

2525 – The Out-of-Hand Experiment

Note:

*All events in this story are fictitious and are only for the development of the plot. No political criticism is intended in any part of the script.

*It is suggested to read the script with the appendix for better understanding.

The story encompasses fictional science and technology, as well as history.

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Prologue

Classified location, year 1525.

The BLACKBOX.

They watch in fear and trepidation as the blue? Because blue brilliant light at the end? red giant dot on the hologram approached with menace. Two green crosses, bravely confronts the raging intruder.

The pair of counter missiles were fired to intercept the diving asteroid that had just entered our atmosphere. The control facility is filled with silence.

Static filters through the speakers.

“T-minus two minutes.”

...

“T-minus ninety seconds.”

It feels like an hour.

“Thirty seconds to impact”.

An agonising wait.

“T-minus ten seconds.”

“Nine.”

“Eight”

...

The crosses flicker and disappear.

“Missiles B4 and B5 missed and self-detonated. They were unexpectedly off mark.”

“Fire B6 NOW!”

A lone green cross showed up on the hologram.

“Sir, this asteroid is ... for want of a better word, weird. Adjacent satellites show it is of an odd pointy shape and emits light from multiple wavelengths of the electromagnetic spectrum.”

“T-minus twenty seconds for B6’s intercept”

“T-minus ten seconds”

The blue? red marker disappeared from the hologram.

A confused voice come over the radio.

“Target just ...erm... hopped off the radar –”

Just then, the last green cross vanished as well.

“B6 self-detonated.”

“ Does the observatory have a clear visual?” The commander frowns.

“Only remnants from B6, sir”

“Last altitude of target?”

“Ten thousand metres, sir.”

“It may have burned up –”

A beep trumpets from the radio. “Target approaching! Clear the –”

The voice discontinues. The blue? red dot re-appears for a split second, before all the systems go blank. Only the fluorescent floor lights remain lit.

“Sir! Huge showers of charged particles detected, causing SEUs¹ in all our digital systems!”

The commander frowns harder. “Is there any way to circum–” he stops. Outside the windows, a luminescent raging ball of pure energy descends, illuminating the night sky. It seems to have a semi-presence²; visible, yet transparent.

An explosion disintegrates it, thousands of dispersed bright fragments race towards us menacingly.

The commander turns from his seat by the window and clasped his hands together.

Everything is engulfed in a brilliant blue light.

END OF AUDIOVISUAL RECORD

¹ Fact – SEUs are single-event upsets, when an ionising particle (from space) such as a proton or an electron hits a transistor gateway in computers and cause reading errors. This problem happens more frequently in space but can happen occasionally on Earth. Modern computers go around this by unaccepting signals and readings that they did not input. NASA satellites go around this problem by having three onboard CPUs, so that when one of them gives an anomalous reading due to an SEU, the other two will override the reading.

² See the next page – under *Asean, 3525, “projectile”*, or see footnote 4.

Asean, E.Y.³ 4025, 7 August.

It is all over the news.

The headlines: *Breaking news. The projectile⁴ struck, destroying an entire Martian city...*

“Many people are criticising the International Space Security Agency (ISSA) for unleashing the vicious attack –”

Gerlane pressed the button on his glasses. They flickered and switched off as he removed them. He shook his head and thought, “What’s happening? Is it legal, is it ethical?”

Mars, M.Y. 1525.

A press release on the destruction of Olympose, a city on Olympus Mons⁵.

“Olympose lays in devastation caused by the impact from the catastrophically huge asteroid. Far away cities reported the asteroid apparently outmanoeuvring our most advanced counter missile systems, which saved the city from previous asteroids. Conservatives speculate that it is from our brother planet Earth, as its rumoured inhabitants seek to counter the Elites’ intensifying colonisation missions on Earth. This is even when our droids on Earth report no presence of intelligent life whatsoever.”

³ In the story – E.Y. and M.Y. will be used to denote “Earth year” and “Mars year”, to differentiate the different calendars.

⁴ In the story – the asteroid in the prologue was actually a missile. Via quantum entanglement and superposition, the missile is in one place but is also at another place at the same time. This is why the counter missiles have a hard time tracking down this “asteroid”. Even if the counter missiles were on target, they will just be hitting one of the two places that the missile is, and only with an affirmative second hit, will the “asteroid” be fully destroyed.

⁵ Fact – Olympus Mons is the tallest mountain on Mars. It is more than three times taller than Mount Everest on Earth, with a height of 27 kilometres.

Earthlings & Martians.

2055 on Earth, global warming has rendered many parts of world inhabitable. A scientist, Professor Gareth X., came up with a way to terraform Mars, not in millennia, but within centuries, making Mars a possible future home. He proposed using fusion energy to melt the ice caps on Mars to release the trapped water and the carbon dioxide. This can be coupled with a huge electromagnet in Martian orbit (is this already there?), serving as Mars' magnetic field, to repel solar wind (only 1 wind?). Gradually, the Martian atmosphere would be pressurised, trap enough solar radiation to heat up and sustain life on Mars.

The Martian base on the south pole was already operational by then, scientists led by Gareth decided it was the best time to start terraforming. The mission was dubbed *Mission Gaia* and was set for completion by 2450. Ten 100-megaton nuclear fusion bombs were assembled on the moon base⁶ on 2056 and launched towards the Martian north pole, with an estimated three month travel time. Meanwhile, Earth's most brilliant scientists launched an ambitious last effort to save its environment. The Contemporary Ice Age was triggered by cloaking the entire equator with dark opaque clouds over four decades. Earth cooled drastically, weathering harsh storms. The human race and other precious living things hankered down and hibernated in arks all over the Arctic and Antarctica. When new dawn broke in 2497, earth was reborn and the new mankind was determined never to let our homeland be destroyed like before.

Mission Gaia received funding over the course of 500 years. It reached fruition in the early 2500s. By then the Martian landscape was a less blush and more lush.

Mission Gaia took ages and lost its original focus. In a huge twist of events, the dream of living on Mars took on new meaning. It turned into an experiment. In 2505, Professor Gregory X., descendent of Gareth, drew up a plan to study the evolution of man. After a decade of heated debate, the plan for *Mission Gaia X* was miraculously

⁶ Fact – the moon base: SpaceX is planning to build a moon base on the moon. Timelines are unclear, but it seems that Elon Musk wants to land live humans on the Moon by 2022.

Fact – the surface of the moon has an abundance of deuterium and tritium, isotopes of hydrogen which are good sources of fuel for nuclear fusion.

In the story – the moon base was used so that if anything went wrong, it would destroy the moon base not Earth. Fuel costs would be lesser on the moon too, due to its smaller gravity.

approved in 2515 by the Federation of Nations⁷ (FoN). The temptation to play god was too great.

Following another decade of preparations, on the fateful year 2525, rockets carrying tons of genetic material from thousands of volunteers, different species of animals and plants were flown to Mars . The first Martian men would be cloned on Mars.

The Martians were born. They roamed their world as civilisations of early medieval and agrarian societies, like Mesopotamia, under the watchful eyes of their Earthly masters. Our Martian base was moved and hidden in a desert where no Martian could survive. There, its operations were kept secret. *Mission Gaia X* would give insights on how humans *could* have evolved.

For a millennium, Earth witnessed the Martian bronze age, iron age, industrial revolution, and digital age. They developed faster than anyone expected, likely because of their higher intelligence than Earth's very first homo-sapiens. Their iron age came very early on, due to the abundance of iron on Mars. The Martians figured out how to reduce the iron ore to obtain pure iron much earlier than Earth men. They advanced rapidly, and within a millennia they reached the height of evolution, a timeline shortened by tenfold.

Secretly, samples were brought back to Earth for testing, which is why things disappear for the Martians. In the early ages, Earth sent men to help them, impressing them with "god-like" abilities, skills and technology. Language was a great enabler inherited from early Earth men. The Martians learnt to speak and write English, French, Chinese, Japanese, you name it. They worshiped their Earthly ancestors, who were there building with them, for them, for a few forgotten moments in their brief history. We were their gods.

Their evolution took a similar path as ours. Religions sprung up to explain unfathomable phenomena. Inevitably, religions splintered because of disagreements. They also fought for food, land and ideals.

⁷ In the story - the Federation of Nations is the successor of the United Nations after it was dissolved in 2741 when they failed to keep peace which led to a catastrophic war in the western hemisphere and the destruction of most of USA, leading to a power struggle between China and Russia.

The most frequently fought and still ongoing war in Mars however, is an ideological war between the Elites and the Conservatives. Elites believe that no intelligent life is present on Earth based on their scientific research. They feel the immense need to explore Earth, and possibly bring Martians to live on the green and blue planet.⁸ Conservatives, on the other hand believed Earth to be inhabited by a vastly superior race, capable and intentionally masking their existence from Martians, for whatever reason. As a result, they recommend more peaceful establishments of contact with Earth. The Elites win most battles, but this war isn't over.

There are differences between the Martians and the Earthlings. The Martians are at best two-thirds our size, because of the smaller gravity on Mars. (***)Put in footnote - Early encounters with Earth men's superior physiques helped stamped the "god-like" authority over the Martians. Do you also want to put a footnote to how much smaller Mars is compared to earth?). They do not have the troubles of earthquakes and tsunamis without tectonic plates. However, they frequently deal with huge dust and rain storms and troubles from the skies.

Courtesy of their relatively thin atmosphere, asteroids and meteoroids frequently crash onto Mars. Thus, they developed effective technologies to safeguard their cities from the rampage during meteor showers.

At home, many rules and laws were written pertaining to Mars. One that proved important over the years was Clause 74, which prohibited the use of offensive weaponry against the Martians unless they threaten the existence of human beings.

Mission Gaia X has been the greatest controversy on Earth. Some cry for non-intervention of the Martians' lives as they have a right to live independently. Others seek openness with them, to declare our existence. Gareth and Gregory's descendents were in supporters of the latter. One of them was Gerlane.

Mission Gaia X had no termination date. In the last 50 years, the Martians have grown ambitious and uncontrollable. It is an experiment that has gone out-of-hand.

⁸ In the story – The Elites are the "scientists" of the Martians, an organisation (they have vast numbers of supporters) which comes up with the best technologies in all subjects – consumer technologies, war technologies, etc. Their space department's most pressing question is to why there is no intelligent life on Earth – it is much more hospitable than Mars. They have been sending many probes and droids to Earth, hoping to uncover the reasons to their queries.

Despite the FoN and ISSA's imposing a world-wide ban, many people still send signals reaching out to the Martians, hinting at our existence.

But everything changed in 4025.

Xinjiang, China, Earth, E.Y. 3978.

The sun started rising on the horizon, its golden rays reflecting off the cool desert soil. Chinese spy deployments laid patiently, disguised between clumps of dried grass.

They were anticipating the arrival of a Martian exploration droid. Each teams had a radio signal receivers and interceptors with them.

The Martians were sending new droids, after the ‘success’ of the previous droid which landed ten years ago. Earth’s satellites predicted that the droids will land in the Chinese deserts in Xinjiang, Rio de Janerio in Brazil, Eastern Antartica (near Kemp Land) and north of Sri Lanka in the Bay of Bengal.

The toughest challenge was to intercept the droid heading for Rio, which was expected to land in the bustling city if it wasn’t stopped. The Brazilians must intercept and disable it from the air.

Only the droids at the Bay of Bengal and Antarctica enjoyed relative freedom, while being constantly tracked for no discovery of mankind.

East Sahara, Earth, E.Y. 3992.

The Martians sent two droids, this time carrying mining and military equipment. The droids roamed freely, unaware of the tight surveillance from the regional government.

The two droids were wandering on? over? the landscape. The mining droid was digging up samples. All of a sudden, a rare Saharan horned viper attacked the disturbing droids from its burrow.

The military droid had no sympathy. A laser beam charred the snake.

Similar incidents had been recorded, the latest involving nearly a whole pack of hyenas.

Leaders on earth are viewing these Martian incursions as a threat. The newer droids were tougher to intercept. Finally, all the droids were seized by governments around the world, and only edited signals were sent to Mars ever since. However, the sheer amount of editing was unsustainable even with human technology. Slowly, governments shut off the droids, reporting that they were damaged in natural disasters.

The determined Martians intensified their droid missions with new and improved technology. The increasing droid incidents were taking a toll on the FoN and the ISSA. Human existence, or inexistence to the Martians, is becoming a threat.

Earth, E.Y. 4025, 18 June.

Mission Gaia X is declared by FoN and ISSA as a threat to human existence, and they have decided to launch one of Earth's most advanced missiles at the Martians, the inter-planetary ballistic missile, in the name of Clause 74. It reaches Martian soil on 7 August.

Siberia, Earth, E.Y. 4025, 7 August

The five rockets descended slowly as their parachutes fan out like the leaves of palm trees. It was evening in Siberia, and the Sun hung low on the horizon, casting an orange hue familiar to the Martians.

“Anyone awake?” A scientist called out to his roommates. Silence. He pressed the comms button beside his bunk, trying to contact officers in the other rooms. “Yea Dr. Thom, Tango⁹ One getting up” the speaker muffled.

The rockets let out a large boom. The landing gears groan under the rockets’ weight. Thom struggles in his bunk, but the gravity overcomes him or was it the weight of his own secret mission. He devoted his life to research Earth, this mission represents the hopes for peaceful contact with any intelligent lifeform on Earth. The dream he had since five rang louder these last few days.

~

The rockets lay still for two full days, as the Martians acclimatise to the stronger gravity and thicker atmosphere of Earth. The fact that they were in space for about five months did not help. On the dawn of the third day, they emerge from their protective shells and started inflating tents to serve as their functional bases.

Over the course of a week the Martians send scouts to explore the Siberian wilderness, with small rover vehicles and equipment. Thom himself was scouring the landscape for the best location to set up his transmitter.

All this while they were carefully watched by the Russian government and all signals to and from Mars have been filtered.

⁹ The Martians refer to “team” as “tango”.

Siberia, Earth, E.Y. 4025, 15 Aug.

Tango One discovered fresh foot tracks near their base.

Thom excitedly sent the photographs back to Mars. Analytics confirmed that the tracks belonged to a species of man similar to the Martians, only bigger. *These tracks are those I have been seeing in my dreams!*

Twenty minutes after Thom sent his photographs, a Russian battalion surrounded the makeshift Martian base. They cut off the Martians' communications and overrode it. The Martians were captured, all 25 crew including 15 soldiers.

Thom was a Conservative. Under his command, they did not engage their weaponry.

Radios from the Russians blare¹⁰ "Stand down! We do not want to fight."

An Earth man emerge one of the Russian mobile columns. Gerlane stepped forward and waited. Thom, flanked by his lieutenants walked up to meet the looming man.

"You are finally here." Smiled Professor Gerlane. "Let's get started, we've got a war to stop."

The first official meeting of Martians and Earthlings.

¹⁰ The Russians translated their speech to English.

Olympose, Mars, M.Y. 1025.

Search and rescue teams hopelessly plow through the mess of Olympose.

“Sir,” a fellow search and rescue colleague radios, “we found the BLACKBOX.”

A radio station, Mars, M.Y. 1025. Two days after the Olympose incident.

“Sir, we received a radio signal from outer space.”

“Establish contact”

Beeps and static ramble on in the speakers. After a few minutes the engineer manages to lock on a right frequency for the signal.

“Locate the source. We might be famous if we find aliens.”

It is a message on loop.

“– and seek peace with you. We will not interfere with your activities. *Beep*. Good morning, we are the inhabitants of the planet Earth. We...”

Everyone in the room looks puzzled. The engineer starts to break out in sweat. He picks up his phone to give a call.

“Ha ha” the boss laughs. “This must be a joke! Those protesters, they think that the Earth is inhabited and they’re trying to send us radio signals to –”

“Umm sir,” the engineer calls out, swallowing hard, with his eyes wide open in disbelief. “All our stations received the same message.”

“No way. No. Our droids never disco –”

‘But the signals are from Earth...’

The message goes viral.

Within two hours, *The Press* receives over a billion views on their morning post regarding the anonymous message from Earth.

‘The message glosses over the fact that the Earthlings wish to have a peaceful co-existence with us, and that it was one of their rogue officials who sent the missile to Olympos.’

Have humans evolved just to have wars?

Earth, E.Y. 4030.

*Breaking News*¹¹

“With an overwhelming agreement from all Heads of States, the landmark agreement was reached to abolish Clause 74. An insertion was included for Earth to declare the 4025 attack, on Olympose, Mars, as an inhumane act and Earth shall do its utmost to help Mars rebuild. Henceforth Mars shall be declared an independent state from Earth and the two human races will cooperate and collaborate for the improvement of ALL of mankind. United we stand, divided we fall. ”

¹¹ This was inspired from the World War II statement regarding the atomic bomb droppings on Japan.

Epilogue

The Future. M.Y. 2525.

Fast forward a millennium. Mars' technology has levelled with Earth's. The war a thousand years ago has long been forgotten. The Earthlings now considered the Martians as a different race, as brothers.

With the two races working together, they achieved huge successes and advancements nobody knew was possible. They mastered instantaneous communication through the fantastic combination of quantum entanglement, and cramming information through the gap in spacetime, via Einstein's Rosen bridges, popularly known as wormholes.

Even though it was long deemed by the Earthlings as some "old theory", the Martians spearheaded the project and managed to establish direct instantaneous communication with Earth. This was the missing link preventing Earth from exploring deep interstellar space. Before this, even with the seemingly instantaneous speed of electromagnetic waves, the waves take a whopping 20 hours to cover just the radius of the solar system.

With the Martians' invention on instantaneous communication in M.Y. 1996, space exploration boomed. By M.Y. 2525, both Mars and Earth reached interstellar space and have explored the solar system far and wide.

The cooperation of the two races brought unprecedented expansion and growth. The heroic collaboration of Gerlane and Thom has been historically celebrated since.

United we stand. Divided we fall.