

2021

In-Depth Piece

Larissa Summers

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Solar sails became the only way for species D10121 to master intergalactic travel, being capable of speeds up to half the speed of light. D10121 became the first sapient species to make contact with other life in the Milky Way. D10121 came to intergalactic dominance by surrounding star KIC 8462852 in a Dyson sphere. A sort of mega-structure of solar panels that surrounds a star and 'beams' raw energy to terrestrial bodies within the same solar system, a structure only possible by completely converting a planet into the structure.. Clearly "humans" were correct in their theory of how much energy is required to achieve viable space-colonization. D10121 now calls 8 different inhabitable planets 'home' with each of the eight planets holding their own fauna and ecosystems. On "Human" date 2082 the first radio waves reached the long range radio communication, it was what they called "Music". Without delay, D10121 sent out a diplomatic team to make the first sapient to sapient species contact.

What they found was a tragedy, the entire planet was covered in a heavily toxic atmosphere that contained only .01% oxygen. The planet's surface temperature read, in Human language, 3 degree Celsius. Clearly, "humans" hadn't been kind to the planet, given how polar ice-caps had all but melted, and huge seas had carved into their land-masses. Only plantlife and macro-invertebrate species remain on the planet. Though, massive derelict structures remained standing, monuments of a clumsy mis-directed species. Through careful scientific missions, D10121 was able to put together a time-line of "Humanity's" death, to be stored in digital archives so their story is never forgotten.

We begin in "1760", humanity was a violent species with limited capacity for empathy and forethought. Apparently, humanity was only capable of living approximately 80 years before their bodies gave out. A series of wealthy "men" had discovered a mineral that when burned could create an exceptional amount of thermal energy. They used this mineral, along with other different types of resources to bring about an "industrial revolution" mining the planets as fast as

they could to wage economic war against tribal groups of different philosophies. The use of forced labor was rampant, and humanity hadn't figured out the basics of healthcare. They were unaware of the CO₂ that was produced in it's burning. Based on the large percentage of CO₂ in the atmosphere, it was reasonable to assume humans had mined and burned almost 800 billion "tons" of coal in their history. Or around 20% of the planet's total coal supply, according to their statistics their consumption rate sharply increased, meaning there was only ~93 years left before coal supplies on the planet were completely exhausted (In 2080). In 1760, a flagrant lack of resources had set the species on a dark path. There were very few breakpoints where Humans were capable of stopping this rising disaster.

From 1840-1920 humanity had increased its capability for destruction, and it's war for resource collecting had increased. Humanity had discovered ways of refining and using what they called "fossil fuels", petroleum and natural gasses were burned to power more machines. In an economic system called "capitalism" bartering became paramount for defining the value of human life. Water shortages became more common, famine was frequent in under-developed nations, and seemingly the entirety of species had opted to increase the destructiveness of their warfare.

2012. A 'RIO+20' Summit was held to convince human tribal groups to rally and solve the environmental issues that were slowly destroying the earth. An agreement wasn't found, with the animosity of Eastern Tribal Groups and Western Tribal Groups blocking acceptable negotiations. This year saw the continent 'North America' covered in a severe drought that threatened the lives of millions of humans. The continent also saw an increase in seismic activity due to a process that humans dubbed 'fracking'. An important species "Bees" began the long walk towards extinction, since the species was a prolific pollinator for the planet's fauna the decline in population was concerning. Humans did not find a sustainable alternative to a healthy

bee population despite the ease of creating machines that could fulfill a similar purpose. In entirety, the human year 2012 was a tick-mark for human extinction.

“The Paris Agreement”, a tumultuous agreement between human tribal groups wasn’t helpful in the end. Too many loopholes and exceptions for resource-greedy tribes, as a matter of fact this agreement became a popular source of study material for D10121 resource distribution scientists. [Indiscernible Language], a professor of the arts in resource distribution had the following to say.

“The Paris Agreement is a lesson in the folly of pledges. The United States, China, France, India, The United Kingdoms, Canada, Russia; each of these powerful human tribes put forth assurances that they would heed the warnings of science and would follow the United Nations mandates to protect Sol 3’s habitability. However, without any central power, and a general resource-claiming aversion to violent conflict there was no system in place to punish violators of this agreement. Furthermore, companies that existed outside of the leadership of these tribal groups were free to do as they pleased. Any sapient species would be smart to adopt countermeasures to these problems. This is why D10121 relies on a central authority that can remove leadership of any of our nations should they fail to follow through on their assurances.”

2040. A human survivor recorded a message to future life on earth. The physical recording was left on earth for their successors. A recording was uploaded into D10121’s central authority archives. The message played as follows:

“It’s March 21st 2040, I think I might be the last one of us alive. I’ve been able to monitor rising sea levels from what’s left of Google’s autos and satellites. It’s really funny you know, the only thing that will remain for us is robots and social media. I still have to fill in Captchas to see my

sisters facebook page. Worldmeter.com is still going but *-laughter-* I think their math is screwed up now. Louisiana doesn't exist anymore. Neither does all of the country of Portugal. It's getting a little hard to breathe here, I know I should go down south to the equator but. I feel like Arizona's next to be flooded. Scientists kept harping on about sea walls but no one told us how many inland seas were going to form.

My name is Dale Harper. I hope that means anything to anyone. I hope someone is still alive out there. Oh man. I've got a few more boxes of twinkies left but, nothing filling anymore. They didn't tell me that canned food eventually goes rancid. I stocked up on old cans of campbell soup and trying to eat one is like trying to eat sludge. I wonder if the bugs like it... they're getting big. Awh man, are bugs really going to outlive us? Guess we should have doubled down on our pesticides or something. I ain't a man of science so, but it would be really cool to say if humans are going down the planet is going down with us.

Guess that's what got us in this situation. Extinct and all.

It's really hard to walk through freeways filled with baking bodies. School busses are especially the worst, you know? We promised all these youngsters we would be better than our parents but man. We fucked up. We really just screwed the pooch and lied to them. I really wish I was able to be a dad someday. My wedding passed last week. Anyways. Some words of wisdom from a dying old man I guess. Just. Do what you can today so you don't have to be eating stale twinkies tomorrow. Try to save the planet. Don't just think it's all about money.

It's really not. I'm tired. I'm gonna go to sleep. If I wake up tomorrow I guess... I don't know I guess this won't be the last one. I sound like a Youtuber. Really wish desalination plants had the funding Youtube did. It would be really cool to be able to drink water again. Alright. Bye."

In the end all that was left of the planet was what they left behind. Decaying monuments to greed. Large reservoirs filled with shade balls and infested with flourishing fungi. Thousands of species of wildlife dead in a matter of decades, a fraction of a second in the course of the universe. Maybe a few survived, consciousnesses stored away in machines, they had reached that level of advancement at least but not for everyone. Not for the poor. All that's left was wreckage and a derelict planet. It was a lesson for species D10121, a lesson to never let any sapient species live in such squalor. To never let another species succumb to the torturous deaths of choking their planet to death.