10 Blinks to Salvation

**Prologue**

After the Drone Wars of 2037 which resulted in the loss of 500+ million human lives, the projections and the popular consensus was that the next great war could take an added 1.2+ billion. However, that was nothing in comparison to what was coming. Humanity had not paid attention.

The region called the Pacific Pale is sparsely populated. This part of the world had not begun the clustering of humanity as it had done in the past. Isolation was nothing new to our team as most of their work is done from their fortified self-sustaining habitat and VR compound.

This region of the Earth was renamed after the continental shift and divide of most of the Western hemisphere 2038. Nearly every island on Earth was lost to the vast oceans along with nearly every life on them. The unprecedented eruptions all along the Ring of Fire changed everything. The apocalyptic destruction from this cataclysmic event forced mankind to rebuild nations and relationships with the entire world in new ways. Decisive and quick action was needed as the population had now decreased by 45%. The remaining 5 billion people left on earth had to survive and learn to prosper once again. There was little time for mourning. Feeling sorry for yourself, was no longer an option. Everyone has a role to play.

And now…Countdown to Blink

The Earth is out of water.

After years of battle, creation, and destruction, Kolt and the SPARQ team gain the Coordinate Key rights to set the Blink destination.

The SPARQ team leads Earth on a mission to rehydrate the planet and return to the Sol system.

The earth is out of water.

Desperate times…

Just below the exo-sphere, two figures can be seen chaotically tumbling in a freefall back to Earth.

Now, June 8th, 2087 At precisely 3:41.73 PM, the planets in the Sol system came into perfect alignment for the biggest, bravest move humanity had ever done yet.

Exactly 6.53 seconds ago, Kolt and Samatha, bitter rivals fought as they flew through the air to seat the final Qtile in the Blink shield around Earth.

Both of them knew the other one was wrong and was just buckets of crazy to put the entire Earth on the line on the other’s bad calculations.

As the seconds ticked off and they both reached the faulty Qtile placement, Kolt performed an impressive flip, reverse thrusters, and slide kick. Amazingly, he was able to fend off Samantha, click the mis-aligned Qtile into the correct position, and pop in the last Qtile, his team’s unique stamp and solution, into place.

The Catnasium was really paying off!

The problem wasn’t supposed to be the return to Earth, but it was.

Once the Qtile had been placed, the entire Blink shield activated around the Earth in a cascade of shimmering silver polygons. The sheen came and went in an instant but every person on Earth looking up at the time saw a short shimmer, like a brief reflection that appears and disappears.

Neither Kolt nor Samantha expected the kickback from the activation and so merely seconds later they were both heading straight down, at terminal velocity, and out of control.

Meanwhile, as the Blink shield completed it’s activation cycle, the secondary stage of the Qtiles expanded on the outward facing surface. Smaller tiles popped up attatched only by a small tether to it’s parent Qtile.

As the secondary Blink shield activated, a golden shimmer of polygons rippled around the Earth’s atmosphere.

Even though Kolt was still in freefall, he knew he’d done it. The Destination Key would be assigned, immediately by the Council, to his team.

“Triangularium 1\*, here we come!”

After final preparations and of course rescuing Kolt, again, the SPARQ team, in raucous celebration, “hit the button Max!” and the entire Sol system would ever be the same.

The Blink drive activated in the subterrainian bunker and the whole shook just a bit.

In the Sol system, Earth disappeared.

As anticipated the system began to re-arrange to account for the new gravity well were Earth had been.

Multiple recording space drones and stationary sensor bases on Mars and the Kieper belt clicked and wirred into the vaccum of space, capturing everything that happened next.

Earth is out of water.

After the endless pandemic, year-round wildfires, drone wars, extreme weather from global warming, and the slow death by dehydration of 82% of the population, the team worked furiously on the last tile.

The day had already been long but when hurricane Carl started crashing into the cliff-face and SPARQ lab’s transparent aluminum bay windows, Kolt knew he still had a lot to get done and no time to do it.

Kolt’s reluctance to join the team earlier didn’t come from the overly bossy Earth Council; it wasn’t from the spat with Samantha; it wasn’t this damn storm that had been getting bigger and bigger for weeks.

It was time. “Time is the only protagonist.”, Kolt repeated and repeated to himself in a psych-up mantra. These were the final moments.

These were the moments where he had to choose to get over the things of the past and make the move toward the future.

The future was now. The drone wars didn’t matter anymore. The death of the past had to be put aside. The chaos hung in balance. Kolt’s next actions would change the course of history forever… one way or another.

As Kolt deftly made his way through the living spaces to the Qpods, the earth shook from the endless barrage of waves, wind, and fury crashing into the cantilevered observation deck of the base. Despite being on the cliff-face, the SPARQ Habitat was architected to withstand meteor strikes.

The place shook and rolled like a drunken monkey but the sound was even more devastating. The whole place was an echo chamber for the crashing waves against the structure. But the SPARQ Habitat would hold. It was proven.

Kolt entered the lab and climbed into his Qgel Connection Chamber. This was his secure pod to enter the virtual lands that he and the team had created.

The Qpod that was warmed up and waiting for him.

Solomon’s virtual projection stook to the left to ensure all procedures were followed and observations recorded.

As the Qpod tilted to be level with the floor, the Qgel began to fill the pod.

Kolt looked around and saw his complete team already immersed in their Qpods.

The team had already logged in and Solomon, the resident AI, had organized the next steps.

Kolt quickly acclimated to the process that he had done countless times and entered the SPARQ Space.

The team was waiting in front of the town hall. The virtual space the team had agreed on was a medieval township with all the tech hidden as magic.

It was a fun way to make tech work that was new and experimental.

Solomon waved his hand and as if by magic a board appeared. It ran down a summary of the current situation.

The landscape changed to that of a central meeting area with a large round table, the display of information floating in the middle, and a full complement of seats and snacks.

Everyone looked at the screen as they picked their seats and grabbed a treat as Kolt began to speak.

“We all know the stats. We know what’s on the line. The question I have is, how many experiments are we down to?”

The team all scanned the new information

SPARQ Summary

Year

Location

Earth Population

Qtiles Placed

Qtiles Generated

Time to Alignment

Simulations Required

Time to Generate Qtile once Solution is Found

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| SPARQ Summary |  |
| Year | 2057 |
| Earth Population | 3.08 |
| Qtiles Placed | 3.01 |
| Qtiles Generated | 3.001 |
| Time to Alignment | 3 days, 4 hours, 17 minutes |
| Simulations Remaining | 38 |
| Time to Generate Qtile once Solution is Found | 6 hours, 3 minutes |

Completing 38 simulations in the amount of time remaining wasn't feasible...

It was right there… in virtual color.

“We have to get the sims down. We won’t make it.”

“I believe that Kolt may have a parallax algo that will eliminate 7 of these. With your permission Kolt.”

Kolt nods quickly. He had already thought of this but hadn’t had time to run the sim. Solomon was living up to his name and job. Kolt was glad. He hadn’t been sure of the entity at first.

“Ok, that’s pretty good. Make sure it’s right. We need a 95% confidence level to eliminate and not lose valid edge cases.”

“Yeah, yeah, we know. Everyone knows. We still need to eliminate 4 or we won’t have time to valid before the fab.”

“Solomon, have you been able to solve the problem with the generator overloading on our harmonic deltas?”

A few blank stares around the room clued Kolt into the room’s mood for his shorthand with Solomon.

“Yes, Kolt I have completed the first revision of the mandala connections. I’m afraid I don’t see how this helps us now though…”

“So, I was thinking that we could use the harmonics we discovered to eliminate any equations that won’t align. What do you think?’

“One moment….”, Solomon’s face calmed and the elevation tones began.

After a moment, Solomon smiled.

“I believe you are correct Kolt. Alignments of 6 of the equations can be eliminated. This is excellent. Shall I begin the variations now?”

Everyone at once in nearly panicked relief shouted “YES!”

The screen updated with the new information

SPARQ Summary Update

Time to Alignment: countdown

Simulations Required: 7

Simulation Runtime: 42 hours

Time to Generate Qtile once Solution is Found: 12 hours 14 minutes 2 seconds

Tile Placement Time: 18 minutes

“FML! This is gonna be close…”

The first instance of the SPARQ virtual space had been the “cat-nasium” which developed into a sort of ninja cat school for minion bots.

Essentially, the little virtual ninja-cats became useful as information gathering and spy bots that managed the communications for the team since the world had become so fragmented the internet was broken… as in, it had become fractured and society broke.

Earth’s human population had gone from nearly 11 billion to less than 3 billion almost overnight.

“Solomon, punch in the key. Sam, get ready for Blink. 3…2…1… BLINK!

Blink Down Commencing

3…2…1…

When the Blink drive came online , the runes that surrounded the Earth glowed almost as brightly as the sun for a moment.

The harmonics of the words responsed to the corresponding resonance of the universe and briefly flashed and shimmered in a silvery cascade of refraction.

1st Blink

Earth Blinks

Blink Storm (many blink shifts in the solar system)

The Sol system rearranges to hold positioning for Earth’s return

Earth finds itself between 3 enomous space armadas; in the middle of a war over the twin water planets in the trianglarium system alpha (first choice that Solomon set for the SPARQ team coordinates).

As Earth pops into existence at triangular one, instant reconnaissance shuttles already sitting in the atmosphere when the Blink occurred begin relaying information about the new location of earth within the galaxy.

As reports came in, it was hard not to panic. The eastern hemisphere had already reported a giant armada of alien spacecraft heading towards Earth on a collision course looking to be armed for war.

This was enough to cause panic and everyone. Luckily that information didn’t get spread widely because the Council had put a small filter in place to preempt information that could cause greater panic. As if running out of water wasn’t a big enough reason to panic.

Unfortunately, as reports started coming in from the Western hemisphere’s scanning branch it became clear there was even more reason to panic.

Approaching from nearly the same vector on the other side of earth was another armada heading directly towards Earth and was apparently only about 6 ½ minutes out from being able to destroy Earth from a very reasonable distance.

Fo-c fo-c fo-c

what the hell are we going to do what the hell are we gonna do? What would you do?

The Blink generator needs 12 minutes to refresh, nearly shouting.

Emergencengy protocols klaxon over the planet to sway panic

We do now Kolt?

We better figure out how to optimize the Blink generator. And fast. It looks like we have to do it in… Three minutes?

It is not right Solomon?

We haven’t done the final analysis yet but it appears that these ships are as surprise by our appearing in the middle of ythier war as we are to be here.

Shit!

OK.

Use the overdrive convertor! But it hasin’t been tested fully!

No choice… either that or hope these aliens, with armadadas both bigger than Earth will just wait?

No NO No ! Fuck that!

Do it Solomon. Do it now.

As you wish.

As the seconds pass, the overdrive system drains the oceans consumes magma and finally reaches 83% charged.

2nd Blink

Emergency Blink out procedure kills 137 thousand due to unadjusted populace from previous Blink.

Earth Blinks to the dark side of the small water twin planet.

The good news is that it worked and Earth and all its inhabitants slotted very nicely into a satellite orbit over one of the swirling pink luminescent hurricanes bigger than Jupiter from back home.

This was the second planet of swirling sparkling pink atmosphere of storms of unfathomable strength.

For the moment we had effectively hidden Earth from those warring fleets. There was no question they were here for water too.

Our systems drained and refined the atmosphere via collector towers littered around Earth for this very purpose – to restore water to earth.

The analysis was complete and despite the alien taste and pink sparkly afterglow people got from drinking it, it was effectively water and, for the moment, humanity could breathe a sign of relief.

It was a short breather. There was still a lot to do.

With the new “water” the SPARQ team was able to charge and prep for the next Blink. After all, there was a war going on. One that we couldn’t afford to get in the middle of. Our hope was to collect enough of the pink substance to make our next 5 Blinks.

Earth siphons pink water substitute to 63% before being discovered

Whoa…

The crew looked at the obseration feeds. The new solar system, in the Triangulariam constalation, was amazing.

In the distance, we could see two twin plantes circling eachoterh around

But before the team could realize the true of what they had accomplished, an urget communicayion cam in. It was from the oterh team.

The vid came across, nice and clear. Outside, coming right at Earth was a fleet of what looked like very scary warships.

No doubt there was scramlbling all over the world.

Team SPARQ did what they did best… solve!

The intercept with the war fleet looked to be 12 minutes if they didn’t change course or speed….

The Blink Generator normally took 15 minutes to recharge for another trip.

A wisper of an idea started to form in Kolt’s mind.

Executing a quick virtual sim, the team worked all the angles.

Serveral favorable plans were generated, but only one had the real potential for the immideate need of water and getting out of the way of the oncoming fleet.

Just as Solomon began the final few simulations that we didn’t want to miss out on an incrediable edge case, a new urgent message came in. This one was from the Council.

The team didn’t respect the Coucil, but any new information was always welcome.

The new vid showed a veery differenct looking fleet…

This one was approaching from nearly the opposite direction.

In a flash of insight, both Sam and Solomon proclaimed, “we blinked into the middle of a way??”

What are the odds of that?

We have no blood in this game. Let’s get out of here.

Solomon displayed a new summary board.

War Fleet 1

Intercept: 11 minutes 32 seconds

War Feet 2

Intercept: 16 minutes 2 seconds

Prediction

War Fleet 2 will obliterate Earth and the other fleet without fail in 16 minutes and 49 seconds

Chapter 5

The plan was simple and yet sooo complex.

The team need to Blink again to a secure place while avoid this conflict AND get water from one of the twin water planets.

It had become clear that this was a battle over water.

With that seeming to be the most likely case, we had to get out of here NOW.

The Blink generator hit red line and we kept pushing.

At minute 8, the other team comes online and helps with Blink generator and applies some of their virtual hacks into solomons system to speed things along.

At minute 11, the first shots hit the Earth’s defense shield. A few simple shots at long range and the shields were already down 22%.

It was clear that in seconds, the Earth would be a casualtiy of this conflict.

Wrong place; Wrong Time!

The Blink Generator hit charge ready at 83% and the short trip we had planned should work even at this low charge.

At the very last pico second, Earth Blinks.

3rd Blink

Earth Blinks the Triangularium beta in search of more “friendly”

life and possibly previous Earth visitors

Earth is now a new satellite of the largest of the two water planets. The blink coordinates chosen was on the other side of the planet and both fleets and their conflict was obscured by the Jupiter sized water planet.

Once the Earth settled in it’s new locale, drones were sent to the surface to collect water specimins.

The 3 of the 20 drones returned and only 2 had samples.

It would be hard to get more… very hard… the weather was something new… something very alien… like lightning jelly-beans…. Or something…

The samples were interesting. 98% H2O and 2% unknown.

Sims were run to determine if we could us it.

The 2% turned out to be benign and had a strange effect on anyone that was exposed.

It turned out the unique properties of this unknown changed everyone.

When exposed people get a slight luminescent pink slivery glow.

IT was odd but harmless as far as we could tell.

Earth is able to setup a siphon and fill the Oceans and storage capacity.

With the time, they examined the system.

And while they had achieved the impossible and could, theoretically return to the Sol system, they remained disappointed with the contacts they have made so far.

They filled enough water supply for 1 year of current population.

They set new coordinates for the other 2 systems in the Tirangluar constellation.

Blink gernator is less efficient on new pink water

4th Blink

Abandoned cities and technology found on burned out planet

Earth completes the Blink loop of the constellation finding nothing further than a bit more unusual technology

5th Blink

Finding nothing more of interest in the second system they moved to the third system.

If they didn’t find anything here, they would explore the team B selections; namely the Sirurs system.

On the 4th planet in the 3rd system of the Triangluar contelation, a message was found.

It was a simple message once decoded.

“Allies of the Ancients are Called to Defend. Your assistance is called for now.”

We blinked.

New coordinates set for Sirus B; the other teams 1st choice

The Earth’s new position was in the sirus b solar system and the most likely place to find a friendly new species.

The system had the potential for first contact and untapped resources that could sustain Earth for preparations of the next blink.

The other team joins up

Earth Blinks into the Sirus B system and meets the Ancients

Finally…

Meet the ancients

The ancients are kind and it turns out did in fact visit earth and setup a base of operations.

The team did not know about this base but once the Oceans were drained by the Blink Generator, many discoveries were made.

The ancients had a problem. They are a dying race and need dna from around the universe to complete the genome that will heal their race and allow them to breed again.

The ancients fix the Earth’s water problem and advance humanity’s technology and knowledge.

The ancients refine the Blink technology and help to build a small fleet of blink ships.

The star navigation path is set and the blink speed runs begin.

Reacquainted Earth and the Ancients, find there is much to be done and mutually benefitial goals are set forth

The Ancients need the blood of the ages and set the SPARQ team

to Blink around the Universe while Earth is re-structured and “healed”.

SPARQ+ team formed (addition of Red’s team)

Ancients deciper the tech we found

The utilize the tech to create long term subspace communications between SPARQ and Ancient Space.

6th Blink

Blinking around the universe to find the DNA segments that the Ancients need.

There are 12 fragments.

Finally, the blink teams return with the fragments.

The war has come to their home world.

We blink into their base directly and get the DNA fragments into the production system.

In lieu of engaging in this war, the Anicents decide that they have to find a new hidden location while they rebuild.

It’s decided to hide, for a short while, in the Sol system (our system).

Qgel fail

New tech found

Ancient on SPARQ team identifies and fixes tech.

Tech reveals 3 DNA strands to collect in the system

Blink ships deployed locally to gather the samples

Last location exploration shows where the next DNA may be.

The information conflicts with what the Ancients said

7th Blink

SPARQ team ignores the Ancient advice and follow the new lead.

7 more strands are found in the next 3 sibling systems. No need to blink after Ancients added the Mobility layers to Vecotr One (Earth).

8th Blink

The last 2 strands are found in the edge of the known universe.

The last planet is one of the oldest in the universe, tyheorized to have been formed just after the Big Bang. Countless centuries have allowed this civilization to grow and expand their planet. Millions of years of civilization building with little internal war. Lessons are passed on.

9th Blink

Vector One (Earth) Blinks back to the Ancients in the Sirus B system.

Ancients get DNA from SPARQ team

Ancients begin repopulation – rapidly populate other solar systems

Ancients further bolster the Blink technology and Earth’s Spacial

Pink

Blink shell

And communications

Include translators for other univerals races

Fold Shell (the blink network around Earth). We had 2 layers. The Ancients added an Energy collection layer, Armarment layer, Envronmental Controls layer, and a Survalience layer.

10th Blink

In lieu of engaging in this war, the Anicents decide that they have to find a new hidden location while they rebuild.

It’s decided to hide, for a short while, in the Sol system (our system).

The ancients help to rearrange the solar system to re-insert the Earth. Sol blink arrangements reverse and reorganize

They live with us until they have developed the infrastructure to allow Earth to continually blink around the Universe.

Just as they are about to complete a new blink shell, an armada sized threat peaks out of the Kieper belt on a direct course for the sun… They want to blow up our sun…!

All of humanitry signs in relief and hydration

Kolt says, “This is not the end”. The book says “The End”