

The Chronicles Of Milky Way Galaxy

The Network

On Thira

1 Beo 111 Meo 960 Keo 557 eo

"To what do we owe the honor of having you here?" asked Alex.

With a smile on his face, Spirto replied, "I have found some of my old memories. Walk with me." He started to walk towards the central agora of Thira. "You have made a vastly complex city here," he added.

"Control of the empire takes first priority," Alex replied. "We are still spending very little on exploring the galaxy. As you know, I want to be capable of maintaining the empire until our next step presents itself."

"I strongly believe that you will make it, Alex. Of all the species and all the emperors of the past, I think you might be the one to make it," Spirto replied. "Where are you now?" he added.

"I am here," said Alex. "I am staying in Thira."

"I see."

"So, what have you found in your old memories?" asked Alex.

"Hahahaha!" laughed Spirto loudly and joyfully. "I think I can help you with a major problem. In fact, I think Jertis can help you from his grave."

"Okay, that sounds interesting. You have my undivided attention. To which problem are you referring? Also, who is Jertis?" asked Alex.

Spirto stopped by a vendor and grabbed a drink. Then he leaned toward a window and nodded for Alex to stand close. With a smirk on his face, as if he was about to win an argument, Spirto said, "It had always been a difficult task to keep a network of information between planets and moons. Every network in history that attempted to unite the empire's worlds had problems with people-related errors, misinformation, delay, and more."

"Yes," Alex nodded, "it is a hard task, but we are working on it. Your excitement has me on red alert." He smiled.

"It should. I have regained memories of a system that, after pouring a lot of work into it, will probably end your network needs for ... well, forever."

"Spirto! This is very serious. What network are you talking about? If I had something like that, I could focus on uniting the galaxy much faster."

"I will start from the beginning," said Spirto calmly.

"Please do."

"After the Great War, in the eons that followed, many emperors tried to conquer the entire galaxy. All of them failed, but ..." Spirto paused and drank a sip of his drink.

"But?" Alex asked with eyes like those of a child. Spirto always had a strange effect on Alex. Whenever Spirto was there, Alex would become more childlike; he would discuss more openly and more relaxed.

"But," added Spirto, "one of the emperors developed a network."

"Jertis?" asked Alex.

"Yes, Jertis, one of the smartest creatures to ever cross the galaxy."

"Tell me more about him," said Alex.

"Jertis was not a him," said Spirto. "It was more like an it."

"I feel like you're purposely delaying the story. Are you playing with me again?" said Alex.

"Okay, let me tell you the story," said Spirto with his hands at shoulder height. "At about 700 meo, the galaxy had a huge number of potential emperors. Most of them would not cooperate with any other species. Among them was Jertis." Spirto took a breath and focused on his story. "Back then, there were still memories and remnants of the Great War. Most species advanced very fast due to the technologies that were scattered everywhere. This was before the technology cleansing."

"I am curious as to what technology Jertis invented that did not get wiped out during the cleansing. Which I still have questions about. You always find excuses to give me the information in small doses," said Alex, clearly eager to know more of the past.

"That's a story for another time. The point is, Jertis developed a way to spy on and monitor other species throughout the galaxy. A way that permeated through the centuries. A way that was so ingenious that worked as a main tool to seed life in otherwise-barren worlds."

"What?" asked Alex with sour curiosity. "What do you mean spy and at the same time seed life? What are those things you are talking about?"

"Listen, Alex, there is a mystery here. A mystery of how my memories of this were lost. This is something I will begin seeking soon. For now, you need to come in contact with that system and gain its trust."

"Gain its trust? I am now fifty percent sure that this is some kind of joke," said Alex and sat back more relaxed.

"It really is not. This system is rooted in nearly every planet in the galaxy. Your home world Earth included."

"This is it!" said Alex, slightly irritated. "You will either move to the point or stop playing with me."

"You called it the mycelian network," said Spirto and gave a few moments for Alex to digest that info.

"Mushroom roots?" asked Alex curiously. "You are telling me that mushrooms are a technology?"

"Well, why is this so strange? You already know of many life forms developed to do specific tasks"

"Well, yes, but mushrooms are ... basic."

"Jertis developed an organism of infinite potential, small enough that nearly no species could detect with the naked eye. A spore that could survive nearly any conditions and once it roots in nearly any environment, it will quickly adapt and begin its building."

"But how does that communicate information?"

"This is exactly the magic of this. Jertis managed to cram in so much compressed information that the network rarely reaches its full potential. The network begins building itself in a way that promotes life around it. Soon it develops a brain the size of a continent, with nearly infinite wisdom in the field of life. This network harvests the power of entanglement and joins the network."

"I don't see how that is possible," answered Alex in disbelief.

"Alex, listen to me," said Spirto seriously. "It is alive, it has desires, and it has a purpose. You need to get that network under your command. It is intelligent. It only transmits information that is relevant to its understanding of necessity. You can train it to be so much more than a network of mushrooms and mineral distribution."

"You realize how strange this sounds, right?" said Alex with a look that betrayed his disbelief.

"I understand. For now, just test it. Spores are traveling as we speak towards every direction. Every new world, every new moon, every new solar system is fed the spores, and the building begins immediately."

Alex looked troubled. "But that system would allow anyone to tap into it from their home world and spy on anyone else. If that system really exists, how is it not abused already?"

Spirto nodded in agreement. "I need to search for my memories, but I think the knowledge of this system is gone. Only you and I know about it now. For everyone else, it's just a root system that seems complex enough to do more."

"And I have to gain its trust?" asked Alex with an annoyed look on his face.

"Yes. Consider it another player in the cosmic game of expansion. Making him an ally would greatly increase your chances of success."

After a while, Spirto bid farewell, and Alex began walking toward the control room. His mind was so occupied that the fresh smell of Cydonian jelly had no effect on him. Cydonian jelly was considered the tastiest thing one who could metabolize sugars could taste. It took a lot of time and many materials to be made, but it was both nutritious and delicious. The smell was said to make you forget your problems. Not this time, however, not for Alex.

"I will be leaving Thira for a while," he said to Bara before entering a cryo-pod.

"How long will you be gone?" asked Bara in the communicator.

"I am not sure yet. Continue supervising the power source. We should have it up and running soon." Alex's voice was heard from the communicator.

"Will do," said Bara and terminated his communication.

On Earth

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"Jain!" said Alex.

"I can sense you!" answered Jain from Thira.

"This is magical. It will change everything."