

The Crystalline Mythos:
The Waiting Room

(From the *Tales From the Tenth* collection)

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NOT FOR RESALE

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In the time of the Auros Boros...

The waiting room held a capacity of one-hundred people at a time, and currently that capacity was full. Everyone sat in dull, plastic chairs. It was miserable. The only lights in the room emanated from television sets, which ran numbers in correspondence to those waiting to be called. Of course, there were less powerful, secondary sources of light glowing from the tracking collars each person was wearing.

The front door, through which they all entered, was now locked. From underneath the door, the roots of blood red plants casually crept into the room. No one sat near to the front door. The front door was to be avoided.

Marvin Squeltor had been sitting in his chair so long that he had fallen asleep. His glasses remained on his face, fogged up, as he slept. He was wearing an ugly cardigan over a Sylvester Squirrel

t-shirt with an alien tracking collar around his neck. When the collar gave him a five minute warning, he awoke to a shift from green to blue light, with an accompanying gentle shock, and a piercing beep sound.

A television set played in the upper corner of the room nearest to Marvin. Infomercials played sunny reassuring images of happy people golfing, all of them on the proper medications, and all of them aging in healthy, and happily married fashion. One old man, married to a beautiful blonde woman with an hourglass figure, approached the screen with a glint in his smile.

“Hello and welcome to the Waiting Room. We hope you are enjoying your stay in our state-of-the-art Waiting facility. Remember to stay calm, and take a moment to really capture and realize how lucky you truly are to be here. All of you who are privileged enough to be here have shown immense quality of character, audacity, strength and determination. You are righteous, in a world with so much needless suffering.”

The man and the woman on the television set introduced another man onto the screen to join them on the golf course for their smiling message. This second man was dressed for golf, but he did not appear like your average Joe. His skin was discolored, glistening in various patches of blue, purple and gray. There were lifeforms, like barnacles or sea anemones, growing in orderly patterns along his neck and face. His eyes were missing. They were open, but conveyed only shadows, as grubs like worms crawled and festered within them. The worms were a part of this man now, food for the higher arachnids. They were blue, and purple, just as the man was. They moved in intelligent orchestrated ways, along with the mannerisms and speech of the man.

This blue and purple man on the golf course spoke. He was a Nebuzalorian host, a man conquered by interdimensional space spiders from a strange and dark dimension. His voice was deep, and otherworldly. It conveyed a knowing superiority, without hate or animosity. He was a very matter-of-fact fellow, who could even be said to hold a subtle optimism in his speaking manner.

“My dear useless fleshy human friends... Thank you for joining us in the Waiting Room today. Now, I know you’ve all worked very hard to make it here, and have proved yourself quite worthy. But let us be very clear—you are still only humans. Humans are not our friends. Simply put, humans are bad. We have unfriended humans, and will not request new friendship with them ever again. We don’t like you, obviously, and we are not going to lie about this, because we don’t have to. We are creatures of a more enlightened world, and your world is horribly corrupted by the presence of your kind in many clearly identifiable ways. Allow me to briefly inform you on some of your many disappointments as a species. Firstly, your species is not kind to the smaller organisms of this planet’s many noteworthy ecosystems, some of which we do actually value. We appreciate many of your planet’s native bacteria species, and several of your slime molds are of great import to our progress and future trajectory toward success.”

A few of the people in the waiting room, who were seated close enough to the television to hear it, gave a light round of polite applause. But, most of them sat, silent.

At the head of the Waiting Room, there was a reception area with many filing cabinets, and a glass tray of candy on the counter. There were three receptionists. All three were Space Spiders living in the eyes and minds of once very presentable and eye-catching women. The three of them spoke kindly and attentively with each new person whose collar was signaled.

Behind the receptionists, there were many collars of different designs, of higher quality for higher status persons. The standard collar, which most people had, was worth twenty-five Housing Points, which meant that each person in the Waiting Room had provided at least twenty-five Nebuzalorian Arachnids with an equivalent number of human vehicle bodies. But on the high end, collars were available that were worth far more than twenty-five Housing Points, and some persons of the Waiting Room had additional Housing Points to trade for superior collars.

One of the Platinum Club Membership collars was the Ultimate Helios Necktie of Doom. This collar was worth a whopping five-thousand Housing Points, and would only ever be given to the most righteous of persons.

Another legendary collar was for the Diamond Club Membership level patrons. It was called the Saturnian Noose of Absolute Human Subordinance, and it was most popular amongst elite collectors. This collar was set at an achievable value of one-thousand Housing Points.

From the back of the reception area, two Nebuzalorian men, strong in their builds, entered onto the floor. They were pushing a cart of snacks and drinks and cigarettes. For purposes of comfort and hospitality, they would be assisting the room with whatever was needed. They passed out blankets and little shoulder pillows for those who would have a long wait ahead of them. And, they always smiled, even as blue, purple worms oozed from their eyes and nostrils.

Next to Marvin Squeltor, an older man with a thin beard and a clean, styled mustache sat patiently. Marvin watched as this man called for the two attendants to assist him.

“Excuse me,” the man said, “I am in need of some attention.”

“Alright sir, that’s no problem,” one of the strong Nebuzalorian men replied.

“I noticed that you have behind the counter a most enticing collar available for those who are deserving—the Ultimate Helios Necktie of Doom! I believe I have the funds required for this fine purchase. In my life in the world as it used to be, I was an important influencer in the digital realm. I need to get one last selfie for my fans and it needs to be with this great and venerable collar. My fans will look at me and know I was worthy of my high stature in the attention economy which ran our society in designs of such exquisite excellence. Of course, it was from my pool of fans that I sought my claim for Housing Points, and from my fans that many lovely Space Spiders found their homes.”

“Alright sir,” one of the men said. “We’re going to need to ask to see your Housing Points score.”

“Straight to business, I see,” the man answered in response. “Very well. You may scan my collar.”

Thin red laser lines sprang from the shadows where the Nebuzalorian hosts once had eyes. Checking the man’s collar, they learned what was necessary for their transaction to occur.

“Cornelius Quincy Westingham,” the host puppet said. “While it looks like you have a sizable account with many Housing Points, you don’t have quite enough for the collar you’re requesting. That collar is five-thousand Housing Points, and your account is at four-thousand, nine-hundred, and ninety-seven Housing Points. You’re three Housing Points short.”

“Well, that is absurd,” Mr. Westingham replied, flabbergasted. “I’m certain there must be some kind of atrocious mistake! Firstly, while my name might in fact be Cornelius, in the digital world I am known as Lil Bougie Daddy and I am a most recognizable influencer with a reputation for excellent, two sentence parables and enlightened judgements created in rhyming fashion for my loyal fans and levied against my despicable enemies. I have many flashy, trendy, and clout raising selfies—all of them demonstrating my many virtues. And, I’m equally quick to detail the flaws of all my haters! I am the quintessential success story! I’m certain I should have at least six-thousand Housing Points. Look at my teeth. I’ve installed diamonds in them. Does this not display that I can make good on whatever payment you so desire. I promise you, good man!”

Mr. Westingham gave the two strong men his best Lil Bougie Daddy smile.

“Sorry sir. You can afford to try our Stupendous Andromedan Pendant of Bedazzlement. It is still designed for our Platinum Club Members. It’s our second most valuable collar, set at a price of three-thousand, five-hundred Housing Points. You’ll receive many benefits if you do choose to upgrade to this collar, and you’ll still have some currency left over in case in case you’d like to buy some snacks. Also, we have t-shirts.”

Cornelius did not appear happy, but mulled it over, just the same. “Alright I suppose there comes a time in life, when one must do with what they are offered. Are you absolutely, positively, undeniably of the utmost certitude that there is no way I can make up for the three Housing Points that I have not yet attained? I could make one last selfie post, with the new collar, and easily attain the funds to pay the remainder!”

“This is the Waiting Room, sir. There is nothing we can do. When you enter the premises, your total tally is what it is. We give no special treatment to any mortal human. Our loyalty is reserved for queens among spiders and great higher Sultans. Now, do you want the Stupendous Andromedan Pendant of Bedazzlement, or not?”

“Yes. Yes,” he said, “I’ll take it. Let’s get on with it.”

They carefully removed his collar. One of the Nebuzalorian men, grabbed his arm. The grip was not so tight that it would be painful, but firm enough to let Mr. Westingham know not to try to escape.

Quickly, the other Nebuzalorian man placed the new collar onto Mr. Westingham's neck. It was much more sparkly than the first collar, which was promptly removed from the scene. The newer, better collar almost immediately beeped and lit blue, indicating that Westingham could now proceed to the reception desk. The fastpass capabilities of this new collar was one of its many perks.

Marvin Squeltor watched all of this, quietly. In truth, Marvin did not want to be here. He came here simply because if he had not come here, he would have been turned into housing for a Nebuzalorian Arachnid a long time ago. Marvin made twenty-five human captures and trades in order to survive. But, he did not enjoy this game, and his heart was secretly still with the human race.

Behind Marvin, a woman in a lavender blazer with long burnt sienna hair and peach lipstick filed her nails. Her name was Dianne Tigerseye. In life, she held noteworthy leadership skills in business and in her community. She had been the wife of a firefighter and a mom to three kids. Everyone appreciated her for her altruistic character. She volunteered often, and always gave to charity. She helped out at the church and even coached the little league soccer team. The homeless shelter was grateful for her assistance, and so was the senior citizen's home.

But, in the wake of the Nebuzalorian Invasion, she evolved into a ruthless collector in the human vehicular housing real estate market. Many Arachnids were blessed to travel to the blue world because of her most generous donations.

Marvin turned to see that Dianne's collar was blinking blue, indicating that it was her turn to head to the reception desk.

She noticed Marvin as she got up, and winked at him. "Looks like it my turn. Wish me luck."

"Uh..." Marvin was a bit awkward. "Good luck."

"Luck is for suckers." She laughed, and walked to the reception desk.

After a few minutes, Dianne was finished at the reception desk and proceeded to the next room, which labelled as the Selection Room.

Another few minutes passed, and Marvin's collar blinked—finally. He had been waiting for such a long time, many days or perhaps many years. At this point, he could tell the time. The world was moving into a new phase. Outside, the sun was changing color.

Marvin got up from his chair. He pulled a small comb from his cardigan pocket, and styled his combover along his balding scalp. Trying to stand upright, he walked to the reception desk. His palms were cold and sweating. His powder blue polo-shirt was drenched in perspiration. All he could do was project a phony smile and proceed. He was not pushing any personae for personal gain, but simply trying to survive. Cautiously, he stepped forward.

He looked to the receptionist, a Nebuzalorian in a lady host with curly hair and an alien void for a face.

“Marvin Squeltor, correct?” She said. “You may head into the next room now.”

“The Selection Room?”

“Well, the Waiting Room for the Selection Room. Looks like you’re all good to go. Good luck.”

“I was told good luck is for suckers.”

The Nebuzalorian did not comprehend the dry, unfunny humor of Marvin. The Arachnid consciousness in her skull was puzzled and also disliked Marvin’s combover.

“Have a good day.” The Nebuzalorian said. Then, directed her attention to the next person in line.

Marvin moved ahead to the Waiting Room for the Selection Room. In this room, there was a big window, which allowed him to observe the Selection Room, but he would not be able to proceed into the actual Selection Room until his collar blinked and, this time, turned yellow.

He could see Dianna Tigerseye and Cornelius Westingham were both in the Selection Room. There was another man in the Selection, ahead of the other two in line. He was a large man with a handlebar mustache, three chins, and a military haircut with a receding hairline. He was wearing overalls with no shirt. He was standing at a station where a Nebuzalorian attendant helped him interface with a large biological computer system designed with a blood-red root system wrapped all around a dark tree. Black fungi grew from the base of the tree along the cracked tiles of the floor. There was a knot in the tree, which extended out, and formed a small bowl where water pooled into a thick oily puddle. This water served as a gateway into which the man gazed and interfaced. There were no buttons and no keyboard. Instead, he simply placed his hand on the tree. His hand was soon engulfed by living leaf limbs, which read his thoughts and followed his direction. It was clear that the man was working with some sort of alien program. But, from where Marvin was standing, it was difficult to fully comprehend what was occurring.

Then the tree spoke and the voice was clear and commanding. “Welcome to the Selection Program. We are now scanning you, Mr. Skippy Orbison, born in Kentucky, raised on grass-fed chicken and government subsidized corn. It appears that your balance of roughly five-hundred Housing Points is plenty enough to place you in a full body plant stasis simulation matrix until the end of your bodily human life cycle. But, from within the hallucinogenic clutches of your mind’s new plant symbiote, there is still the grand question of what you would imagine your perfect life to be. What would you like your perfect death to be? How long would you like to live for? What sort of world would you like to live in? These are all questions that must be answered before we bring this new apparatus upon your person, and you become one with the great plants, forever ensnared in their wholesome root system. The vitamin

content of your circulatory system will benefit out our plant hosts, and you will experience the amazing freedom of our new secondary reality.”

Skippy Orbison thought about what he wanted in his ideal life. In his actual life, he had been a real piece of shit. For years, he had worked in a hotel with little holes in walls where he would watch people. In a side business, he had set up security cameras for homes and businesses, and used his company's network to spy on customers. He was without concern for basic decency.

In his new life, his wish was to become the commander of a great army in a war for the soul of his country. He would start on the front lines and make his way up in the ranks until one day he was a military general and eventually a successful politician.

“This would make an excellent selection,” the tree answered. “We would love to accommodate you in this fantastic vision.”

“I also want to marry a woman, like a sexy vampire who can turn into a fuckin’ dragon so I can fly around on her and burn people with her flaming hellfire.”

“Wonderful choice,” The tree replied. “We will add that to your specifications. Compliments on your creativity. Would you like us to add a scented embalming fluid to your real world biological husk?”

“I want to smell like a field of fresh strawberries.”

“I believe we can arrange that.”

“Excellent. You may now proceed down the hall to the Gardens of Nebuzalorian. Enjoy your stay, and may your life bring you great happiness, longevity, and wonderment.”

Next up to the tree computer, Cornelius Quincy Westingham, was very excited to discuss his future living arrangements. He tapped his fancy shoes in anticipation.

“Hello, Mr. Westingham. We are now scanning you. Born in the United Kingdom, you’ve risen to become an important influencer in the pop culture of this planet before the day our Arachnid brethren arrived. Describe your ideal existence? How would a man of such great talents wish to spend the remainder of his earthly primate life-cycle?”

“Well, in life, I was constantly surrounded by people. They were all calling my name. Women wanted me, and men wanted to be me. But, I wish to live in solitude and solace now, forever until the end of my days. I have given it deep thought and I would wish to live in a cave in a mountain side in a deep wooded forest away from all others. I will converse with only the animals, and they will speak back to me in their gentility and grace. Together, we will sing songs creating order in the universe. Birds will land on my shoulders. Bees will tickle my whiskers. Bears will tend to my home, and sleep beside me with tender cuddling. There will be Grizzly Bears, and Panda Bears, and Black Bears with jelly-jam for my

sandwiches. Peacocks will sing as I prance through the woods. And, Hippopotamuses will swim beside me in the lakes.”

“No human companions, then?”

“Well, I would perhaps appreciate a wife in my new life. I would ask that she weighs at least twelve-hundred pounds, and that she has long, golden hair. While I would venture through the woods, she would cook me my supper. Likewise, she would chew my food for me. One must never chew his own food.”

“That sounds splendid,” the tree replied. “Compliments for your creativity. You may now proceed down the hall to the Gardens of Nebuzalorian.”

“Wait! One more thing!”

“Yes.”

“Can I take one last selfie for my fans? With you, perhaps?”

“No.”

“Please? My fans will be awaiting my last moments before annihilation. I want to assure them that I am in good hands.”

“Absolutely not. Please proceed down the hall to Gardens of Nebuzalorian.”

Cornelius was not pleased. He dragged his feet as he walked down the hall. He muttered to himself in frustration, vowing that he would one day write a negative review blog post concerning the Nebuzalorian Arachnids.

Next to the tree was Dianna Tigerseye. She approached the tree with confidence in her step.

“Welcome to the Selection Program, Miss Dianna Tigerseye. We are now scanning you. You were born in Las Vegas, Nevada, where you later became a casino owner. Responsibility is no stranger to you. What sort of life would you have wished to live if anything you imagined could be yours? The world is in the palm of your hands, Miss Tigerseye. For what do you wish for?”

“Easy,” She answered. “I want to run shit. I want to live in a big mansion, but more like a castle, with a moat and shit.”

“Ok. That can be arranged.”

“I want seven husbands, and a bunch of maids that do shit for me. But, everyone knows to get the fuck out of my face when I tell them to. I want to eat grapes from vines, and I want a big ass white Bengal Tiger with silver eyes that pierce like knives... and I want to ride on its back like a horse. That way, I could look like a badass bitch when I rule my people. I want lots of gold that I can trade with foreign lands, and they can have other kings and queens there, but I’m the toughest, coldest, hardest monarch in the whole damn world. I want them to bring me offerings. I want them to worship my ass. I want statues. Monuments. Pyramids. Obelisks. *All that shit.*”

“And how will this tale come to its end?”

“I want to die when I am very old and very accomplished. I just want my last moments to be a total accident. Maybe I could get stomped by a pack of stampeding elephants when I’m, like, ninety. But I want to come back as an elephant goddess after that, and live as a ghost so I can see my big funeral. Then I can just sort of fade away and shit. That sounds pretty good.”

“Excellent choice. Compliments for creativity!” The tree actually meant it this time around. “Would you care for scented embalming fluid for your human tree symbiote remains?”

“Give me that lemon scent, like window cleaner. I don’t want that organic garbage. Environmentalists make me sick!”

“Excellent. You may now proceed to the Gardens of Nebuzalorian.”

As she walked confidently to the next room, the Nebuzalorian attendants gave her a round of applause for her award-winning attitude. She kicked off her heels, and walked gracefully barefoot towards her new beginning.

Back in the Waiting Room for the Selection Room, Marvin Squeltor’s collar blinked and turned yellow. On the left end of the room, there was a rusted iron door with moss growing all over it. This door opened, and welcomed Marvin into the Selection Room.

Marvin was sweating buckets. In truth, he did not want to be put into any floral stasis. He did not care if his new life would be a fantasy. He only wanted to survive. Though prone to panic, Marvin was intelligent. Trying to maintain an outward appearance of calm composure, his heart pounded like train pistons.

The dark tree and its biological computer system noticed this heightened heart rate, but did not discern Marvin’s motives to escape the building. Instead, the tree simply offered him sedatives and ice water with cucumber. Marvin accepted the ice water with cucumber, but politely refused the drugs. He took a deep breath, and resolved to get through this.

The tree spoke, “Welcome to the Selection Program, Mr. Marvin Squeltor. We are now scanning you. You were born in Cleveland, Ohio. In life, you worked as a clerk in a convenient store. Your medical

records indicate that you were diagnosed with anxiety. The fear which you felt about everyday life is no longer relevant. You are righteous. You have served us well. What sort of life would you wish to have if you could have anything you ever wanted? What are your dreams, Mr. Squeltor?"

"Yes. Absolutely," Marvin put on his best poker face and answered, "I just want something nice, sensible—like a farmhouse and a nice family, and a dog."

"Alright. That sounds great, but where is your creativity?"

"Oh. Uh. Right," Marvin stumbled as he spoke. "Maybe I could have a cool car, and be like a secret agent, and wear cool suits and stuff."

"Is that all? Your creativity is improving, but remember, this is your life, Mr. Squeltor? Give it thought, and put your heart into it."

Marvin felt he was being found out. He was a fraud, and the tree knew it. Perspiration dripped down from his forehead to his nose and fell into the puddle of oily liquid with which he interfaced.

"Fuck it. I've got an idea." Squeltor replied, "Give me a warehouse full of monster trucks, and a stadium with awesome pyrotechnics where I can smash cars and daredevils can do long jumps on motorcycles. I want to be in a hair metal rock and roll band and play the halftime show in leopard skin pants. Then, I'll hop on a motorcycle and jump a ramp over fifty monster trucks."

"And how would you like to die in the end?"

"One word. Cobras."

"Excellent creativity!" The tree exclaimed. "We knew you wouldn't disappoint us. You may now proceed to the Gardens of Nebuzalorian. Enjoy your stay!"

"Thanks." Marvin muttered, practically pissing his pants.

His knees were shaking and he could barely walk. Still, he proceeded down the hall. The corridor was long, tiled, and clean, but with pulsating intestine-like root systems extending along the ceilings.

One of the Nebuzalorians stood in the hall as a guard and chaperone. He was a blonde man, blue and grey with patches of green. An arachnid the size of a grapefruit was housed in his skull. It had eaten most of one side of his head. He was wearing a white t-shirt which read: *Stay Positive!*

"We hope your time in the Waiting Room has been as positive for you as it was for us!" the blonde man said as bugs ate his face. "Beyond this door, there is new life."

The large wooden double doors behind the blonde man opened, and Marvin could see a large greenhouse space with a pond full with many pods and pod people wrapped in many vines like cocoons. Marvin was still panicking inside, and channeled his anxiety into scanning the room for a potential escape. The room was so humid and slimy that Marvin's sweaty forehead was no longer a giveaway of his intense internal anxiety.

A spot was set for him to lay down. He had no choice but to cozy up next to a tree at the edge of the pond, where his new life in plant stasis would take form. His legs and feet hung into the green pools. Blood red roots curled around his arms. He looked around to see Dianne, Cornelius, and Skippy all being put into their stasis. Spores poured forth from nostril-like openings in the trees and put the three of them into peaceful rest. Only Marvin remained awake. He looked to his tree. The opening for the spores could be found in a long tubular vine, which slowly swayed in intelligent, living fashion. In a most diar moment of choice, Marvin grabbed the vine and tied it in a knot.

"Excuse me!" He called to the blonde Nebuzalorian man at the door. "My tree machine thingy isn't working! I need help."

Kindly, the blonde man walked to Marvin, laying against his tree at the edge of the pool.

"That's no problem," the man said. "That's a tentistruil stasis vine, and it might just need a second to send sleep spores..." Then, the blonde man noticed the status of the vine, "Wait! This is tied into a knot, sir. Did you do this? This is a clear violation of protocol. I'm going to alert the manager!"

Marvin punched the spider right out of the blonde man's decaying skull. The spider landed on the ground, and tried to run away. Quickly, Marvin sprung up, and chased the spider. When the spider saw that it was being chased, it turned around and jumped onto Marvin's face causing Marvin to fall in the murky pond. Living plants seemed to coil around Marvin's body, and the spider only tightened its grip. Reaching up, Marvin was able to grip the vine, and untangle it, even as the spider bit him repeatedly. He felt one of his eyes ripped from the socket, as the spider readied to burrow in his brains. He pulled the vine and pushed the tube over the spider's head, wrapping it tight. The spores filled the arachnid's alien lungs. Gasses filled the spider to the degree that it bloated and popped, spewing acidic goo all over Marvin's face and torso. It burned and was incredibly painful. Marvin tried not breathe the spores, but even the small amount which entered his lungs caused him to feel extraordinarily sleepy.

Still, he pulled himself from the pond, and stood to his feat. In complete panic he examined the room again. Now it became clear that many of the people plugged into the plants were decaying and rotting as mosses and strange flowers grew from their remains.

Then, he formulated his plan. He took the dead spider, which he had killed, and placed it on his head, and even went so far as to press it into his eye socket. He grabbed the blonde man's shirt and through it over his own. This would be his disguise.

Carefully, he walked out into the hall, hoping nobody would notice his humanity. He was in a state of complete agonizing pain, but he tried to maintain a friendly smile. He walked right back to the Selection room, and gave a nice smile to the Nebuzalorians.

“Lunch time,” He said, trying to look professional. “The wife packed a pastrami sandwich for my fat new vehicle body. She makes it with grub and larva, just the way I like it.”

“Sounds yummy.” A happy attendant lady said. “The new vehicle body looks great. Is that Marvin Squeltor? I thought he was going to be plugged in to the plant matrix.”

Marvin couldn't think of anything to say. All he could do was improvise and hope for the best.

“Oh, yeah, well... of course... he ran out of Housing Points... and it turns out he didn't actually bring us twenty-five people. He was faking it! The managers caught him, and stuck me in his head.”

It was a terrible excuse. He was doomed.

“Oh that happened to me last week!” the attendant said. “That's so funny! I'll make sure to update you in the system. The new bod looks good! Nice eye socket. Looks like you've still got a lot of face to eat.”

“Yes, ma'am,” He laughed, nervously.

“Hey, tonight me and the girls are getting margaritas if you want to come.”

“That sounds... nice... the first round is on me.” He gave her a smile and winked his one good eye.

Now, he walked back into the front Waiting Room. He could see the front door, and the red roots growing on the floor.

Walking out the front door, he could see the world covered in alien plant life. It was disgusting and eerie, but he could feel the sun on his skin. There were birds in the air singing, even if strange alien insects lived in their minds. Maybe it would have been better to go into the plant stasis. But now, Marvin's only option was to continue into the frontiers of this changed, bizarre, new world.

He could see in the distance, townspeople living lives very much like natural humans. But, they were Nebuzalorians, and their vehicle bodies were just throwaways. They lived like humans. Some of them lived in the suburbs. Some of them drove cars to work. Marvin bought a hotdog, and picked the bugs out of it.

Note: *If you enjoyed this story, please check out other stories by T.J. Cheis.*

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