grumbled as she dropped down to her knees. She dropped her shoulders to the ground and left her wide ass sticking up for him. Eddie grabbed her hips with his hands and pulled at her delicious ass. He had to drop to one knee before the head of his cock found the wet slit. Julia took over from there. Reaching underneath them, she guided him into the right angle and wiggled her ass upward as she impaled herself on his cock. Eddie growled and hissed to control himself as the urge to wrench her fully onto his cock threatened to overwhelm him. Julia didn’t relent. After the first half of his newly enhanced length was inside of her, their mingling juices coated the rest of his cock and allowed him to slide fully inside of her. Primal instinct forced him to draw back and thrust again, but he went slowly, enjoying the feeling of her walls spreading open to take him inside of her. He thought he could luxuriate in that blissful feeling of tight warmth for hours, but Julia was impatient. “If it helps, you can thumb-fuck my ass.” To emphasize the offer, she reached back and spread her own ass open for his pleasure.

The opportunity would unfortunately pass him by, Eddie realized. The momentary lapse in his control the offer caused changed the slow fuck into an urgent, panicked need to empty himself into her. He rose back up to the flats of his feet and bent his form around Julia’s body while remaining sheathed inside her pussy. One arm wrapped around her waist to keep her stable, but the other groped at her udders. His hips bounced as his cock glided into her and his balls slapped against her engorged pussy lips. As his palm pressed into her nipple, he felt the gush of milk. It excited him so much that he didn’t even realize he was cumming until the third ecstatic spasm.

Julia did, though. She kept pressing back hard against his cock as her lips gripped tight at the base. Her body was rigid with orgasmic pleasure as her udders sprayed freely. Her body went limp before Eddie finished pumping his load into her. Even after it finally stopped, he remained rooted in her as they caught their breath. Julia was face down on the cool tile with her udders squashed against a puddle of her own milk. Eddie finally slid out of her and looked down on what he’d done with a sense of profound accomplishment. Her pussy closed up quickly, but a few splurts of cum oozed out anyway. He gave her ass an encouraging swat from his palm. A second later, he realized another woman was standing off to his side.

The room was hazy with the pink dust. The woman was naked and holding up a huge pair of udders with one hand while the other was knuckle deep in her pussy. “Are you done with her?” the woman asked. “I came in here looking for someone to breed me, and noticed the size of your cock. I was still a little unsure until I saw the way your balls shook as you bred this cow.

Can you do me now? You can drink my milk while we fuck if you're thirsty."

Part of Eddie thought that something had gone very wrong. Another part thought he should ask Julia if it was ok with her that he breed another woman. Still another part ignored thinking altogether and slurped the woman's udder into his mouth, sucking down an amazingly delicious flood of milk as his cock shoved into the woman's dripping snatch. Such circumstances made it hard for him to believe anything was wrong with the world.

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Helshent roused from his data slates at the sound of a small cough. "Yes, what is it chancellor?"

Vanis stood at attention, "We have completed bombardment and achieved full saturation. Expected growth is two hundred and fifteen percent. With your permission, I will dispatch the liaison ship to monitor the planet's progress. In honor of the native's name for their planet, we would commission the ship as *Earthwatch* to be crewed by House Laternae under the leadership of Duke Porlet Laternae."

"Permission granted," Helshent said. He waited until Vanis was out of the way and then addressed Jesseth, "Lieutenant. Begin preparation for our next jump. Navigational plotting is being uploaded to your systems now. Send my regards to House Laternae. Luck be with them and let them guide the people of Delta-Zero-Three to the stars with wisdom." He paused and sighed, feeling the weight of his obligation. Helshent still remembered the tinge of pink in the sky of his homeworld. The people of Earth would not see a pure blue again for generations, long after the effects of the chemicals had subsided.

The wistful emotion vanished as six new petitions from workers unions on four different decks pinged at the corner of his thoughts. "So ordered," he grumbled before descending into the murky fluid and his screens.

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