

## **1297 NC (New Colony)**

Alix Thorn lay on his bunk looking out through the clear dome of Habitat 47. He was the youngest of his family and had just completed his first term at the colony university.

As he lay there looking out at the clear sky and the Sagittarius arm of the Galaxy, his thoughts were travelling back to the home that his great great great grandad had left 1297 Earth years ago to start a new life on Antilac IV.

Earth 1200 or so years ago had become a difficult place to live. Vast tracts of the planet were no longer habitable, either flooded over or dry deserts, quite a contradictory affair. There was at this time a Planetary Assembly of what was left of civilisation, an advanced civilisation however with colonies on the Moon and Mars. In addition; the development of the 'Slip Drive' had enabled the exploration of relatively close star systems and their potentially habitable planets, Antilac IV being one such planet.

Resources, precious resources, were made available and a site on what used to be the British Ilse's was chosen as the place to build and launch the first colony ship to use the Mk2 Slip Drive.

The Slip Drive uses the space between the folds in the fabric of the universe and gravity waves, in effect you 'Slip' through the holes in the universe.

Anthony Thorn, Alix's 3G Grandfather was project leader and had been elected 'First Colonist' for the expedition, along with Alix's 3G Grandmother.

A team of 16 would be active for the first 'jump' and if all went well, then these 16 would join the rest of the 2,000 colonists in hibernation only to be awakened at the final 'Slip' to monitor their arrival at Antilac IV.

That was 1297 Antilac years ago (Antilac years are just a month shorter than Earth years) as we see the colony settlement survives and flourishes. Of the original 2,000 colonists, just over 500 were lost due to a meteor strike on the first settlement which destroyed 3 of the 5 domes initially erected.

The strike was of not one meteor but part of a storm of several hundred. Recovery was slow, but brutal determination and resolve, plus the availability of abundant raw materials on this 'new' planet brought about the thriving settlement of today, with a current population of 2,000,000 souls.

Alix had recently joined a team of 20 geologists, engineers and astronomers investigating the remnants of the meteor that struck and nearly wiped out the original colony.

### **The Discovery**

The remnants of the material from the meteor were unlike other samples collected elsewhere further afield from the settlement. Dixon Bane was the lead engineer/ investigator and was just loading the latest samples into the Micratemer (this was a quantum microscope) when Alix entered the lab'.

"Ah hello Alix, give me a hand with these samples if you will".

Alix walked over to the machine carrying a small bag.

"What have you there?" Asked Dixon.

"I've just flown in from site 3 drill rig and have a collection of the new samples" replied Alix, "It looks like at least one of the meteor fragments smashed through the local crust to a depth of almost a kilometre".

"Good grief! How the devil did it manage that?" Exclaimed Dixon.

"Have a look at the sample, I've not seen anything like it before" replied Alix.

Dixon took the bag and carefully removed the sample with the laser grab and placed it on the sample plate of the Micratemer. To look at it was the same as many other samples, except there was something else, just out of reach of perception; a feeling of what! It was as if the thing was trying to communicate!

"You feel it too" Alix responded to the look from Dixon. "Everyone at the drill site felt it too, only much more 'Insistent', if that is the right word or emotion".

Dixon looked back at the sample “This is irrational! How can a piece of rock want to talk! We have to analyse it and look inside with the machine”.

With that Dixon placed the sample with the plate into the chamber of the Micratemer and started the analytical process.

Almost immediately a burst of energy broke through the retaining field of the machine and engulfed Alix and Dixon.

In an instant it had gone, but it left them both with memories seared into their minds!

It took them both a while to recover their wits and to realize the extent of what had just happened.

“It – it spoke!” Stuttered Alix.

“No – it imprinted” said Dixon, equally bemused.

They both collapsed onto nearby lab’ chairs.

“I saw Earth” exclaimed Alix.

“Me too” replied Dixon, “But a billion years ago!” There were creatures, the fore runners of the dinosaurs by the looks of them and Humanoids!” In the background there was a saucer like craft and the humanoids were collecting samples of flora and fauna, returning to the saucer craft with the samples”.

Then a blank – The next ‘memory’ was of 2000, 000 years ago and the saucer was there again, but this time the humanoids were bringing large containers from the craft and setting them down outside. At a signal from one of the humanoids the enclosures were opened and ape like creatures emerged looking apprehensive and bewildered. The humanoids encouraged the ape like creatures to move away from the enclosures and go out into the world beyond.

The next image they experienced was 1300 years ago and the saucer had been hit by an asteroid and was breaking up on its way down to a planet, the crew desperately trying to avoid a settlement. Unfortunately, a large section of their craft hit and destroyed sections of the habitat. Other sections struck further afield and burrowed deep into the planetary crust.

“My God!” Exclaimed Alix, “This is a fragment of that craft and that craft had visited Earth at least twice and it seems started Homo-sapiens on their journey!” What if in fact they were using the Slip Drive to fold time and it is us!”

**Ho Humm!**