

The Sixth Message
Translated into Earth/Human/English

Prologue

In examining the history, the sentient beings of a planet called Earth near the Alpha Centauri System, should have headed the warning of a being they called Stephen Hawking; a famous theoretical physicist, cosmologist and author from their time marking called the 21st century. A male of the species, he warned that Aliens (non-Earth beings) visiting would likely result in their extinction. Some of the Earth beings called humans had been attempting to contact intelligent life in Earth galaxy for generations. The humans believed themselves to be explorers, but like most sentient beings, the root of the human wish for contact was in gaining resources to aid in making their own species thrive at the cost of the ending other life.

The first message from other sentient beings came long after the ending of the life of the human called Stephen Hawking. The first message came from beings who never gave a name, but came to be called the haUss (ha-EWW-ss). The message was short and to the point, in what seemed like a compilation of words pasted together from Earth/Human messages sent into space, “we do not come in peace, we come to not share, you will die”. With the message came a video, like the human picture books used to teach their offspring. The message showed what looked like a passage through a black hole, a bright light quickly fading to blackness for a long period and a bright light again. An image of the planet Earth came into focus quickly shifting to an image of Earth with holes in the surfaces and burning carbons and gasses. Before the video ended, Earth spinning around the star called the Sun happened thirty-seven times.

One thing about the message was clear, Earth/Humans had thirty-seven years to figure out a way to protect themselves from the haUss. Talks with the different subgroupings or packs of humans started. Their leaders which are called 'governments' tried to come together. The most powerful, having the most people and weapons which the humans called 'militarized' dominated the talks; as seen with numerous other sentient beings studied. As the government groupings China, Russia, Europe and The United States dominated the talks, many governments began to be left out. Infighting between governments started as different subgroupings or packs couldn't decide who would be in charge of the preparation and each government. North Korea and South Korea were the first governments to break-away from the talks, ending a more than hundred Earth/Sun cycle war between the bordering countries. The now unified Korea, Japan, Philippines, Taiwan and Guam joined China once China also left the talks. Once joined with China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Mongolia joined within weeks. Thailand was the last government to join by sheer force. The alliance of countries was called Unified Military and Civilians of Asia. Though not all of Asia was allied under the alliance, the power of the fifteen governments together started what the humans called World War Three (how Earth/Humans marked large wars in the 20th and 21st centuries). World War Three lasted almost twenty-two Earth/Sun cycles.

Twenty Earth/Sun cycles into the war a second message was received, this time from a different sentient being called nUllings (n-EWW-lings). The message was a response to Earth/Humans' original messages, being unaware of the message received by the haUss. The message repeated "come in peace, come in peace, come in peace", and had what seemed to be video directions to build some kind of machine. As the war waged and more human life died, Earth/Human engineers argued about what the machine may be. It took two Earth/Sun cycles to

decide the machine was likely a communication device. It took another half Earth/Sun cycle to get enough governments to agree to work together to build the complex machine. Initial tests showed the machine created a worm hole only big enough to send energy information through such as audio and visual recordings. Earth/Humans built a large scale machine from the nUllings directions and sent their first message back. There was no unanimous agreement between the human governments on whether the message should have been sent. The government Russia sent the message against the wishes of many of the other governments.

The third message came as a series of flashing images and sounds broadcast all over the planet. It took months for the Earth/Human scientists to put the puzzle together of what exactly the third message was. What became initially clear was the amount of data sent back through the message worm hole. By the time the forth message came, Earth/Humans had just discovered the intention of the third message. The third message was a way to 'size-up' the Earth/Humans (size-up to some Earth/Humans means to be a measurement of character, value, status as a means to ascertain somethings capacity to meet given requirements). The nUllings had to measure the Earth/Humans intention in contacting other sentient beings. The nUllings found many of the subgroupings of Earth/Humans used a take/give system. The Earth/Human species consistently challenged notions of fairness and equality, leading many Earth/Humans to take without giving as a show of dominance or privilege. The nUllings found the Earth/Humans took unfairly when in a dominant position within the subgrouping causing a history of fighting within the subgroupings when that balance became intolerable. The nUllings decided to 'make-a-deal' (another term used by some Earth/Human subgroupings meaning to negotiate the terms of trade often with the intent of being fair but never actually fair). The deal nUllings would send one hundred of their top scientists and warriors to Earth to combat the haUss and Earth/Humans

would send one hundred of their top scientists and engineers to help them with a problem that would be disclosed in a later message.

By the end of World War Three, Earth was tattered and scorched. Where Earth/Humans once made their habitats, there now stood stones and pieces of cut trees marking where dead Earth/Human bodies were placed under the crust of the planet. As alliances shifted, fallen governments became new ones, the last twenty-two Earth/Sun cycles would become an asterisk, a side note in Earth's greatest discovery, life outside of their own planet. Then the fifth message came. The fifth message came from the nUllings with a promise to help heal Earth and to help prepare for the coming of a defeat of the haUss (haUss in the nUlling language meant something never ending like space, something cold and limitless but also empty). The message was very specific about the types of knowledge the nUllings wanted the Earth/Humans to send; fifteen types of scientists and engineers all having anthropological experience. The end of the fifth message seemed more like a form of entertainment or amusement, like a movie being played. The movie introduced the Earth/Humans to the nUllings sharing a brief history, a bit about their culture and what they could expect once the nUllings arrived.

A multi-governmental team was assembled called Science, Exploration, Extraterrestrial, Contact or S.E.E.C. (pronounced seek). The team after a world war was difficult to assemble, like searching for a needle in a haystack (another common Earth/Human saying). Many scientists went into hiding or had been killed during the war and as the war waged, less humans were able to attend places of higher learning on Earth. This left Earth and the Humans ill prepared to assemble such a large team of scientists. Among the humans is where the famed Citlali Romero emerges into the Earth/Human historical records. Citlali or Lali (pronounced Lolly) was one of the hundred scientists and engineers recruited for the S.E.E.C. mission. Lali

Herrera was a sexologist who focused on biology and epidemiology which is why she was chosen for the mission. Lali had an injured hip from the war which slightly pivoted like a cog in her hip when she walked with the S.E.E.C. team during news conferences. Most days, one couldn't notice the limp or pain she hid it so well. On other days when the weather was cold or after a long day of training, you could see a slight rotation in her hip like a wheel on a train trudging forward, mechanical and in need of grease.

Lali wasn't exactly excited about the constant barrage of government officials, cameras and medical doctors constantly trying to gage her. The S.E.E.C. team was something the governments assembled, people weren't allowed to 'sign-up' for the mission and Lali made it very clear she didn't sign-up. Lali was happy to be getting back to her boring ole life after the war, researching the mating habits of flowers and sharing her excitement in the classroom is what in the end got her heart pumping. She was only a teacher in higher education for four years before the war broke out. When the war reached the beaches of her home country, she was quick to join the effort in protecting her government and lands. Lali spent twelve years in the war, seven of which were on the front lines fixing downed drones and other weapons used by warriors sitting in a room like gamers of the 21st century (during the 21st century a subgroup of mainly youth would engage with one another through digital games online and were called gamers). The front line was no longer people with guns or swords; it was now people wielding a control board and live screen while drinking soda (a popular drink made of sugar, flavoring and carbonated water). The new front line was the mechanics and engineers doing the daily repairs and the civilians in areas near military bases.

As the S.E.E.C. team was paraded across the screens of the general population, the governments hoped a natural leader would emerge. The governments needed the support of the

public now more than ever as increasing blame and mistrust grew over the governments of Earth and their inability to work together in the best interest of their people. As the public weighed in on the hundred-person team of S.E.E.C., Lali emerged as the love of the masses. Lali was tough and no nonsense, like only a person who had been on the front lines of the war could be. She was also gentle and during training, was the team member to challenge her team mates while also stopping to smell the flowers. Actually this was something she did often, for Lali it was something she grew to love while taking biology classes. For the public, it was a sign of humanness and appreciation of life that seemed to almost be lost during the war. The public nicknamed Lali “The Flower” and images of flowers began to flood the internet (the internet is a way of sharing information and communicating through fiber optic wires across the planet). The public relations group working with S.E.E.C. started insisting Lali wear a flower in some way everywhere she went. The flowers started out as cut flowers until Lali finally put her foot down about the abuse of flowers for decoration and they allowed her to wear a fake metal flower a fan had sent her.

Before the S.E.E.C. team had finished training, an alien ship had started circling the planet. The ship while continually scanning the planet broadcast a message to Earth “your chariot awaits” (another common Earth saying meaning your transportation is ready or available). The ship while orbiting, continually scanned the planet and somehow changed and morphed. It was unsure how the ship morphed, but the scientists who were tasked with monitoring the space ship noted daily sometimes hourly changes to the hull of the ship and well as the interior layout. The common hypothesis was the ship changed to better meet the requirements of housing Earth/Humans which differed from the nUllings. No one was entirely sure what the layout of the inside of the ship was like. The outside of the ship only made minor

changes after arrival, but scans showed major chances to the interior for weeks. What they knew for sure, was the ship would have some kind of gravity in at least two of the sections via two huge spinning rings around a central long ship. The ship was massive, bigger than any ship Earth/Humans had ever made.

Early on during the days of training, the public disapproved of the S.E.E.C. team all wearing different outfits. The public wanted a visibly united team, they wanted a matching outfit that showed them as a unified team, they wanted uniforms. Clothing production shortly after the war started became entirely centered on making military and governmental uniforms for the war effort. Civilians had to learn how to make clothing from what was available, piecing together parts of shirts with smaller holes with pieces that had become tattered and torn. What once was called a rebellious subgroup called post-apocalyptic punk became everyday wear for civilians. A new industry emerged called remaking or remakers. The most talented remakers started businesses out of their homes patching together bits of fabric and clothing they were able to scrounge-up. Some opened shop where they sold their wears and even fewer became more famously known for their creative use and combination of fabrics. Remaker designers were recruited to make the uniforms for the S.E.E.C. team. One of the remakers was wildly believed to have an underground army of tattered clothing suppliers who had connections to the military, taking their throw-aways. The S.E.E.C. uniforms were a combination of green military and black urban. Their pants were patches upon patches of stitched together pieces of army green scraps, some pieces more faded than others. Their tops, were knitted (a kind of loop weaving with the use of long pointed sticks) with tattered pieces of old shirts and died black with oak galls, lemon and rust which there was plenty of. Though their uniforms weren't all exactly alike,

the public could tell who was part of the S.E.E.C. mission and somehow it helped them feel calm about the uncertain future they faced.

They had assembled, they trained, they had uniforms. The time came for them board the alien ship. Good byes were said, the trip was expected to take five to ten years, if they ever came back. At this point, they were Earth/Humans best chance in surviving the haUss invasion, but it didn't make saying good bye any easier. Supplies were packed, food was gathered, seeds, extra clothing and water was sent to the launch site. Each scientist was allowed a small box about the size of a stack of books of personal items. Most took pictures, headphones, polished rocks, crystals and sea shells from Earth. Many had small data devices full of music, more photos, videos of loved ones and letters from family and friends. The boxes were filled with what each S.E.E.C. member needed to stay connected to humanity. Each member knew their connection to humanity would be slipping away, into the void of space. Many feared the mission to be a one-way trip, members married before departing, others sold everything they had leaving all to family and friends. They would all share a moment of either the greatest adventure any Earth/Human had embarked on, or the greatest catastrophe in the many remembered lifetimes. This must be what it was like for a baby bird leaving the nest, either learning to fly or plummeting to their death; you have no choice but to leap. But they all left Earth, they all made it to the alien ship safely and tried patiently for their anticipated expedition to begin, the possible fate of Earth/Humans rested on their hundred shoulders. A surely precarious position to be in.

The 6th Message

Once everyone was settled, a gathering in what seemed to be the main room or mess hall off the kitchen just above the living quarters drew the attention of everyone on the ship. While they all shared their first meal together, the walls lit up, what looked like a video message began

to play all around them. The message went onto explain why the Earth/Humans of the S.E.E.C. (Science, Exploration, Extraterrestrial, Contact) expedition had been gathered, what their purpose is, the problem more specifically the nUlling need help with, including information about how nUll is now an almost toxin free planet, but since their problem began, their bodies had become swollen with toxins which had to be drained on a regular basis. The message also describes how the computers can be accessed, how there are no log-ins or something to maintain privacy other than personal messages to one another or back home. The nUllings believe that by streamlining the sharing of information, the S.E.E.C. team may better reach a solution to their problem. It is also explained to them how gravity works on the ship and will increase slowly throughout the journey to help them acclimate to the slightly greater gravity on nUll and how once they complete their almost two-year journey, they will have to wait another three months before their bodies have been fully acclimated to the low toxicity of nUll planet and have been cleared of harmful contaminates to the nUll. They were told to enjoy their journey, work hard and take advantage of all the ship had to offer them. For tonight, music played, dancing happened and desserts were enjoyed. The spectacle of the last 22 years of war had cumulated to this moment in time, the weight of the Earth lay on the shoulders of these one-hundred Earth/Humans.

They awoke after their first feast of many on board the nUll ship. The ringing of crying, laughter and amazement woke Lali to the sight of unfamiliar space outside their sleeping quarters window; which seemed too thin to trust touching and not fall out into space. Glowing stars in the distance drew closer and then vanished like a glittering streaks of meteor falling from the sky. While they slept, the ship began its journey to planet nUah which Earths greatest minds were assuming was also in the Perseus arm of our own galaxy the Milky Way were the haUss

likely had greater access to the nulUha. Lali reluctantly, having a belly still too full of pineapple pie from last night, drew the covers back, stretched their legs and body until their right hip popped just like every morning and made their way across the room to the shower. The water felt more refreshing somehow as Lali lathered soap on their hair and body, taking the longest shower they had in all their remembered lifetime on Earth. On Earth during the war, resources were scarce and Lali like all their other fellow citizens were restricted to one shower a week for a maximum of two minutes. Lali could take two showers a week for a minute each but found it easier to soap and rinse in the two minutes once a week.

After their shower, Lali headed to the biologist wing of the ship. Each group of scientist were divided into their specific fields and given a lab station as well as an adjoining personal office. As Lali walked to their lab, they struggled with the view of walking in the rings of the ship, their body never feeling like it was walking up hill but with the view of nothing but a monstrous hill in front of them. The ship was designed with a central ship area which housed the kitchen, dining hall and additional storage. The central ship had some kind of device that created artificial gravity though none of the scientists on board understood how it worked. Lali recalls conversations from some of their fellow scientists the previous evening that once they were done helping the nulUhaings with their problem, they would love to get their hands on the Artificial Gravity Generator (AGG). Lali wasn't much interested in the AGG and wanted nothing more than to dive into their work so that once they reached nUah they could show their findings, fix the nUahings problem and head back home. They were reluctant to agree to this expedition in the first place having never left their own country during the war let alone planet. Lali wanted to get to the sole reason why the nUllings answered their call, to help them figure out why their population was decreasing and why generation after generation less and less were

having offspring and why less and less of them didn't even have interest in communal relationships let alone romantic.

Lali was one of the five biologist on board and the only one who specialized in botany. In their personal office, Lali started like many of the other scientists by going through the data logs on the ship. They all had access to the same database with the different sciences and subjects being earmarked by color and connections to related content. Lali started reading up on the basic biology of the nUahings as well as the basic biology of other living things on the planet. Every time Lali thought they made a connection, an earmark would be created in the database as if the computer system was able to read their minds. Lali noticed the nUllings didn't make their own hormones like humans did. They explored the database further investigating their reproductive process. nUllings seemed to at one point of time reproduce sporadically, not having to wait for a menstruation cycle like those on Earth. For the nUllings, reproduction could happen at any time. It was normal for public displays of affections, with intercourse often being in public spaces unlike the humans on Earth. Lali wondered why their populations weren't booming out of control, if they had so few restrictions on both the time in which they could reproduce as well as the removal of the stigma around what was and was not an appropriate places' for intercourse. Lali had to once again remind themselves that the nUllings weren't Earthling and that solving the nUllings problem was going to require much more thinking outside of the box than problems did on Earth.

Lali found a listing of all the successful inseminations locations on nUll. On the interactive map, they asked the computer to light them up in the order in which they occurred. As a pattern began to immerge, Lali wondered if there were other connections they were able to make. They first tried weather patterns, solar output, even residue from past wars weapons.

Nothing seemed to correlate. Lali watched the computer play the successful inseminations in order over and over again. Like waves, the lights blinked missing certain areas of the planet over and over again. As the light sequence ran on and the successful inseminations began to dwindle more and more, Lali notices the patches where no lights blinked began to get bigger and bigger. This had to be a connection of some kind, but what?

By the time Lali looked up from their work and decided to take a break, almost ten hours had passed. Without the sun rising and falling, Lali had completed misjudged time and what seemed like only four hours was really ten. Lali's stomach turned into a crescendo of growls that almost felt comforting and familiar like ration times during the war. Lali, left their office and began the uneasy vertigo feeling of walking back up the ring to the hallway which led to the mess hall.

Critical Analysis

There are seven tenets of western love; (1) unconditional love such as parental love or a love which lasts forever, (2) love that relates and affirms oneself or a love which loves through good, bad and ugly, (3) selfless love which puts another before yourself such as love a 'good' partner or family has, (4) benevolent and harmless love, the kind which reminds you of valentine's day and boxes of chocolate, (5) eternal love, a love which will exist long after death, (6) love which transports you from the everyday imperfections, a love that makes you a better person just for loving or being loved, and (7) love which redeems life's losses, a love which makes all the suffering in the world worthwhile.

But what if something got in the way? What if there were truly a disconnect or separation from the mind and the body, making physical love or pleasure undesirable (St.