Chapter 1

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…”

Chapter 2

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.

Chapter 3

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

Chapter 4

BLINK!

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.

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.

Finding nothing 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. XXX.YYY”

We blinked.

Chapter 6

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 begins.

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).

The ancients help to rearrange the solar system to re-insert the Earth.

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…!

What will the team do now?