

Visitor

I slowly awoke to the quiet sounds of movement that froze me within my sleeping position. Fear. This was true fear that I had only experienced within the pod as I tumbled down here to the surface. Was it true that I would die within the first 10 hours of being on the surface, wait I broke that record. So I'll die leaving behind a new record? Why was I thinking these things when I needed to concentrate on survival, I had mother to return to! The movement seemed to be from behind me and was very subtle with only the tiniest movements. I slowly opened my eyes to peer into the room, the lighting hadn't changed from when I set it. Maybe it hasn't been that long since I fell asleep? No, there was light also coming from what looked to be a crack in the door outside my view. I concentrated on listening to the movements, possibly just some wind making its way into the room? I was told also that the possibility of small animals roaming the surface was somewhat high. Wait. That crinkling noise of paper was from the CB wrapper. I didn't eat the whole thing so it should be in my bag, was it just the torn portion I left on the floor scrapping about? I listened more intently than before attempting to wrap my head around what was within the room if anything at all. The slight and quiet crinkles of the wrapper... ah I heard a small *munch* *munch* noise! Only a human could be capable of these movements while eating...right? Just to know what reaction I could get out of my visitor, I slowly rustled my covering like one being stirred from a slumber. After doing this the crinkle of the wrapper was pronounced like someone being startled. It's a human alright, I just hope they are friendly. My rifle laid on the floor below me, I could tumble out of my current position and grab it but there was no guarantee that my visitor wouldn't have a weapon and kill me before I could react. It was a bet I had to take, just lying here waiting for my possible death wasn't an option. I readied myself for what I was about to do, though it was all mental and not physical. Then I did it, I leap out of the PSR with great force pushing myself towards the ground. Reaching for my rifle I snag it and force it into my shoulder while getting to my knees, then bringing it up to my target that was formally behind me. She looked at me with a startled face, one that pronounced terror combined with confusion. A small girl, couldn't be more than twelve years of age was staring right into my eyes as I aimed the rifle at her. Her hands trembling with great force while clutching the CB, tears forming in the corners of her eyes. She was dressed in rags, not suitable for this weather and her extremities had become tinted blue due to that. Her eyes were a strong green color that I had only seen on digital interfaces within the station. She had no ears, no, she had no *human* ears. Her ears laid atop her head in a dropping manner as if to help signify her fear, they were of the feline type. Was she truly human? Possibly the further evolution of felines or somehow a mixture of feline and human? I was utterly confused as I continued to observe the small creature in front of me. It was painfully obvious though, this small girl wasn't a threat to me or my mission. I lowered the rifle slowly to a resting position and then sat atop the PSR facing the young girl. She stopped her frantic shaking to a softer shiver and her ears slowly raised up while she turned her gaze downward towards the floor. I sat there just watching her as her eyes darted between the floor to me to the CB and then back to the floor in that order. Nothing was said by her or me with just the harshness of a strong wind resonating outside the ruined building. Having obviously been looking for shelter from the harsh coldness outside this girl found her way inside here. Following the feeling of my base camp's warmth and dim light she must have quietly sneaked her way inside here. "Is it harsh outside?" I quietly said with what I thought was a gentle voice. "...!" She quickly looked up at me with a nervousness while clutching the CB ever tighter. "You can... understand me... correct?" I enquired

her again with an easier question still attempting the gentle tone. "...Ye....s" she took her time answering but still, I received an answer. So she was somehow educated with English speech huh? "Where are your parents? Are you all alone?" I continued asking questions while she quietly started eating the CB with little *munch* *munch*. How cute. "Mommy... Da..ddy....go...ne... *munch*" I listened while she continued eating, "Mommy...didn't wake...up...Daddy... fell down..." tears started to form in the corners of her eyes again while saying these dark things. "Daddy...he... *sniffle*...didn't wake up too!" Her voice cracked as the tears started to flow and the sniffles started. "He... *sniffle*...he just stopped breathing... *sniffle*... no smoke... *sniffle*" such a harsh life she has been leading now, both parents dead and a cute little girl left behind in this cold world. She started to cry softly, the tears running down her face like coolant from a damaged insulation hose. I quietly propped my rifle against the PSR and walked over to her side, getting down onto my knees I gently caressed her head against my chest. "Don't worry, even if you have nowhere to go I will be there." I said this while stroking her head the same way mother did when I cried as a child. "Really...? *sniffle*" she asked while starting to calm down, "How could I leave you here and not worry? I will care for you, we will survive this!" I replied in a strong tone. We stayed like this for some time until the tears stopped the sniffles retreated. "Who... are you?" She asked tilting her head upwards to gaze into my eyes. "I am... Erika" I told her while looking into her green cat like eyes, "What is your name?" I asked in return. "My name... Sophia" such a cute little name for a cute little catgirl, Sophia looked at me with a large smile that was a sharp contrast to her earlier expressions. "Well Sophia we can rest up today and I'll have to give you some better clothing before we get moving tomorrow." I guided her to the PSR while saying this and adjusted the lighting slightly to a darker level. I removed my filtration suit down to my waist allowing me to take off the old jacket. "Here, this was my great-grandfather's jacket but you can wear it for now until I find you a better one." Handing Sophia the jacket she quickly put it on. It covers her up nicely with the length reaching down to just above her knees, the sleeves are obviously too large but can act as hand covers for when we travel. I reach into my bag to retrieve some self-warming stockings that I was given if my filtration suit failed or I had to abandon it. "Put this on so your bottom half doesn't freeze hon" I start helping her put the oversized stockings on her but they act well as pants and grip nicely to her so the heat won't escape. "Erika... why are you helping me so much..." after getting all dressed she asks me. "You're the first person I've met down here on the surface, a cute little girl such as yourself can't be left behind!" I proclaimed to her. "My mother wouldn't forgive me if she knew I left you behind, so we'll be sticking together from now on okay?" I stroked her head right behind her ears. "What do you mean, surface?" she gives me a quizzical look while tilting her head into my caressing hand. "I'm from the station, from space. There are many people like me up there waiting to return here to the surface." I began informing her about the station and what it was while gently scratching behind her ears. We laid together under the PSR quilt while I told her about the station and the people on it. How my mission was to find technology here on the surface and help start building a home for the people of the station. Sophia listened intently as we laid in the rack through the day as a harsh storm punched the outer walls. When night finally came we both quickly descended into a slumber snuggling close hand in hand. Tomorrow we would venture north towards the city and into the old suburb of Lebanon. I was happy to have met my little visitor.