
Soap Opera

by Mike Rozak
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*This story contains sexual references.
It is intended for mature audiences only.*

Elk as a hostage



Pacing

I was locked in a metal box, 2.2-meters high, and 4.4-meters square. The box was located in the basement of building. I occasionally heard people talking to one-another above.

The walls, ceiling, floor, and door of the box were an unpainted flat-panel grey-“steel”.

I paced around the cell.

The box’s only-door was offset towards one corner, perfectly flush with the wall. It had a small shiny-steel loop-handle. I had tried opening the door, but it wouldn’t budge.

I paced around the cell.

Lighting was provided by battery-powered glow-sheets glued to the ceiling. They had motion-sensors attached that dimmed the lights when I didn’t move. The lights never shut off.

I paced around the cell.

There was no air vent. The air was stale, and reeked from a few days of body, urine, and faecal odours.

I sat-down against the wall, my knees bent.

In the room was a blue bed-sheet, and a very-thick orange comforter. A urine-bottle, dustpan, and brush were in the other corner. I had scooped my faeces into the dustpan. Also in the corner were an empty plastic water-bottle, and a wax-paper sandwich wrapper from yesterday’s feed.

This place was too small.

I wondered when the Hominids were going to let me out.

I would have slept to-pass the time more-quickly. Sleeping was difficult though. The box’s air was stale and fetid. The lights never shut-off completely. Despite the thick comforter they gave me to sleep on, I couldn’t rest my head properly. My antlers were too large. If I lay on my back, my head was tilted forward,

uncomfortably pinching my neck. If I lay on my side, my head was tilted to the left, and my right antler-base would ache because of the asymmetrical weight put on my right antler.

At least the Hominids didn't cut off my antlers; Hominid slavers sometimes did that.

Yesterday

Yesterday, sometime that may-have-been morning, afternoon, or evening, someone opened the door to my cell.

I was awake, ruminating, when I saw the door slowly-open outwards. A Hominid man, with black hair, looked at me awkwardly as he peaked through the cracked-door. He might have been nervous, but I couldn't accurately tell from his Hominid face.

I was far-enough away from the door that I would have to stand up to get near him. I decided not to move so that he wouldn't be frightened by my actions. I was considerably larger than him.

The man placed a small wax-paper bundle on the ground by the door, and left a small bottle of water sitting next to it.

He quietly closed the door.

Food, finally.

I stood up, my antlers nearly touching the 2.2-meter high ceiling. I grabbed the food and water from near the door, and returned to my bundled-up comforter, where I sat-down.

Since I was thirsty, I first tried to open the 700-millilitre water container. My hands have two large fingers, a distant thumb, and a

smaller pinkie. My fingers didn't have enough purchase for me to unscrew the small sky-blue water-bottle cap.



I put the water aside out of frustration.

I grabbed and unwrapped the wax-paper. Inside was a sandwich made with a white-bread bun. The filling was a thin slice of ham, or maybe some dinosaur-cattle meat. It had mustard, and no greens.

Having been starved and dehydrated for the last few days, I quickly-ate the sandwich. The bread-bakery they used produced decent-tasting bread. Their ham was distinctly flavourless.

I returned my attention to the water. I once-again tried to unscrew it. That didn't work.

I rolled my eyes nose-wards in mild-disgust and annoyance.

How was I supposed to open the water? I needed to drink now. The Hominids might not check on me for another day or two.

Teeth might work.

Not my front teeth though. I have a sizable gap between my front teeth and rear ones. I used the water-bottle's neck to force my left lip-corner as far-back as possible, where I clamped the water-bottle cap between the first of my rear teeth. With two hands, I unscrewed the bottle from the cap.

Ten bottle-twists later, the cap fell-off in my mouth, and I drank the water.

One small sandwich and 700 millilitres was not enough. I was still hungry and thirsty.

Three days ago (my time)

Several-thousand years ago, we would have arrived by sailing-ship.

Our spaceplane landed at the prearranged location. Its exit-door opened-up in front of us. We had a twenty-centimetre down-step onto the pristinely-cut lawn of the reception mansion.

We Elk are very traditional, at least at formal gatherings and ceremonies.

Before the door opened, I was already-positioned in front of the meter-wide exit-door, with the three Elk-women envoys behind me, in a perpendicular line. If the Hominids were going to shoot, they'd hit the largest and front-most object first, which was me. My collapse would provide a few-seconds worth of distraction for the Envoys to scatter.

The Hominids weren't going to shoot. Several-thousand years ago, Elk archers might-have shot me though, as I appeared on the deck of my longship.

I was the first to walk-out of the spaceplane. I stopped about four people-spaces in front of the doorway.

My role was simply to look tall. The tradition goes back thousands of years, when men were big-and-brawny, and women needed defending. At the time, each Elk-man was allowed three wives because two-thirds of the men had hacked-themselves to death with scimitars.

In the thousand-years since, Elk-men became less brawny, and less-interested in being hacked-to-death.

We weren't sure why the Hominids wanted a full ceremony. If it weren't for their full ceremony, hopefully including a feast later, which there wouldn't be, then I wouldn't be required here. I was selected because I was available, and because three-hundred generations ago, my great uncle's second grandfather was the king's little-brother.

The three envoys walked out of the spaceplane-doorway single-file, and repositioned themselves in a perpendicular-line behind me.

All that could be seen of our spaceplane from the outside was a doorway looking into our spaceplane's reality. But for a faint doorframe-outline and some forming fog, our spaceplane's exterior was invisible. As expected, when we had all exited onto the lawn, I heard and felt the spaceplane disappear out of our three-dimensional space.

We tried to look stately and elegant; we were undoubtedly being filmed by invisible cameras, for a news-segment and for posterity.

The Elk-woman to my right stamped her foot, signalling that all was clear... and that all three women were prepared for the slow walk up to the reception-mansion.

I began walking at a stately pace, the women following in a line behind me.

“Walk a bit faster,” came a telepath.

I walked at a slightly less-stately pace.

A hundred meters away, stood three red-headed Hominid women at the top of the wide entrance-steps to the reception-mansion. They wore ground-touching white gowns. The woman in the centre held a bouquet of flowers.

The bouquet verified that they were being filmed, and so were we.

Most of our walk was on the soft grass. Five meters from the stone-step entrance, we stepped onto a bitumen loop-driveway. It would-have allowed chauffeured limousines to drop guests off at the mansion.

Two meters before the bottom of the grey-green stone steps, we paused.

The centre red-head stood slightly in-front of the other two.

The Hominid woman on the left held a scroll, which she unravelled. She began reading a long and lengthy formal greeting, that included a traditional poem, and various translations of *“We welcome you”* in traditional languages.

Every little twitch and blink that I made was being recorded by the cameras. The invisible camera-bots were undoubtedly zooming around us to get the best angles.

Half-way through the lengthy welcome, the woman on the right took-up the greeting without missing a beat. She had no scroll to read from. The woman on the left was still reading

silently. This was a symbolic gesture to indicate that no telepathy-blockers were being used. The woman on the right was speaking what the woman on the left was reading silently to herself.

After the formal greeting was finished, the Elk-woman behind me stomped her foot, indicating that I should proceed.

We weren't expected to speak a response here. In our tradition, I would have called-out loudly, using a non-word that sounds vaguely like "Ah-oo-kk", perhaps spelled "orc". Our delegation would then-have entered the house for a feast, followed by discussions. Since this ceremony was meant for Hominid television, we adhered more to their ancient protocols than ours.

My job was to look tall. I didn't have to say anything.

The Elk-women weren't expected to speak anything until meetings took place inside.

I walked slowly and stately up the steps. The three Elk-women followed behind me in a line.

The three red-headed women walked backwards as we advanced. I slowed my pace a-little so they wouldn't trip and fall. The Gothic-arch entryway was wide enough for the three Hominid women to walk backwards, abreast.

A minute later, my antlers cleared the top of the arch by a few centimetres. I expected to have to bend down.

The three Elk-envoys followed.

I hoped that I wouldn't sneeze. I had done so once before.

When we were all inside, the red-headed women turned around, and led us down the centre red-carpet of the great hall. We followed, keeping pace with them.

About midway down the unfurnished great-hall (benches were against the walls), I stopped as scripted. The three Elk-women

behind me also halted. The red-headed women proceeded to the end of the hall, where they exited via two doors on opposite ends of the far wall.

Several formally-dressed Hominid men stood against the left and right sides of the hall, not far from the two doors. As the red-headed women left, the sandy-brown-haired men approached to continue the ceremony.

The four men arranged themselves into a line in front of us, with a person-gap directly in front of me.

One of the white-dressed women returned from her doorway hideout. She walked forwards, stopped a length behind the men's line, and motioned for me to follow her.

I stepped through the line of the men, two to either side. The red-headed woman turned around, and I followed her. My role here was finished. I would-be led through one of the doors towards a retiring-room. I'd then be off-camera, and could sneeze without embarrassment.

This time, I was led through the right door. I had to duck so that my antlers wouldn't hit the doorframe. I didn't want any antler-height misjudgements to appear on Hominid news. Such accidents were photogenic, even for us.

Once underneath and through the doorway, I followed the woman to the right, down a carpeted hallway. We must have left soiled hoof-prints on their carpeting, I thought. That's the problem with disembarking your spaceplane over grass. Oh well, their security-concerns took precedence.

I followed slowly behind the woman. She quickly outpaced me, then stopped half-way down the hall. Turning around, the woman held her left hand at forty-five degrees, gesturing for me to enter

whatever room was there. I would spend a few hours in the room while the envoys were doing envoy-things.

Meanwhile, all-hell broke loose in the great hall. I didn't see or hear anything. Nor did I receive a telepathic alert.

Two minutes later, I reached the doorway to the room where I was supposed to wait. I turned to my right, ducked low, and walked into my metal box.

The door closed behind me.

The room was distinctly more Spartan than I expected. I thought that I'd at-least be deposited in a small dining-room. Instead, my "room" was the metal-box that I described at the beginning of this story.

Some blankets were thrown slapdash against the corner. I didn't jump to any conclusions though.

After half-an-hour, I began suspecting a trap.

After about an hour, I tried opening the door, but it wouldn't let me out.

I knocked.

An hour later I knocked again.

Soon after, I felt the box being extradimensionally moved. I was in for a spaceplane-ride to some other planet of the Hominids' choosing.

The urine bottle, dustpan, and dust-brush were hidden underneath the blankets.

I have been in this box for the last three days.

The box was almost-certainly loaded onto a deep-time spaceplane. Two days of travel to me, times twenty real-days per

day inside the ship, and I could have been transported a thousand galaxies away.

Eight days ago

I trudged exercise-weary up the bitumen-path to my house. I had just finished an hour-long nature-walk along “*The Garden Path*”. It meandered down the hill from my front door, into a valley near a brook, up to a small ridge, down a bit, and then back up to my house. My house wasn’t at the apex of the path; it was one of many upper middle-class houses along the walk. I was just-about the only person in my neighbourhood that actually used the walk though.

My house was co-owned by my sister, and her two nieces. It was a large log-cabin house, three-quarters of the way up a forested hill. The house wasn’t quite a log cabin. It used log-cabin construction techniques, but the logs were milled into mostly-even capped-elliptical lengths. One of the walls in the house was authentically made of whole-logs with white chinking, but that was mostly for effect.

I entered the house through the extra-wide front door.

The house’s interior was one large void, two-stories high, with a gabled ceiling. The beams were exposed.

To my right, a staircase attached to the wall of the trapezoidal building, climbed to a mezzanine.

Below the mezzanine, in front of me, was a kitchen, where one of my nieces was preparing some food. Beyond the kitchen was a storeroom and toilet.

To the right of the storeroom's doorway, was a door that led to a separate bedroom pod, where my sister and her two nieces slept.

The mezzanine half-floor had a toilet, as well as a television and piano room. I slept up there.

My other niece was sitting at our large mahogany-table, in front and to the left of me. My niece's homework-papers were sprawled-out in front of her.

"Good morning," I greeted semi-formally, since this was the first time I had seen them today.

Both my nieces looked-up briefly and replied, *"Hi, |auh"*. (*"|auh"* is pronounced with a glottal thump/plosive (the *"|"*), followed by a highly aspirated *"au"*, and an expelled breath, *"hh"*.)

Hanging on the wall to the left of the table, was a small dining-room television. The morning news was showing, attracting my attention. The television was too-small for me to see clearly, and the volume was a too-low for understanding, but I could see and hear enough to get the gist:

War was upon us. Hominoid militaries had already invaded dozens of our planets. People were being evacuated. A scene of pandemonium was shown, most-likely a queue for an evacuation-spaceplane. Crying children were shown. A clip of menacingly-hovering Hominid battleships was next. A video of a few explosions in the sky was displayed. There were no nukings yet.

"Father," spoke my niece in the kitchen, even though I was her uncle. I was ceremonially shoehorned into the role of father and big-brother, by my elder sister, and her two children, depending on their whims.

"Telephone call," she alerted.

"I'm on my way."

In a male-Elk stately pace, I walked into the kitchen, behind the counter.

My niece handed me the phone:

“Hello, Jauhh speaking.”

That’s when I learned that I needed to pull-out my ceremonial garb, get a taxi-ride to the local airport, and make my way to the sub-capital. From there, three envoys and I were to-be flown to meet with the Hominids.

Theco as a hostage



(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thecodontosaurus>)

The illustration is misleading. Thecos' skin-colour is less saturated than I have painted. Their skin-colour is a "smooth" colour (like moss), while their feathers are spectrographically "sharp" colours (like LEDs).

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_spectrum,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Light_emitting_diode)

Farewell dinner

The sunken table was set. All of the cutlery, glasses, and plates were arranged. Half of the food was already laid out.

Our dining-room, living-room, and kitchen were combined into one large 40-meter by 40-meter one-story room, all open, with no support posts. The room's ceiling was a pyramidal roof with a 2.14-degree angle.

The floors were white marble-like stone. The ceiling and concrete walls were painted white. Arched windows ran along the east wall, looking out onto our vineyard. The west wall (where the sun rose) had double glass-doors looking onto a patio, and six arched-windows looking beyond, to our mandarin-orange orchard. The kitchen was on the north. The south-wall had arched-windows near the corners, and a centred entryway to the sleeping-adjunct.

It was night. Fake-candles illuminated the dining-room table. Wall sconces with fake candles highlighted the walls, and provided ambient lighting.

The dining-room table was on the east side of the room, somewhat north of centre. It was placed in a marbled sunken-depression, about half a meter deep. The table occupied the entire area of the depression, except for a "run-around" wide enough for leg room, or for a child to stand in.

The tabletop stood about half a meter above the floor level. It was "glass", subdivided into sixteen one-meter sections that could easily be lifted-out and cleaned.

Special-occasion kneeling cushions were placed around the table's depression, ready for our family to kneel-down and dine.

I ferried just-out-of-the-oven hot food to the table, a plate full of archaeopteryx legs, about the size of turkey legs. They had been

marinated and cooked in vinegar, then glazed with honey, and baked until golden brown.

Our Raptor servants usually did the cooking, dining set-up, and cleaning. Since this was a special occasion, we did all of the work ourselves... Except that Chin, who was (and is) an exceptional cook, prepared the food for us, and left us instructions on how to bake the dishes. (Theco are evolved from thecodontosaurus, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thecodontosaurus>. Raptors are evolved from velociraptors, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Velociraptor>.)

I next laid out the hard-boiled emu-eggs, cut in half, and salted with paprika. A spray of light-oil prevented them from drying-out and turning colour. (We have smaller Emu's than those on Earth-Sol.)

The sticky sweet-potatoes with cumin were already on the table.

Just to double-check: The red wine, our own, was already in a carafes.

Everything was ready.

I walked to the double glass-doors on the west wall, and opened them up. People were outside talking.

"The food is ready everyone!" I loudly spoke, with celebration in my voice.

Our family and friends walked in. They ogled the food, and took places (kneeled) by the table. My niece hopped-down into the depression. She couldn't reach the table when kneeling, so she'd eat standing... which was no inconvenience. We often stood for hours on end.

Someone put on bird-song "music": *"Finches and Larks, Volume III"*

We all proceeded to eat, building-up a conversation as dinner progressed.

“So, are you ready for your interviews?” asked my mother’s friend.

I smiled and squinted, and nodded. *“I’m nervous. I don’t know what to expect.”*

“When we were on the patio, your mother was telling me about your interviews. Do you know why the Horses are going to interview you?”

“No.” Pause. *“What are they like?”*

“We have certain dis-agreements with them. We have been at war with them a few times.”

I was going to answer with a question when my niece interrupted with, *“Buh-buh,”* for the sweet-potatoes. One of my mothers pushed the potatoes towards my niece, and helped her spoon them onto her plate.

I returned to the conversation. *“What would they expect of me?”*

“Expect a sharp grilling from them. They will see if you harbour any resentment towards their species.”

I mentioned the other races that were supposed to interview me. *“The large Tyrannosaurs are also going to interview me.”*
(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyrannosaurus>)

My mother’s friend nodded. *“They’re to be expected there.”*

“And maybe the Eora[ptors].” (Eora are evolved from Eoraptors, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eoraptor>.)

My two mothers were also paying attention. One commented, *“The list is ***flexible***. They will spring surprises on you.”*

My mother’s friend shifted the conversation. *“This conflict seems to be deeper than the news portrays.”*

My mother didn't seem to have told her friend everything. "Yes," I answered, "*The work-position I am interviewing for is as a liaison for the wall-formation, which will soon be coming through.*"

Property walk-around

I awoke just after sunrise the next morning, the finches calling to one-another. My hangover wasn't that bad, just a slight headache.

We had talked and dined for two hours. Our guests left. Half-an-hour to clean the table and load the dishwasher, and we all went to bed. My niece would be cranky today.

My bed was a futon mattress, set in a half-meter-deep depression in the room's white marbled-floor. My bedroom was 5-meters by 5-meters, with the same architectural style as the living room, but with a skillion roof. The bedroom's eastern wall had double glass-doors leading outside. Opposite the doors was a 5-meter "S" privacy-hallway leading into the foyer-hallway.

All of our bedrooms were off-of the foyer-hallway. The house's massive wooden double-door entryway was on the south wall. The foyer-hallway's north well led to the main-room.

In my bedroom, I rolled onto my stomach and stood up. I stepped up, and out of bed.

It was a crisp, sunny morning, about 18-degrees Celsius. The temperature would get up to 25-degrees Celsius today.

I walked-out into the foyer-hallway, and entered the bathroom to my right. I washed my face, brushed my teeth, and comb-picked

my head-feathers and arm-feathers. The previous week, I had my feathers cut into a short business-like style at the salon. I had been growing my feathers longer for fashion reasons, but the testing changed everything. A business-style was necessary.

My clothes hung in the bathroom wardrobe. I selected a deep-red vest to compliment my orange-red feathers. If I had been out-of-feather, I might have gone for a blue vest. My skirt was a cool yellow, with cream-coloured floral embroidery.

A Raptor servant walked past as I exited the bathroom.

I turned-right from the bathroom door into the main-room. On the way, I glanced at the dried-reed pot-decorations to make sure they were free of cobwebs.

A bowl of fruit was placed on the kitchen-counter. I ate two melon-grapes there, and carried one with me as I walked-out onto the patio. The double glass-doors had already been opened by the servants.

The yellow sun had just risen above the mandarin-orange trees.

I popped the melon-grape into my mouth.

A beetle buzzed by my head.

One last look-around before my trip. After several weeks of planned interviews, I expected to be assigned directly to a spaceplane, without first returning home.

My job would be to travel around with a delegation and smooth-out issues that arose on Saurian planets. Theco are very-good intermediaries, much better in the role than other Saurians. We do our best to understand what people's issues are, on all levels, and on all sides.

I had an "Intermediary" degree from the local university, as well as eight years of experience managing our villa and orchards.

Though I didn't need to inspect and manage the orchards today, I couldn't NOT manage them out of habit. I only had a few hours left of my old life.

I walked towards the western morning-sun, into the mandarin-orange orchard.

Ripe-mandarins were already being harvested by Raptor servants. A Raptor-woman was picking mandarins from the tree, and placing them into a diagonal shoulder-bag she was carrying.

"Hello," I politely greeted her.

"Morning, ma'am".

I walked past her.

She continued to pick fruit.

Another worker was ahead, but since she was in a different row, I didn't need to greet her.

About twenty mandarin-trees further along my walk, and I entered the coffee orchard. Our coffee bushes formed an "L" that hemmed-in the mandarin-orange orchard.

The coffee-beans were still green, just ripening. They would be picked after the mandarin-orange season was finished.

I wandered around the coffee-bushes for awhile. I usually enjoyed this. The bushes were arranged maze-like to maximize their yield and quality. Because the servants were working on the mandarin trees, the coffee grove was still and quiet. The birds had also quieted-down. I soaked-in the sound of grasshoppers whizzing around.

Further along, we had enough grapes to make a few-thousand bottles of wine, as well as grapes for eating: Small red-purple grapes, and lime-green melon-grapes. Beyond the grape-lines were the servants' housing, small bungalows with communal showers.

I never followed the same morning path. As an orchard manager, part of my job was to look for weeds, termite nests, plants that needed pruning, fallen grape-suspension fencing, and any other unnoticed work-items.

Today, I didn't walk all of the way to the grape-lines. I turned-right just before the grape lines. This allowed me to enjoy another half- kilometre of slow meandering in-and out of the coffee-shrub maze, until I came to our crushed-rock driveway.

On the other side was of the driveway was a mowed lawn. Many people kept sheep on their lawn. We didn't, because sheep smell too-much, and they continually bleat. We didn't need the sheep, since we had enough meat to trade. Beyond our servants' housing were our cattle. Our archaeopteryx shed was in the opposite direction. Looking towards the house, I could just-see the shed's roof beyond the orchards.

I walked onto the low-cut lawn. My bare-feet enjoyed the feel of the spongy soil. I considered lying down for a last roll in the grass, but that would mess up my clothes.

Instead, I stood for a short bask in the sun. I might not get a good sun-bake for awhile. After fifteen minutes of exposing my arms, I turned around so the back of my head would receive some sun. Its skin would be healthier that way.

While I am writing this, Hominids are mind-reading the description of the villa and farm from Mike, trying to locate it on my planet (out of millions), and threatening to spray my orchards with pesticides, or to release pests, or to blow-up the main house.

To add to that, the Hominids have suddenly-and-hypocritically become vehemently anti-slavery. Theco have slaves who are treated slightly better than the Aussie slaves. Aussies treat their

slaves much better than the Hominids, approximately two Earth-standard-deviations better.

Spaceplane to the testing

My taxi arrived at the scheduled time. My two sisters and my niece saw me off to the airport.

The 20-kilometer trip wound through orchards and woods. I was driven directly up to a small triangular commuter-plane, sitting on the tarmac. It was about 20-meters long. The spaceplane would take me to the testing building-complex, where I would meet representatives from the other races.

After paying my driver, I climbed-up some movable stairs, and boarded the spaceplane via the centre-door on the flat side. The spaceplane was one floor, with 50-ish business-class seats. Horizontal oval-windows lined the walls at eye-height, providing a view.

I stowed my bags in the half-height cabinets built-against the flat side.

I was the first person aboard, about half-an-hour before the door would close. I sat, and watched as other people boarded. I might have known them; our community was small. Some of them might be my competitors at the interviews.

About twelve other people boarded, most of them Theco, but some of them were Raptors.

In the end, I didn't recognize any of them. Not all of the people would be travelling to "the testing", either.

From what I knew of the testing, our permanent records were to be scrutinized. Our minds were to be thoroughly read. We were going to be tested against our instant-reactions to different races, as well as longer-term reactions. The Four-legged Horses, I heard, were some of the most-abusive interviewers.

Unannounced races might also show-up to test us. They would be selected to stir antagonistic-feelings in us. The individuals might-well role-play a hostile persona to test our reactions. I hoped they wouldn't put me in front of a Raptor male; I hated them. They reeked. And they abhorred the Theco, especially landowners like me. And they were SCARY when they became upset.

Some of what I had heard-and-read about the interviews must have been intentional misinformation. Surprise elements would undoubtedly be included, testing our unplanned reactions.

A flight attendant closed the door. The flight would be a short half-hour trip, only travelling a few stars over.

I didn't expect to be returning home after the interviews. I had enough clothes for a couple-week-long trip. I would purchase whatever clothes I needed. I might be provided a few uniforms made by a seamstress. In a multiracial society, everyone's shape was completely different. Clothing stores don't make sense.

The work I was interviewing-for was supposed to be as a liaison-officer between the coordinating races, and people (mostly Saurians) on various planets. Some of the coordinating races would be frightening-looking. Or, the coordinating-races might have been in conflict with the planet's population in the past.

As a liaison, I would act as a marionette “video-phone” on behalf of the coordinating races. They would walk, move, gesture, speak, listen, and see through me.

If any of the configuration-militaries needed to land on a planet, I might be called-upon to minimize the number of indigenous people who would have to meet (and be frightened by) the militaries.

Languages would not be a problem because I would have language-translator implants installed. They are very-capable speakers, and can verbalize most languages. Telepathy was expected to work also, though it could be less-reliable than speaking.

Meanwhile, the spaceplane had taken off. Through the windows I could see a bright-lit fog. The sky then darkened as we passed into another space. We wouldn't need to enter hyperspace for this trip.

A weird field-feeling.

Blank.

Prison cell

Discomfort.

Why is my head leaning-against a grey-steel wall?

Gravity was also wrong.

Was I going to fall-off the wall if I moved?

Maybe.

I didn't move.

My tongue was very dry.

Several minutes later...

I rechecked my assumption about falling off the wall by moving my arm.

No problem. I didn't fall off anything.

I slowly propped myself up with my right arm. The wall turned into an angled floor.

Two minutes later...

I looked around.

I was lying-on the floor of a prison cell, about 2-meters by 2-meters. The wall by my feet had a 1-meter wide barred prison-door. A grey-steel bench was in the corner.

A few minutes later...

I rolled onto my stomach, kneeled up, and then stood-up. The floor still seemed to be angled.

Across the hallway, I could see another prison-cell like mine. It was empty.

I didn't think to think who I was.

The barred door didn't open.

To the right, was a third prison cell, also empty.

To the left was a long hallway.

Why was I in prison?

This wasn't a Theco prison.

What had happened?

I had just boarded the taxi.

"One of them is awake," telepathed an Aussie.

"Don't worry," he continued. "We have you in temporary detention. Refreshments will NOT be served on this flight."

"Click," was a telepathed word.

(I was just informed: One of the other interviewees woke-up soon afterwards, and thought she was being tested as part of the interview. The Aussies verbally-mockingly-abused her for hours thanks to the misconception.)

How did I get from the taxi to here?

Distraction...

I looked around the room to see what I could find. It was empty of everything except for a grey-steel bench.

What was I wearing?

I looked over my attire.

I was in my underwear. The thought that I should be embarrassed by being only in my underwear flitted across my mind.

I remembered boarding a spaceplane. I might-have recalled it taking off.

I telepathed a demand to speak to a lawyer.

I was thumped with a chuckle, followed by a click.

I checked my telepathy implants to see if anyone-else (non-hostile) was aboard. Some people were above me, but communication was blocked. Communications to the outside were also blocked.

I was fairly certain I was in a large spaceplane.

Bastards.

Who had kidnapped me?

I vaguely recalled the telepathic message from minutes before: Aussies.

Did it make sense that they would kidnap me?

Of course it did. They were the same as the Hominids, just a few-hundred-thousand years older. They would be allies, if not co-partners, in this war.

I hadn't heard about them being at our end of the taurosphere though. They were in concentrations up top, and to the north-east.

Why would they kidnap me?

They might have been pirating arbitrary spaceplanes to acquire money-valuable hostages. The spaceplane I was in was very low-tech, and easy to grab.

I may have specifically been targeted for my ransom value, which might be a few-million dollars.

We might have been shot down by the Hominids. The Aussies may have salvaged our space-floating bodies.

Our group may have been targeted so we couldn't reach the interviews, costing our side resources.

Or we could be taken hostage for interrogation purposes.

It was unlikely we would be taken as slaves. Both the Aussies and Hominids preferred mammalian slaves.

I thought through each of these possibilities, and tried to figure out how to minimize the negatives.

If I were taken hostage for money, I wouldn't be ransomed. Ransom-payments weren't allowed by this war's agreements.

If the Hominoids took me as a prisoner-of-war so I couldn't act as an envoy for the configuration, then I'd be stuck in some internment camp for years. I would have to make myself useful-enough that I didn't end up in a chain-gang.

The same conclusions held if the Aussies just happened to wander by our destroyed spaceplane and collect our floating bodies.

Would I get rescued? Not likely. The war encompassed the entire Saurian zone at our end of the taurosphere.

Shit!

I realized that the Aussies could transport me all of the way to the Aussie zone at the far end of the tauro-taurosphere. I could be there for years.

What did the Aussies do with Saurians when they caught them? I didn't know. Hominids were known to torture us, and/or enslave us into hard labour.

What were my other options?

If I were very compliant, the Hominoids might not be too-harsh on me.

If I was ornery, they were more-likely to chain-gang me, but they were also more-likely to kill me. If I were killed, I, without my body, would be returned home.

Crap.

I eventually lay-down. The steel bench/bed wasn't long-enough for me to sleep on, so I laid-down on the floor. I fell asleep, my head next to the door.

The mansion



|auh: Measuring up

The door opened timidly. Fresh air entered.

I was sitting down opposite the door, my back to the wall, and knees up.

I expected to be handed some food, and then to have the door shut again. Instead, the black-haired Hominid-man wedged the door open with a rubber door-wedge. He stepped back, and cautiously motioned for me to step out.

I stood up, and walked out slowly so as not to frighten him. I had to duck my head when walking through the doorway.

The reception-mansion hallway was gone, as I somewhat expected. The box had been a clever capture-and-transportation trick.

I was now in a fluorescent-bulb-lit hallway constructed of foam-concrete walls. The construction was rather cheap. When not a hostage, I was normally a building engineer.

Unlike the very-long hallway from before, this new hallway was about 8-meters long, with a stairway going up to the left.

The Hominid man was stairwards, a few meters away from me. He motioned for me to follow as he backed up. He was clearly nervous about my size.

I followed at a slower pace than my usual gate, slowing down even-more as the man backed his way up the concrete staircase. The staircase didn't have any handrails. Regulations usually stipulated handrails on both walls. And the steps were too short; it was like walking up a children's staircase.

The man looked as though he thought he were taming a wild beast.

I followed the man up, into a kitchen. A small white-tiled kitchen-counter was on the wall opposite me. Double glass-doors opening onto a very-short brick patio were to my right. The windows were divided, which was unusual for Hominid buildings. We Elk always used divided windows to ensure that people wouldn't walk through them when they didn't see their reflection in the glass... which is a character-flaw caused by the laws of reflection, combined with eyes designed more for looking left-and-right than forward.

A small kitchen-table had been pushed to one side.

Three blue-clad guards stood around, holding their truncheons. They must have had guns somewhere behind their backs.

The dark-haired man stood out fashion-wise. He was dressed in a whitish button-down shirt with dark-brown trousers. He wore an oak-leaf-brown vest.

All of Hominid men looked VERY nervous.

What did they want me to do?

The black-haired man stood opposite me. He had obviously been "volunteered" for the task.

He very-intentionally looked at his vest and unbuttoned it. He pointed to me.

"No telepathy?" I telepathed.

No answer.

What did he want me to do?

I thought about his recent actions for a moment, and then Elk-smiled.

I also unbuttoned my vest. I was tempted to point back at him, but decided that the situation wasn't funny enough to warrant a joke.

The dark-haired man took-off his vest, and set it on the kitchen counter.

So, I took-off mine, and set it on the table.

If we were playing "undress", not only was he the wrong gender, but he was cheating. He still had a shirt underneath his vest, and I was now skin-only on-top.

I hoped he wasn't playing "undress".

Sure enough, he was. Looking a bit embarrassed, he undid his pants, and then took them off.

Sigh.

I wasn't wearing any underwear like he was.

Should I be obstinate and make him expose himself like he was going to do to me? Two-thirds of Elk males, the immature ones, had hacked-themselves to death with scimitars several-thousand years ago.

I unlatched my baggy pants, took them off, and stood proudly naked.

The black-haired man looked very uncomfortable at this point.

He next spread his arms horizontally, and spread-apart his legs a bit.

I did the same, as well as my joint-flexibility would allow.

Hominids have more-flexible joints.

One of the guards cautiously approached with a measuring tape. He nervously measured my arm-length, hand size, chest, and legs...

And even my privates.

I wasn't sure why I was being measured, but the last item went a bit too-far. Perhaps they wanted to sew me some new clothes.

After I was measured, I was led out the doorway on my left, across a hallway, and into a laundry room.

The men didn't hand-me my clothes back. My clothes disappeared from the kitchen while I was in the laundry.

Inside the laundry-room, I was handed a sandwich and a water-bottle. To emphasize my displeasure, I made sure the Hominids were watching while I unscrewed the blue-plastic water-bottle top with my teeth.

The men watched nervously as I ate.

They led me out of the room when I had finished eating. I tried to hand the empty water-bottle and wax-paper back to a guard, but he backed away. My left lip pulled-back in dismay. I set the empty bottle and wax-paper on a shelf in the laundry.

Ducking my head a few times, I was led back into my cell.

Someone had obviously been a zookeeper. In my cell were two bottles of water and one-more sandwich. They were incentives for me to return to my cage. The urine-bottle and dustpan had been emptied.

The door closed behind me.

I sighed.



Woong: Waking up in the mansion

When I awoke after a few days of travel, I at-first thought I was in the same 2-meter by 2-meter cell.

I was and I wasn't.

The cell-shape was exactly the same, except my new cell was made out of concrete. Given the mouldy wet-concrete smell, I must have been underground.

Empty prison-cells were in front of me, and to my right. The hallway no-longer travelled west. Instead, concrete steps led up.

I must have been extradimensionally pushed from a standard-shape cell in a spaceplane, into a terrestrial cell with the same shape.

Where was I?

Gravity seemed to be higher than normal.

It was mildly humid.

And chilly.

The prison-door was still locked.

My telepathy-signal was different. Telepathy had been muted before. Now telepathy was hostile towards me. When I tried telepathic communication, I was instantly negatively-reinforced with a thump.

Should I call out verbally?

I had been illegally taken prisoner, and then illegally transported, not-to-mention whatever happened to everyone else on the commuter spaceplane. I hadn't had anything to drink or eat for days.

These people weren't law-abiding, and they certainly weren't following the conventions of the war. By now, I should have met face-to-face with someone who would explain why I was detained.

I decided to remain quiet.

What did I now know about my circumstances?

I had been transported to a planet, and imprisoned in a basement.

Whoever did this had sufficient technology to capture the spaceplane I was on... which wouldn't require much technology. They must have hauled us out of the spaceplane while we were unconscious, and placed us into prison cells. Most-likely, they captured the plane in a multi-level sphere with whole-level extradimensional-decompression chambers.

They had technology that extradimensionally pushed me from their spaceplane into this hostage-cell.

How many years would I spend in this cell?

I tried to telepathically seek-out other people from the spaceplane, but was rebuked with a telepathic-thump.

Nothing happened for an hour.

I decided to lie down. Within a few minutes of lying on the floor, I was asleep.



Woong: Meeting the Hominid actors

I awoke a half a day later, as a guard's keys jangled while he unlocked my prison-cell door. He was dressed in navy blue, wearing a helmet with a protective plexiglass visor.

The door opened to the right, the guard standing safely behind it.

I stood up, and looked at him officially.

I tried telepathing to him.

I was blocked.

What language would he speak?

I hadn't seen any of their writing, so I couldn't guess. I didn't know if any of my implants would translate any Hominid languages. They knew some Alotian languages, I think. Many Hominid languages were similar.

What were my options?

I could try to grab the guard... He winced when I thought this. He must have had telepathy turned on, and had been listening to my thoughts.

I could bump up the security-encryption in my implants, but I didn't bother. If I bumped-up the security too-much and/or too-often, Hominid communication-technicians would computer-hack into them and decrypt my thoughts anyway.

I could stubbornly stay in the prison-cell.

Or, I could go left.

I considered the options for a minute, while glaring at the guard.

I could even do a ballet twirl. That would confuse him.

I decided to go left.

I walked up the concrete steps, and entered a library.

The library was panelled with plywood stained to look like it came from an entire tree. A dark wood-bookshelf with monochromatic (and dull-coloured) hardcover books was against the far wall. A divided window was to my left, overlooking a grassy-field. The wall to my right had light wood-panelling, a doorway, and a painting of a sailing ship.

Two embroidered sofas were in the room, one against the bookshelf, and one to my left. Between the two was a wood-framed coffee-table with a glass top.

Standing in-front of the doorway, just to the right of the bookshelf, was a guard in navy-blue, holding a truncheon. One stood in a doorway located in the right wall.

A black-haired Hominid male stood on the opposite side of the coffee-table. He had just stood-up from a seated position. The black-haired man looked like he was in charge. He might not be.

The guards were all nervous.

What did they want with me?

If I were a hostage, and this house was my accommodation, then I fared better than I expected.

I might have been taken out of my cell to meet with someone. I certainly would like to know the Hominids' legal justifications for the act of piracy, my being taken hostage, and prisoner abuse.

Was the black-haired man some sort of government official?

He motioned with his hand for me to sit down on the sofa. He sat down to emphasize the point.

I tried to telepathically communicate with him. A negative thump came across, and then dead telepathic-silence.

Theco cannot sit on sofas. Our tail isn't flexible enough to bend between our legs. We can kneel, but not sit. We can recline, but our strong sternum limits our backbone's flexibility.

Without telepathy, and without knowing what language he spoke, or being able to speak it, how was anything going to be accomplished by this meeting?

I thought for-a-moment about what I should do.

I made an effort to try and sit down. The sofa cushion was spongy-enough that I could lean my tail against it, and not be in much discomfort. My leg-muscles held me in a Hominid sitting-position.

The guards watched.

On the table was a bottle of water, with a sky-blue screw-top cap, and a parcel wrapped with wax-paper. The black-haired man motioned with his hand towards the objects.

The water was obviously water.

Water went with food.

The other package must be food. I hadn't eaten food for a few days, not since my breakfast walk.

I undid the wrappings. Sure enough, in the package was some bread, sliced in half. A thin slice of meat stuck out from between the two slices of bread.

I unscrewed the bottle-top, and took a drink. It was water.

Wasn't he going to eat?

Apparently not.

I didn't expect him to poison me with the food or water. There was no point in me trying the "both you-and-I eat and swap the food" technique, like I saw on television.

I opened up the bread, picked up the meat with my fingers, and ate only the meat-slice.

The dark-haired man looked at me oddly.

I was still hungry. I took minor-control of the situation.

On the wax-paper, I drew the shape a grape with my fingernail: A circle with a stem. He might think it was a cherry. Or any sort of fruit.

The Hominid man looked puzzled.

I drew the grape again, and mimed me picking-up the invisible fruit and eating it.

He seemed to understand my request. Telepathy would be so-much simpler.

The man turned towards the guard by the door, and spoke something. The guard responded to the man with, "*Niet.*"

The dark-haired man emoted an exasperated look, I think. I had watched gesture-transcribed Hominoid-television a few months before, to familiarize myself with their behaviours.

He slapped his hands on his knees, an expression I didn't know. The man stood up, and walked out the doorway.

A minute later, he came back with an orange, a slice of rock-melon, and some-more slices of meat.

I said "*Thank-you*" in my language, with a slight head-bow.

After eating a few bites of the rock-melon, I offered the man some food. He took the opportunity to grab-and-eat a slice of rock-melon.

Neither of us offered the guards any food.

After finishing our light meal, the black-haired man pulled a small flat-panel video-display off the bookshelf behind him. He fiddled with it, pressing buttons to turn it on, and then play some video.

I heard it play some tinny speech, before he placed the display on the table, upside-down to him so I could see it. It was a 20-centimetre display, showing a video of Hominid-television.

A television-commercial for laundry-detergent came on ten seconds later. The black-haired man seemed annoyed with *Murphy's Law*. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murphy%27s_law)

His hands momentarily jerked-forward to press the fast-forward button, so he could skip through the commercial. His hands stopped; he must have decided to let the commercial run its course.

Should I laugh, or should I pretend to be interested in the commercial, or should I be interested in Hominoid laundry detergent, or should I be upset at being kidnapped, flown thousands of galaxies away in a prison ship, and then being sold soap products?

I waited.

He wouldn't even know if I were laughing, would he.

The Hominoid television-show resumed after two minutes of ads. I wasn't sure what I was supposed to do at this point, or what I should understand about the show.

The dark-haired man somewhat-answered my questions soon-afterwards. He pointed to a man on the video-display, and then to himself.

And then he pointed back to the man on the display.

And then the scene cut to a man with long sandy-hair, in a blue uniform, running across some rocks and shooting a gun.

Murphy's Law?

A minute later, the dark-haired man reappeared on the television.

The dark-haired man in the room pointed at the dark-haired-man in the video, and then back to himself.

I got it! The video was of himself.

Was he a news broadcaster, covering the war?

If he were a news broadcaster, why would he kidnap me to interview me? Why was I chosen as an interview candidate?

The dark-haired man left the video on the table, and walked out of the room, towards where the kitchen was.

I alternated between watching the video, and waiting for him to return with more food.

The video didn't look like a news broadcast, since it alternated between the dark-haired man, some other civilian-Hominids, and war scenes. Did the Hominid news-channels spend that much time covering the war here?

The video didn't seem like a news broadcast. Our news was interrupted every five minutes to cover weather conditions on various parts of the planet. I hoped to see a weather report so I could learn what planet I was on. The weather never interrupted.

The black-haired man returned a few minutes later. I was watching an interesting commercial about Hominid diapers. Our infants didn't need diapers.

He returned carrying a large black box-like-thing that could have been a weird laser-cannon. He held it up, resting it on his shoulder. Our laser cannons were usually held to our sides.

He pointed it at me, and clicked some buttons.

I was waiting to feel radiation.

I MAY have felt some radiation, but I couldn't tell.

He then pressed a button, and dismounted the laser-cannon from his shoulder.

I should have been dead... if it were a laser cannon. Why would they drag me thousands of galaxies to test their latest laser-cannon on me?

The man rotated the cannon around, and showed me the targeting display.

It was playing a video of myself.

Dual-function laser-cannons might exist, or the device might just-be a very low-tech video-camera.

He must be television reporter, I concluded.

How should I let him know that I understood that he was a television newscaster?

I pointed at my own image on the video-camera, and then back at myself, and then back at the video-camera's display. I tried to smile with my mouth, but that didn't work. We can't smile Hominid-style.

What was next, the interview?

It hadn't occurred to me that an interview was impossible given the language barriers and lack of telepathy.

The Hominid man held up his hand, and twisted his forefinger and thumb into a circle, which was a rude gesture to me. I noticed him simultaneously smile, so I concluded he wasn't trying insult me.

The man stood up, and walked towards the stairs leading to my former prison-cell. He motioned for me to follow.

Sigh.

I hoped that I wouldn't be placed back in prison.

I stood up, and followed him down the stairs.

He pointed to the cell. It now contained a bucket and a blanket.

How could I gesture, “Why?” I looked at him a moment, head tilted.

He began looking nervous.

The guard behind me stepped-forward a pace.

Very well.

I walked into my prison-cell and stood, facing the prison-cell door, and whoever was going to close the bars on me.

I later concluded that the bucket was a very-small toilet.



|auh: Filming in the kitchen

The next morning, at least that was my guess, the box's door opened and let-in fresh air. I had heard voices above for a few hours yesterday, and then silence for half a day. The voices returned an hour ago.

I expected another sandwich and water, and then a closed door. Instead, I was gestured outside the door by the black-haired man. He must have been the person in-charge of talking to me.

I very-slowly followed him up the steps.

Maybe I would be fed in the kitchen... er... laundry again.

In the kitchen, a T-shirt dressed-man, somewhat bald, was carrying a very-large video-camera, held pointing-down at his side. The kitchen counter had some fruit on it, as well as some green stuff.

Several blue-clad guards stood around, looking nervous. Perhaps my naked male-ness made them nervous. Clothes would be nice.

The dark-haired man walked over to the kitchen counter. He waved me over. I approached slowly, making-sure to stand off to his side, so I wouldn't frighten him.

He cut some celery, into lengths, with a knife.

He then backed away, and pointed to the celery.

Should I take the big uncut piece, or one of the smaller pieces?

The smaller pieces would be more socially-appropriate, and less rude.

I decided to pick up a small piece, and eat it.

After munching down the sliver, I looked at the dark-haired man for approval.

He stared blankly... as far as I could tell.

It sure would be nice if they turned telepathy on.

The man didn't seem to mind, so I grabbed another small piece and ate it. I looked back at him. I couldn't read his facial gestures.

He didn't seem to disapprove.

I took the uncut half-stalk of celery and munched at that, while looking at him.

The dark-haired man began waving his hands horizontally back-and-forth at mid-height. I wasn't sure what that meant.

Unexpectedly, he walked up to me, and handed me the knife.

That was a bit odd.

I intentionally hadn't picked-up the knife because it might frighten him.

Oh well, he handed it to me; the instruction was clear. I could barely grasp the knife though. It had the wrong handle on it, for Elk-me.

The man then rearranged the celery on the cutting board, and guided my hand to chop up the celery.

I was confused. Was I being trained in cooking?

I turned towards the counter and began cutting the celery into like-sized lengths. I had done this before, but usually with carrots and parsnips.

The man with the camera spoke something to the black-haired man in a Hominid language, and then gestured at me.

The black-haired man walked up to me, as if to hug me, but he then changed his mind. He walked around me, to the cameraman's side, and pushed me a little bit.

Pretend-horse now?

I stepped right, as his push directed.

Three seconds later, the dark-haired man pushed at my hips to rotate them.

Interesting.

I rotated where he wanted to rotate me.

He seemed pleased with my new orientation.

I am right-handed. From my left side, he reached over, and led my right-hand to resume cutting.

I resumed cutting, while looking at him quizzically.

The black-haired man walked back to the corner of the room, in front of the window. The cameraman, whom I hadn't paid much attention to before, lifted the camera to his shoulder, and videoed me.

Hmm...

Maybe they were going to video me cutting celery to prove that I was a valuable slave.

When I finished cutting the celery, the cameraman didn't stop filming me.

I turned to the black-haired man, my assigned liaison, to ask if he also wanted the fruit cut. I couldn't ask though, because telepathy was blocked.

I picked up a small orange and showed it to him.

I think he smiled. I don't know.

I began slicing-up the orange. I had never cut-up (or eaten) an orange before. I have since been informed that oranges should be cut into quarters or eighths, not thin slices.

I briefly looked at the camera.

I could slice another orange for the cameraman, but decided that a banana would provide more variety.

I had never eaten a banana before. I cut the banana into thin slices, including its skin.

At this point, the cameraman and dark-haired man began laughing. I knew what a laugh was. I chuckled in sympathy, even though I didn't know why my actions were funny.

The men eventually allowed me to eat all of the fruit and celery that I had cut up. And a sandwich. I should have sliced-up more.

Once again, I ended up in the box in the basement. With my current caloric-intake, I was going to starve-to-death in a month. Didn't the Hominids understand that I, weighing 125 kilograms, couldn't survive with so-little food? A small sandwich, orange slices, orange rind, banana slices (without the rind), and two sticks of celery weren't enough.



Woong: Filming in the library

A small circulation-fan in the basement-dungeon cut into my hearing. After the Hominids locked me back in prison, I could hear speech above, too quiet to identify phonemes.

Awhile later, the upstairs lights were turned off, and the house's front-door closed.

I fell asleep.

Sometime the next morning, the house's front-door opened. There were occasional conversations. A bit later, more talking, and then some Hominid laughter.

Half an hour later, a guard walked down and handed me a bundle of cloth through the bars.

Another blanket? I could use one; it was chilly on the floor last night.

I opened up the bundle. Some trousers fell out. I was left holding a shirt.

I picked up the trousers and put them on the bench.

The guard had left.

The shirt was really weird. It had pointy stiff metallic-cloth shoulder-adjuncts. Most of the fabric was a sparkly purple.

I checked-out the pants. They were half-height, dark olive-green.

Hominids had no dress sense.

Did they expect me to wear this for their interview?

Sigh.

I put-on the shirt. I might as well be going to a costume party; I dressed-up like a butterfly when I was eight.

The pants didn't fit. They were designed for Hominids. There was no-place for a tail. My tail was quite sizable.

I took the pants off, and held them ready to show to whoever was in-charge of clothing. I wasn't completely naked below; I still had my blue-lycra underwear on, and the long costume-shirt.

Half an hour later, the guard returned and opened the barred-door. He, of course, stood safely behind the rightward-swinging door. I was funneled-up the stairway.

I walked up the stairs, holding the wrong-species pants in front of me, to make them obvious.

The dark-haired man was there, along with a man with long sandy-hair, and a balding man with a camera, and four guards (one behind me). The room wasn't large enough for all of the people.

The dark-haired man saw me holding the pants, and motioned for me to put them on.

Still no telepathy.

I sarcastically complied with his request. When the pants wouldn't pull-up over my tail, I turned around and pointed to the problem. That would have been a very-rude gesture in my culture. In this case, it was merely a sarcastic, *"You have no clue what you're doing, don't you?"*

When I turned around to face the Hominid man, it was obvious he had gotten the point. (*"Point" is a homonym in our language for "tail", so there's your first Saurian pun.*)

I tried putting the pants on backwards, with the zipper underneath my tail, but the pants wouldn't fit that way either.

The dark-haired man eventually fetched some scissors, and cut a slit into the back of the pants for my tail. The pants now buttoned-up in front, but they kept falling down.

I pointed this out to him.

The sandy-haired man went to look for more parts-and-pieces, maybe for some string. He returned with empty hands.

The dark-haired man had me test my pants to see how long they would stay up. My pants stayed up for at-least ten seconds, sometimes one minute. Apparently, that was good enough.

The situation got even more-odd...

The dark-haired man looked directly into my eyes, spoke a short phrase very-loudly, in an over-articulated manner.

I wasn't sure what I should do, so I watched and waited for more instructions.

He spoke the same phrase again, and pointed his finger at me. I rotated and tilted my head into a question.

We were playing a game of "Guess"?

He grabbed-hold of his own lips, and pulled them as he reiterated the same phrase.

I nearly laughed.

This was a strange interview.

What did he want me to do?

I tried mimicking the phase. It came out about an octave lower than his voice. My voice was more resonant, with fewer formants. I was less-capable of pitch-inflection. The Hominid plosives and phoneme-transition speeds were difficult also.

The black-haired man made the rude hole-gesture with his fingers at me. I must have done what he wanted.

The cameraman lifted the video-camera onto his shoulders. It was time for filming. I looked the cameraman up and down, to measure his intentions and personality.

The dark-haired man waved at me to attract my attention. He mouthed the words again.

It took me a moment to ascertain what was going on.

The dark-haired man wanted me to speak something in his language, to be recorded for the interview. A video-editor would later cut back-and-forth between video of him asking a question, and me answering.

I had attended interview-class, so I knew what was expected. I looked straight at the camera, and spoke my line.

The dark-haired man might be having me speak anything in his Hominid language. For all I knew, I could have repeated a sentence stating that we were all murdering scum. What was I going to do? What I did didn't matter much, since no-one at home would be offended by a forced videoing.

The cameraman continued filming me.

The dark-haired man once-again hand-waved to attract my attention.

After I turned towards him, he re-announced the phrase.

I must have spoken the phrase incorrectly.

Once again, I turned towards the camera and spoke my line.

I then glanced back at the black-haired man for rude-gesture approval.

I got the sign.

I wondered what the next line was.

The dark-haired man held out his arm at a 45-degree angle downwards, and spoke the line again.

I looked at the camera, spoke my line, and performed the same arm motion.

That didn't make the black-haired man happy. He caught my attention and motioned his forefinger in an arc parallel to the ground.

Did he want me to turn?

I turned in the arc-path directed by his finger, positioning my body straight at him.

He mouthed the words again, and held out his arm.

They must want different camera angles, I thought.

I spoke my line and held out my arm again, but this-time looking at him. When I held out my arm, he grabbed my hand and shook it up-and-down a bit.

That was unexpected.

I wasn't sure what the hand clasping-and-shaking meant.

The dark-haired man seemed pleased.

We repeated the phrase and hand-clasping several times.

By the sixth time, the cameraman had wandered around, and taken shots of the same phrase from different angles.

After twelve takes, the dark-haired man decided I was finished for the day. He gestured-and-led me back into my prison cell.

The pants didn't fall off as I walked down to the cell.

In my cell were two bottles of water, and one sandwich.

Sigh.

After the door closed, I ate the sandwich meat. I even ate one-quarter of the bread, before I thought about gagging.

What were these people doing?

An interview would take forever at this rate, and it would hardly be an interview.

With some reflection and thought, I concluded that the team was mostly-incompetent.

My thoughts then turned to more-serious matters:

When was I going to get out of here?

How would I ever be found?



|auh: Filming in hoeing the grass

After I was locked back-in my grey-steel box, I heard more conversations and walkings-about for a few hours. Night happened for the Hominids. My night was merely dimmer grey-ness.

The Hominids returned in the morning. My door opened.

They led me up, into the kitchen again. This time, I was allowed two bottles of water, but no food.

A different cameraman was in the kitchen, along with three blue-clad guards. The cameraman led me outside via the double glass-doors, across the brick patio, and onto the lawn. The lawn was uncut ankle-high grass (for me), 20-centimeters high.

I must have proven trustworthy-enough with the knife to be allowed a stroll outside. Besides, Elk can't run, and the Hominid-slavers would know that. And even if I did run, they could still shoot me running away. And if I ran after them to attack them with my MIGHTY bare hands, they could run away from me.

The men walked me up to the ridge behind the house. When we reached the top, the cameraman stopped at a pre-planned location, and picked up a hoe.

A hoe?

My eyes rolled.

If they were going to sell me, they could at least let me drive a tractor. Tractor-driving Elk were more-valuable than ones with a hoe.

I took a quick look around. Beyond the "mansion" stretched an enormous suburb with a city-centre about 20 kilometers away. The

suburb swarmed all the way up to a road running in-front of the “mansion”. The mansion’s side of the road was grassland.

The side of the ridge facing away from the mansion was un-built grassland. The hillside ran-down into a treed valley. A stream undoubtedly ran through the trees.

The grass was permanently green. This planet obviously received plenty of regular rain. It would never have gotten above 22-degrees Celsius, and it would always be drizzly at night, with a slight chance of sun during the day.

Perfect Elk country, actually.

As requested, I picked up the hoe.

Why was I filmed performing mundane, and now-pointless tasks? Under armed guard?

Was I being videoed for a documentary on Elk slaves?

I was much larger than their typical Elk slaves; I had watched enough Hominid-slavery documentaries to know that Hominids preferred smaller races of Elk. In the documentaries, enslaved Elk in the smuggled-videos always wore at-least loin-cloths. I was still naked... and being filmed naked.

I began to hoe. I found it difficult to effectively grasp the hoe though. It needed special grips for Elk hands.

The cameraman took up his camera, and filmed my exercises.

I hoped they wouldn’t make me eat the grass I hoed up.

By the time I was done for the day, I had hoed ten square-meters.

While being led back to the mansion, a hope arose in me that my implants might be able to more-effectively send an emergency signal while I was outdoors.



Woong: Filmed requesting asylum

The next afternoon, a guard came down to let me out. Noticing that I was still in my underwear, he pointed to the clothes on the bench and made a spinning motion with his hands. The guard walked back upstairs.

He wanted me to put the clothes on. Within a few minutes, I had pulled the goofy costume-shirt over my head. I tore the back of the pants to expand the tail-cut. They fit better, but fell-off quicker. A bit of tape would have held the pants onto my waist, or even some safety-pins and yarn.

The guard returned fifteen minutes later. Once he was safely on the other side of the right-opening barred-door, he let me walk up the stairs. I had to hold onto my pants so they wouldn't fall off.

The library coffee-table had been cleared away. A green-painted standing-box, about 50 centimeters-square by 15 centimeters-high was placed near one corner of the room.

Three guards were mulling about, along with the black-haired man, and the balding cameraman.

The black-haired man pulled his video-display off the shelf. He turned it on, pressed play, and handed it to me.

In the video-display, I saw the sandy-haired man running-around a rocky hill. The video cut to the dark-haired man speaking something. Then I was shown speaking my line. The dark-haired man returned with his own line. (I hadn't seen or heard him record

either solo-line.) This was followed by a quick shot of me being led down into the prison cells. A commercial for toothpaste and automobiles followed, which interested me more. A further minute of dark-screen puzzled me. Was that all that I was going to be shown? Then the sandy-haired man returned on video, running-away as zap-gun blasts flew past him.

I filled in more hypothetical details about my situation: I had been kidnapped and flown several-thousand galaxies away to be a supporting cast-member in a C-grade movie.

As I write this, some Arthropod screenwriters are saying that this true-life story puts a new twist on the old twist of a movie being filmed within a movie. It even puts a twist on someone being kidnapped to be filmed in a movie. They are jokingly (I hope) figuring out how they can kidnap some Hominid actors, so the kidnapped Hominid-actors can be cajoled into playing the director/actor-kidnappers in a movie about making a movie. The Arthropod screenwriters would themselves play the kidnapped arthropod actors who were supposedly kidnapped by the Hominid actors, who were the ones who would have actually been kidnapped. [Writer's note – Make sure that clothing-articles on screenwriter-actors do not actually fall off. The kidnapped Hominid-actors pretending to be screenwriters should have their clothing fall off.]

My kidnapping would have been a tad expensive for these guys, at least a few-hundred thousand dollars. They wouldn't have commissioned it.

Perhaps I was kidnapped because of the interviews I was going to attend, or because I was wealthy. In those situations, the

kidnappers would not have given me to a C-grade movie-team. Maybe the kidnappers decided they weren't going to get a ransom, and made-up for a loss by selling to me to the movie-team for pennies-on-the-dollar.

Neither the black-haired man, nor the sandy-haired man, seemed comfortable with the idea of having kidnapped people on their set. Even at bargain prices, my impression of their personalities was that they wouldn't ever think of purchasing hostages for their movie. They might have an unseen producer who thought that way, though.

Would someone use the movie to embarrass me at home? They might. But, people from my culture would hardly see the forced-videoing to be embarrassing for me. It would be incredibly embarrassing for the Hominids.

If embarrassment were the purpose of the movie-making, would the Hominids get me to make a fake confession? Most likely.

Should I refuse to speak?

If I became uncooperative, the director might replace me. One Theco would look the same as any-other Theco to them, even if we had different feather colors. If I were uncooperative, I would be transported to a rock quarry. Or, the Hominids might change their script, and video my actual torture for true-to-life acting and gore. I didn't like the concept of torture.

Interesting thought: My behavior could affect their script to a point. If I became too-uncooperative, I would merely delay filming while they shipped me off, and purchased another Theco. If I acquiesced and did as they said, I should receive better treatment, avoid worse treatment, and eventually take partial-control of the situation.

I decided to do as they told me, but to modify their instructions slightly in a direction of my choosing.

The video had finished playing by the time I analyzed my new insights. I tried to Hominid-smile at the man, and handed-back the video player.

After placing the video-display on the bookshelf, the dark-haired man stood-upon the box.

I now understood the box. I was taller than the Hominid man. The box would enable face-to-face shots.

We filmed several scenes that the day. There's no point going into detail.

My pants repeatedly fell-down. The dark-haired man and cameraman didn't seem to mind as long as my pants stayed-up for the scene.

While filming, I glanced out of the library window and noticed a few men on the ridge. Some of them were difficult to see because of their blue clothing. A white-shirted cameraman was perceptible when he moved. I clearly-perceived a mammalian, with brown fur. He (or she) was bending over, performing some farm-work.

The movie-crew must be filming several of us at once.

Would I get to meet the other non-Hominid cast?

That question led me to another: Were any of the Aussies that captured me involved in the movie? Or were they merely contracted slave-catchers?

Which led me to another question: Why was I selected to be a supporting cast-member?

Did the Hominids have records of my speaking ability?

Did the Hominids even know that we Theco were capable of speaking Hominoid languages, while most other Saurians were not?

Did their database have a “cultural-embarrassment points” calculated-field that would determine what race and/or individuals would be most propaganda-effective in a C-grade movie?

Was this movie a test for me, to see if I would be placed in a different role? Perhaps a role interacting with Hominid politicians? Perhaps the C-grade movie-filming was a façade intended to test my reactions.

Mid-way through filming, the intelligent mammalian was walked down the ridge, and into an unseen part of the house. We stopped filming while door-opening, banging, and grunts were taking place. I think the mammalian was a Cow, and I think he was a he. They didn't let him wear any clothes.

A few hours later, I was led out of the library by the dark-haired man, flanked by the blue-guards.

The next-room over was a sitting room.

Then we came to the kitchen. It was very small, and cramped.

The three rooms I had so-far been allowed to visit were all the same size. They all had doorways running to-and-from the next rooms in the sequence. They all had doors on the right; if the room's right-door was opened, it revealed a hallway, with more rooms on the other side of the hallway. The hallway most-likely bisected the building.

The rooms all had divided-windows on the left, or double glass-doors. The windows and doors overlooked the lawn, which was merely grass grown as long as it would ever grow. No-one had cut the lawn.

Rather than a continue-on door, the kitchen had steps going down into a basement. A toilet-room door was left of the basement staircase.

The dark-haired man showed me the toilet-room. He allowed me to enter and use it. They thoughtfully gave me privacy. The toilet was the wrong design for me, but I could squat around it if needed. Being a bit spiteful, I decided to not use their toilet-gift then. My bucket would work.

A shower would be nice. But requests by slaves cost “friendliness” points, so I’d hold-off on the shower-request for a day or two.

The kitchen was bare, except for a table with some meat slices, and fruit on a plate.

I was offered a chair. I indicated that I couldn’t sit down on a Hominid-chair properly. I instead stood at the table.

The dark-haired man sat anyway, and then decided to stand.

He picked-up some meat, and placed it on a sliced bun, which he had grabbed from the countertop. He began eating his conglomeration.

I took some meat, rolled the slice up, and ate the roll.

I grabbed some fruit, and offered an orange to one of the guards. They looked at the fruit as though I was offering them poison.

I unpeeled the orange and ate it.

The dark-haired man grabbed a water-bottle from the kitchen-counter, and give it to me. I thanked him, and drank from it.

After eating, I was led down to my cell.

I concluded that the dark-haired man was trying to be as nice as possible, given the situation.

As I was being returned to my cell, the dark-haired man gave me a string that I could tie around my waist as a belt.



Woong: Lunch with an Elk

I wasn't filmed with the black-haired man the next day. He was still there, working as both actor and director.

He led me into the kitchen.

Sitting on an undersized chair was the mammalian slave from the day before. He was still naked, and he was most-obviously male. Even not naked, he would have-been obviously male. Not having seen many mammals before, I thought he was Cow-evolved, but as it turns out, he was an Elk. Antlers, horns, whatever. He had hooves. I may have seen an illustration of an Elk when I was nine, but I had seen many-more cows.

A chair was pointed-out to me. I lifted my eyes up to emote, "*Do these people not learn?*" I pulled the chair aside, and didn't sit on it. My thick tail wouldn't allow me. I stood in-front of the table.

There was a chance that my telepathy implants would talk to the Elk's implants, but not to the Hominids' implants. The Elk and Saurians might use the same system. I tried telepathing to the Elk, but I once-again received a negative thump.

While I was observing the Elk, the cameraman pulled some large plates out of the refrigerator, and placed them strategically on the table. One plate had bread rolls, another held two kinds of

meat, perhaps ham and archaeopteryx. A third plate held semi-randomly professionally-arranged fruit, including grapes.

I eyed those.

The Elk eyed the bread and the meat.

We were given two plastic glasses to drink from, both filled with water.

We would obviously be filmed eating today, slave to slave. The (relative) “feast” showed how well us-slaves were treated. After a week of below-minimum-calorie food-intake, I could do with the minor feast.

My family fed our slaves much-better food, and we fed them on a daily basis. Actually, we fed them twice-daily. Besides the communal lunch-and-dinner buffets, we had a refrigerator stocked with food.

I thought about the Elk-man. The Hominids most-likely fed him only grass-cubes.

Using hand motions, the dark-haired man distracted us from gazing at the food. He spoke something to the cameraman, who then began filming.

The filming was going to be annoying. We’d have to stop eating while the cameraman switched positions.

The dark-haired man signaled-to-us that we could eat.

I was quickest on the uptake. I first grabbed some meat, neatly rolled it up to eat – I was on camera after-all – and ate it relatively slowly, like I had seen in processed meat-sheet television-ads.

Eyes wide-open, the Elk-male showed surprised at my alacrity. He hadn’t expected me to be so quick. He took a sandwich roll, bit-off a large chunk, and chewed, staring back at me.

After my slice of ham, I grabbed a few small green-grapes and ate them slowly.

The Elk had already finished his bread roll, and was now thumbing another-one open.

The cameraman stopped recording, and lowered the camera to switch filming positions.

I had a grape in hand. I popped it into my mouth, and stopped eating until the cameraman switched to the other side of us.

The Elk ignored the cameraman's side-swap, and placed some processed archaeopteryx and ham meat on his divided bread-roll. He had grabbed half of the meat that was on the plate!

He began eating his construction.

The Elk-man must not have perceived that the camera wasn't filming.

I kicked the Elk under the table, and puckered my lips to warn him of his faux-pas.

He looked at me with a puzzled expression, I think.

And then took another bite.

With my head, I motioned to the cameraman, who was setting-up his camera on the other side of us.

The Elk got it, and sat watching the cameraman, chewing. His construction was one-quarter eaten by the time the camera began recording.

The Elk took another bite as soon as the camera turned on.

Since both the Elk and I desired the limited-resource of sheet-meat, I next grabbed two-more slices of processed-meat before he got-around to making another meat-and-bread-roll construction.

I didn't drink my water until the end, the kitchen having less food than water. Given the sink, water was an unlimited resource. I certainly didn't expect the Elk to drink my water after he had finished his.

He had to drink water before I did though; his bread was thirst-inducing. The Elk-man picked up the plastic-glass with both hands. A single hooped-hand couldn't grasp the cylindrical glass. He would have preferred a mug-shaped glass, I suspected.

After we finished our meal, we both received the rude-sign from the dark-haired man, indicating that we had done well.

The Elk was led downstairs.

I was offered the toilet. I decided that since I was treated better, I would use their toilet today. I closed the toilet-room door for privacy. The guards were un-paranoid enough to not force the toilet-room door open.

The Elk was NOT offered the toilet.

With lunch-filming completed, I was led down to my prison-cell.

I took off my costume.

I tried to figure-out the movie-story so far. I was obviously a visiting envoy; the alien-looking clothing implied that.

I wasn't sure why I was filmed eating with an Elk-servant though. If I were an envoy, I should have been filmed eating with a Hominid.

Or was I Saurian slave?

Hominids didn't keep Saurian slaves, except to torture with hard-and-useless work like rock-breaking. I wouldn't have been given the sparkly-purple costume to wear if I were a slave.

Maybe they wanted me to have a love-interest as an ambassador... but an Elk-slave seemed hardly likely. I would have expected a Hominid.

Blech!

I really didn't want to entertain either thought.

Maybe the Elk was loyal to the Hominids, and was going to act as a slave-manager quasi-guard for me. If he was going to be my loyal-buddy, then why would we be filmed eating lunch?

I couldn't put the pieces of the puzzle together.

Perhaps whoever-was-in-charge was trying to confuse me about the Elk's real role.



|auhh: Filming a walk

I awoke when someone knocked on my box door. The Hominids were becoming more civil; they hadn't knocked before. The door slowly opened.

I kneeled and then stood up, ready for another day of videoing. And a few more hours of fresh air. And a fifty-percent chance of being fed.

It bothered me that I was still naked. I was intentionally getting ruder about my lack of clothing, as male-Elk can.

What could I do as slave? Just comply with their instructions, and mock the Hominids when appropriate.

Two blue-guards and a cameraman led me to the top of the ridge. The cameraman motioned for me to walk down the other side, so I did. I hadn't been on a decent walk for a week.

I repeatedly looked at the camera, annoyed. Nieces and sisters with cameras were bad enough. Full-grown men with large video-

cameras who have enslaved you, kept you locked in a box, and who were now filming you naked, were even-more obnoxious.

I walked down the hill in the direction that the man was pointing. The walk felt good. Maybe I'd get a chance to look at the stream.

The Hominids stopped to let me squat on the open grassy-field. They weren't going to let me use the toilet-room off the kitchen, were they. At least they stopped filming.

Happily, the cameraman didn't turn me away when I got closer to the trees. I could tell by his filming that he wanted me to walk into the wooded-area that surrounded the stream. I willingly complied.

The trees around the stream were deciduous. The ground was covered with leaf-litter only. There were no ferns. The entire planet must have once been covered with a similar forest.

After a twenty-meter hike on virgin, spongy ground, we came across a gravel path. The cameraman had me follow the path left, as it tracked the small stream. Oddly, I found that walking naked on a public path was more-disturbing than being filmed naked on someone's uncut lawn. I didn't see anyone-else on the path.

I was filmed walking one-hundred meters down the path. The cameraman motioned for me to veer off the path, back uphill. The two guards were winded by the time I left the path. The cameraman was fine.

I didn't offer to stop and let them rest.

I accelerated my walking-pace up the hill, in an attempt to get the cameraman out-of-breath also. By the time I got to the ridge, he was 20 meters behind, and the blue-guards were 100 meters further back.

While waiting for them to catch up, I scanned the suburbs. *“Crap, there are a lot of them.”* Sigh. Termite infestations came to mind. We Elk love wood houses, and fear termite infestations.

When the men reached me at the ridge, they directed me back to the mansion. The mansion, I concluded, was just an expensive-looking but cheaply-constructed house.

I took a slower pace returning to my box.

Rather than being led directly inside, I was directed to a concrete patio, and underneath a shower. The cameraman handed me a bottle of liquid dishwashing-soap, and turned on the cold-only shower.

Shit! That was cold.

While I appreciated a shower, the selection of soap, location, privacy, and coldness didn't appeal to me.

Of course, I was filmed.

By yesterday's lunch, it dawned on me that I was being filmed for a television show. I made sure to spend a long time carefully washing my rude bits. The show's editor might want that film for their Elk-showering episode.

The water turned off.

I expected to be handed a towel.

I wasn't.

I looked around for a towel. I didn't see any.

I made a motion that I needed a towel.

No-one seemed to care.

Crap, it was cold.

What was I going to do, shake myself off like a dog?

Oh well, I would drip-dry at some point.

Angry sigh.



Woong: Filming nibbles

I heard voices and commotion upstairs, so I pre-dressed in my costume.

My underwear was getting dingy. Some laundry facilities would be nice. My costume could also use a wash. And I could use a shower. I needed to communicate these points today.

I tested telepathy again. It was still blocked.

The guard came down. He didn't expect me to be dressed already. As soon as he saw me in my clothes, he rambled back up the stairs. Two minutes later he returned with the keys.

When I was let out, I walked up the stairs to see what today's movie-making included.

On the library coffee-table was a silvered plastic-tray of hors d'oeuvres.

The dark-haired man was there, as well as the balding cameraman. The guards looked bored.

The dark-haired man raised one finger to signal something, and then walked out the doorway, towards the kitchen. Someplace in the next room, he called out, and someone yell-replied from outside.

The dark-haired man returned to the library, and waited.

A minute later, a guard entered... the room was getting crowded... followed by a soggy and naked Elk-male, followed by another cameraman, and another guard.

The dark-haired man noticed the soggy Elk. The man didn't seem to mind that Elk was naked. The actor asked the rear-most guard to get something.

The Elk stood sullen, dripping all-over the burnt-sienna Oriental rug, as well as the simulated hardwood-floor. He smelled flowery though. It wasn't raining outside; the Elk must have been allowed to shower.

Two minutes later, the errand-guard returned with a large green towel, which he handed to the cameraman, who handed it to the dark-haired man, who handed it to the Elk. The Elk spent copious-amounts of time drying his balls. He then dried the rest of his fur.

Theco have slaves, usually Raptors. My slaves had at least five sets of clothes, without holes. They had towels. They had small bungalows, with two twin-beds, two cabinets, a desk, and a television.

The dark-haired man was respectful to me, but none of the Hominids seemed to be respectful of the Elk, even if he weren't bright-enough to run his own house.

What did the Hominids think they were doing?

When, not "if", the Elk-male got pissed-off enough at his treatment, he was going to do serious damage to someone. And a lot more damage to the property and business.

These actors, cameramen, and guards didn't know what they were doing. If this was how Hominids treated slaves and people, neither did their race know what it was doing.

The Elk finished drying himself. To emphasize the point, he dried his balls again.

The dark-haired man first mimed the scene for us.

Filming took thirty takes, or more:

I entered the room as a sparkly-purple ambassador, and was greeted by the dark-haired man.

He invited me to sit down.

I had to fake-sit on the sofa.

The dark-haired man then had a personal-shot where he called out “*Mufon!*”, or something like that.

The irate Elk entered the room carrying the hors d'oeuvres tray. This, of course, required several takes.

He set the silvered-tray on the coffee table, which was far-too low for him. The cameraman shot this scene from behind. I suspected that the Elk positioned his butt to maximize the camera’s view of his scrotum. The cameraman filmed the same scene from the front, where the Elk maximized other views.

The dark-haired man and I then ate half the hors d’oeuvres over a few takes. Contrary to the mimed script, I offered the Elk-man an hors d'oeuvre while we were videoed. He gently took it in hand, and ate it. I suspect that video-clip never made it into the movie.

The dark-haired man dismissed the Elk-male, another shot.

The cameraman filmed from front: The Elk-male carefully picked up the tray, the tray intentionally held below his long-bit.

The Elk was also filmed lifting the tray, from behind.

And he was videoed carrying the half-full tray out. The Elk-man had only been allowed to eat one small nibble. Was he going to be fed grass-cubes in the kitchen?

Finished with the mimed script, the dark-haired man signaled for me to get up and follow him out of the room. I was filmed as we exited. Fortunately, my pants stayed on.

Women must be the primary target-audience of the movie. Why else would the screenwriters include a naked Elk? The

movie's demographics weren't that simple though: The combat-scenes would interest Hominid men.



Woong: Filming going to sleep in an elaborate bedroom

The dark-haired man led me into the sitting room, then into the mansion's dividing-hallway. We followed the hallway to the end, past the kitchen, and stopped in front of a closed door, on the left.

The cameraman got into position.

Several takes were filmed of the dark-haired man opening the door and motioning me in.

I was filmed walking into the room, a bedroom.

Dark blue-purple plastic covered the outside of the bedroom windows, making it look like I had walked from afternoon-daylight into night.

The bedroom had a poster bed, with twirled wood-bits supporting a rug-like canopy.

The room, overall, was exceedingly dark. Its walls were the same dark-stained paneling as the library. There was a darkly-stained dresser. There were dark-green curtains. The Oriental rug was a dark burnt-sienna. The bed's comforter was dark juniper-green.

Lighting came from a few dim electric fake-flame lamps.

The cameraman filmed me walking into the bedroom.

The black-haired man and I were filmed as he showed me the bed... I didn't like the feel of this.

What could be next?

I then had to pull down the comforter, get into bed, pull the blankets over me, and pretend to go to sleep.

I did so.

That wasn't good enough though.

The dark-haired man gestured me out, and remade the bed.

People don't go to sleep wearing costume clothing. I began feeling irate. I had to undress down to my underwear. My underwear wasn't terribly clean after a week's usage. The Hominid men didn't-even film me undressing from behind, as would be polite. It was a full-frontal shot, including my bulge and my private feathers. Unlike Raptors, we don't have pouches.

I was once-again filmed getting into bed and covering-up.

While I lay in bed, my head propped-up by a few pillows, the two Hominids filmed a scene that really-irked me. The dark-haired man left the room, turned out the lights using a light-switch near the door, and gently closed the door. It was reminiscent of saying a bedtime-goodnight to children.

Now I was his child...

At least he wasn't going to get in bed with me.

This was filmed several times, from different angles. He gently closed the door every time. After the fifth time, the door didn't reopen.

Was the filming over?

I didn't know.

I tried to enjoy the bed while I had it. I lay in bed for about an hour.

The sheets would smell of feather-oil, by the way. I hadn't showered for a week. I was beginning to stress out; the sheets would also smell like stressed-out skin-oil.



|auh: Also moved into the bedroom

After filming the hors d'oeuvres scene, I was escorted down to my box for the evening. The Hominids had forgotten both my food and water for the day.

I lay down to sleep.

Sometime later, the door opened up while I was dozing. A Hominid said something to wake me up. They must have wanted me for more filming.

I opened my eyes and looked at the Hominid. A guard stood in the doorway, motioning for me to get up.

I kneeled, then stood erect. Guessing that he wanted me back upstairs, I walked through the doorway, into the basement hallway.

Perhaps they had decided to feed and water me.

The guard stood to my right. I gazed-irately at him for a moment, wondering if he wanted me to follow him right, to the end of the basement hallway. Or, if he wanted me to go left, and up the stairs, him following behind.

The most-likely response was left.

I turned slowly to the left, expecting a truncheon if I guessed wrong.

No truncheon.

I slowly ambled up the steps into the kitchen.

There, the dark-haired man and a cameraman were sitting at the table. They had finished the hors d'oeuvres, as well as a sandwich each. Their meal was being completed with a cup of coffee each, which they were drinking.

When the two men saw me, they gestured to me, and led me into the mansion's dividing-hallway. I followed them to the end of the hallway.

The cameraman began filming.

The dark-haired man pointed to the door, and rotated his wrist. I guessed that he wanted me to open the door.

I couldn't grab the faceted-glass doorknob with one hand, like he wanted. Instead, I used both hands to twist the knob, and then gently pushed the door open.

Inside was a bed. Sleeping in the bed, and now alert and sitting up in the bed, was the woman Theco.

She got a bed. I only got a box. They seem to have treated her better than they treated me.

"Close the door and do it again," I was telepathically thumped. Odd. Telepathy had been dysfunctional before.

Should I admit to "hearing" the telepathic command?

No, I thought to myself. I'll play coy.

I looked at the man for instructions. He signaled for me to close the door.

As I closed the door, I tried to emote embarrassment to the woman whose sleep I had disturbed.

I saw the man gesture for me to open the door again. At the same time, I received a telepathic-thump, *“Open the door again.”* Maybe the jammer’s battery was getting low.

I opened the door for another take, and then looked at the camera inquisitively.

The cameraman approached.

I backed up.

He squeezed inside the room, and positioned himself a few meters from the door.

“Close the door and do it again,” was telepathed simultaneously with the dark-haired man’s motions.

I closed the door, and reopened it.

Surprise! The cameraman was inside. I must have been feeling a bit less-grumpy.

Predicting the next take, I repeated the action without prompting.

Maybe I shouldn’t have done that. I should have waited for a gesture.

Meanwhile, I understood that a Four-legged Horse was in a hovering spaceplane, not far away. (*“Houyhnhnm”* from Part IV of *Gulliver’s Travels*.)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulliver%27s_Travels)

I looked at the black-haired man for more instructions.

He gestured for me to enter. Telepathy seemed to have been re-blocked.

I walked into the room, bending my head to avoid antler-hitting-things embarrassment.

I was filmed entering the room.

Stepping in from behind, the dark-haired man briefly talked to the cameraman, and then curled his fingers at me.

The Theco-woman watched intently.

She didn't have breasts, I noticed.

The two men walked behind me and out of the room. They closed the door. I heard a locking-mechanism click.

What was I supposed to do?

My eyes squinted in sadness for the Hominids' childish and impolite behavior. If I did the wrong thing, the Hominids might find an excuse to beat me.

What was the default behavior they expected of me given this circumstance?

I stood in front of the bed, waiting further instruction from the Hominids. The Theco-woman didn't seem to know what I was supposed to do either.

I waited for fifteen minutes, and then sat down about a meter from the door, legs up, leaning against the dresser.

I waited some more.



Woong: Elk in bedroom

He REALLY shouldn't sit like that, I thought.

What were those two Hominids up to?

The Elk-man waited, sitting against the dresser, knees up. I sat-up as much as my tail would allow, and waited for the door to open.

After fifteen minutes of sitting, the Elk stood up, and knocked gently on the door, hoping to be let out.

He knocked again a few minutes later.

Then he tried to open the door. The door wouldn't open.

I didn't notice, but I was no-longer planning and/or being proactive.

We heard voices rummaging about the mansion for an hour, and then the main door closed.

The Elk-man began wandering around the room, to see what it held. When I was left-alone in the room, I had first awaited instruction, then I fell asleep. The thought of investigating the room had never occurred to me. Now that the thought was aroused, I consciously decided to NOT investigate at the moment. The Hominid men might-not like the room being searched by us.

As the Elk-man wandered about, I thought, *"He really should put some clothes on."*

In the corner of the room, under a dark-green blanket, the Elk-man found three bottles of water. He offered one to me.

I hadn't noticed the bundle.

I opened the light-blue bottle-top with my hands.

He opened his with his mouth, and drank.

I leaned-over to see if there was any food underneath the blanket.

The Elk-man got the hint and rummaged further into the bundle. There was one-other water-bottle, and some crackers at the bottom of a yellow plastic-bucket.

The Elk ate most of the crackers.

After we "dined", the Elk-man paced around the room some-more.

He knocked on the door again a few times.

And he tried to open it again.

He also investigated the windows. Bar-shadows cast by the outside road-lights were visible on the blue-purple plastic taped onto the windows.

I tried to think proactively: We could break through the door, but we wouldn't get far. We would undoubtedly lose "good-behavior points" for the action. Once out of the room, we were unlikely to get out of the house, since a guard was almost-certainly stationed someplace in the mansion.

My proactive thinking was interrupted. The Elk-man cautiously and nervously sat on the bed next to me. I lay just off-center of the bed. He looked at me, and expanded-and-rolled his eyes. No telepathy.

The Elk-male swiveled around, and stretched out his legs on the bed.

I slid over.

This was my bed! But then again, it wasn't my bed, because it had only been my bed for a few hours. He certainly deserved a bed as much as I did.

The Elk-man leaned-back to lay his head down.

His antlers scraped the wood bed-head.

Oops.

He sat up, and scooted further down the bed so that his feet were sticking-over, just slightly. His head went down without scraping the wood-paneling behind. His antlers prevented his head from resting on the bed, though.

I offered him a pillow. I had taken both.

He accepted it, but didn't try to place it under his head.

Instead, he sat up, and swiveled around so his feet touched the bed-head, and his antlers overhung the foot of the bed. He crunched the pillow underneath his head.

I didn't particularly want to sleep next to him. True, he was dishwashing-soap clean... But he was a stranger, and he was lying on his back.

I got off the bed, carrying my pillow with me. I laid on the floor and fell asleep.

I woke up once, listening to him quietly snoring.



Woong: More filming during the day

I slept much better on the carpeted floor of the bedroom than the hard concrete-floor of the prison-cell. The Elk's light-snoring may have soothed me.

The next day involved more filming, this time in a sitting-room in the front of the house. I saw the infinite suburb-houses for the first time. The mansion-owner wasn't all-that-wealthy, after all. The "mansion" was built on an empty piece of land. The next suburb to be built would surround and eat-up all of the "mansion's" grassland.

The Elk played the role of house-servant. Clothes would really have helped.

I needed to remember to ask the dark-haired man to use the shower and laundry. I didn't get a chance during the day, though.

We filmed in the morning. For lunch, we were provided sandwiches... again. I didn't eat the bread. I was losing a lot of weight.

More filming occurred after lunch.

In the evening, I was offered the use of the indoor toilet. I hadn't seen the Elk enter the toilet-room at all, ever. He certainly didn't have an Elks-only toilet.

We were locked into our room just before night fell.



Woong: Another night in the same bedroom

When the men had closed the mansion's front-door for the night, I had enough wherewithal to search through the room myself. The dresser was bare. I didn't dare look underneath the bed in case we were being watched by hidden cameras. The desk was devoid of anything; some paper and a pen would have been nice.

The Elk-male also helped in the search. We both explored as thoroughly as possible without arousing too-much suspicion. We even peaked under the carpet.

We didn't find anything interesting.

The Elk went to bed first, upside-down, feet at the head of the bed. This time, he covered himself with a sheet. He quite-intentionally occupied only the left side of the bed.

I decided to try sleeping on the right side. We slept head to foot though. Having my head near the foot of the bed would-have

left me feeling too-exposed to the door-opening. I didn't want my head near his head, either.

I have to admit, his feet were interesting. I examined them to see how his furred skin intersected with his hooves. The undersides of his hooves were an intricate biological construction.

The back-side of the Elk's feet, right next to his hooves, were bare of fur. Saurian feathers always grew from small bumps; the feather-bumps would remain even when the feathers had fallen out. The Elk's fur-follicles had only very-minor skin-indentations, and showed no skin micro-discolorations. His skin didn't produce much oil either, at least not on his feet.



Woong: More filming during the day

The next day was filled with more filming, this time mostly-with the sandy-haired actor.

We worked throughout the day.

I still had no idea what my spoken lines meant.



Woong: Passion

We ate soon after sunset.

The dark-haired man had skipped-out in the afternoon, and returned at sunset with four takeaway meals.

I was given beef in a thick gravy, with rice. It tasted a bit sour, which may have been the Hominid cooking style. Overall, the meal was very tasty, even the rice. The Hominids had put me on a starvation diet; I had lost at least five kilograms in the last week.

The Elk was given what-looked-like the same beef, but with lettuce instead of rice. His meal also came with a bread-roll. Given his size, he was most-definitely on a starvation diet.

After a toilet break for me, we were both locked in the room. I think my Elk companion was forced to toilet outside.

I am fairly-certain the food was drugged.

I became very horny.

The Elk-man became very horny.

There was nothing else to do.

I certainly wasn't going to get pregnant.

Nor was he.



Woong: Detonations

I woke-up in the morning, remembering the previous night. We must-have been drugged with sexual stimulants.

Why did the Hominids do that?

Perhaps the drugs were used as a “positive reinforcement” for good behavior. Drugging people into having sex was an odd-sort of positive-reinforcement though.

We were both awake, waiting for the door to open.

Before the Hominids had a chance to arrive, we heard a distant explosion.

Then another, a few seconds later.

Then 30-megatons were dropped. The city-center and suburbs were destroyed, including us and the mansion we were locked-in.

What happened outside of the story...



The Elk delegation

The Hominids were invading the zone inhabited by the Elk-evolved people, and other non-Hominoids. The delegation-party that |auh was ceremonial head for, was a capitulation delegation. The Elk-envoys were to meet with the Hominid negotiators and arrange for the evacuation of Elk-evolved civilians.

Everything that happened in the reception-mansion was video-recorded. Officials from at least two Hominid zones were involved in the Elk-kidnapping that day. Part of the reason for videoing the hostage-taking was so that all Hominid parties would have incriminating evidence to use against one-another.

|auh was flown several taurospheres away, to *The Six Kingdoms*. Two of the three women travelling with |auh have not-yet been rescued.



Woong

Woong's spaceplane was captured by Aussies. They were most-likely subcontracted-out by the Hominids. Woong was most-likely NOT the specific target of the spaceplane piracy.

Woong was flown from the Saurian zone near the bottom of our taurosphere, up to *The Six Kingdoms*.

Soap operas

Hominids love soap-operas. Soap-operas are the predominant television story-form on other Hominid planets, just like situation-comedies and cop-shows are predominant on Earth-Sol.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Situation_comedy,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cop_show)

Half of the soap operas only use Hominid actors; non-Hominids are NEVER shown in them. The soap-opera episodes include social backstabbing, and lots of censored romance, just like Earth-Sol soap-operas.

The other half are "science-fiction" soap-operas. They employ military themes, exploration themes, space travel, and combat. "Animal-people" slaves and authentic dead-"reptiloid" bodies are commonly shown.

Soap-opera scripts are written by professionals, and franchised to small C-grade production-teams on each planet. The C-grade teams localize the soap-opera to the planet's language and culture, hire the actors, and record-and-edit the episodes. The franchisors

transport spaceplane-loads of actors from different franchises to safe war-zones, where they are filmed en-masse dodging zap-bullets or walking through fields of “reptiloid” battle-dead. The franchisees are also provided help with marketing and distribution, and access to military technology and videos of combat.

Televised-pornography involving Hominid-sex and Hominid-nudity is illegal. “Animal”-people pornography is legal, but only after 10:00 pm. Space-operas, because they involve non-Hominids, often include “animal”-people pornography. Two versions of each soap-opera episode are produced. One version is designed-and-edited for all audiences. The late-night version has the same basic content, with some added swearwords, “animal”-person nudity, and an occasional “animal”-person sex-scene.

Woong and Jauhh were drugged. Their sex-act was videoed in the bedroom by invisible extradimensional cameras.

They were also telepathically recorded for “feelies”, television “video” that includes emotional telepathy. For the “feely” sex-scene to work well: Jaaah and Wong would have to be relatively-compatible personality-wise. They would be drugged with sexual-stimulants to break through their reluctance to have sex. They would have to be ignorant of the clandestine filming.

Various non-Hominid organizations maintain psychology personality-vectors on people, everywhere. This information was most-likely acquired by the Hominid “talent-scouts”.

When Jauhh and Woong were taken hostage in the same week, along with hundreds-of-thousands of other wealthy people, their personalities were run through a dating computer-program. The pair must have matched as compatible personalities, as well as meeting racial-constraints required for the science-fiction soap-opera storyline.

Tens-of-thousands of C-grade soap-opera companies exist. Each would be delivered pre-paired hostages over the course of a few months.

|auh was most-likely kept naked on purpose, both for the nudity-content of the space-opera, and to sexually stimulate Woong.

After a few weeks and a few sex scenes, either |auh or Woong, or both, would be discarded from the show.

Saurians, in general, have a tendency to die in the course of filming a science-fiction soap-opera. Woong might have been killed a few weeks or months later, as part of the storyline. |auh, hopefully, would have become emotionally attached to her by then, providing for more “feely” drama.

“Dealing with the devil”

Science-fiction soap-operas are the only mass-media way that *Six Kingdoms* war-dissenters and less-racist-Hominids can propagate their messages.

The Hominid actors in this story were less-racist than typical Hominids. The actors seemed surprised to have-received hostages as supporting cast-members. Most-likely, the team-members were ignorant of the franchisor’s long-term storyline, which would have been revealed to the C-grade soap-opera team bit-by-bit.

The actors behaved as though they hadn’t-before included non-Hominids in their show, other than the occasional slave or dead “reptiloid” body. By using hostages in their cast, the soap-

opera team was “brought into complicity” with Hominid racist and pro-war norms.

The team would have incorporated the Saurian cast-member and sex-scenes with the allure of larger audiences. Franchisor contractual rules might also have encouraged the use of hostages and sex-scenes.

Broadcast near |auhh’s home

Hominid soap-operas are broadcast in the Hominid zones near the Elk-evolved zone, where |auhh came from. If and/or when the soap-opera featuring |auhh appears on television, the acting, nudity, and pornography will soil the reputation of |auhh’s family and clan.

Treatment of |auhh and Woong by the actors and cameramen

The actors and cameramen in the story, no-matter how less-racist they were than typical Hominids, did NOT “reverse the roles” and imagine what |auhh and Woong were feeling and experiencing. Earth-Sol children and teenagers often have the same problem. Children will “neglect pets”. Woong and |auhh were “neglected pets”. Their sleeping accommodation, bedding, clothing, showering, food, and beverages all illustrate the neglect.

The actors and cameramen may not have thought of Woong and |auhh as people deserving respect, an Earth-Sol teenager-problem. The Hominids either didn’t realize that two hostages did not wish to be drugged into sex, nor wish to be filmed for pornography, or the Hominids had teenager-like sociopathic-tendencies and didn’t care that Woong and |auhh were being mistreated. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociopath>, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milgram_experiment)

Animal training

If Earth-Sol were “disclosed” to, culturally and genetically different Hominids would migrate here, and half-life replace our indigenous culture and genetics within 100 years. Space-faring migrant Hominids are approximately 2 of our standard deviations less-capable animal-trainers than we are on Earth-Sol.

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_deviation,
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Half-life>)

As a general rule, Hominids on other planets don't have pets, like our dogs. Most Hominids are incapable of imagining themselves placed in their pet's role, or with their pet's knowledge-base, or with their pet's intelligence, or mimicking their pet's thinking-processes. Without these abilities, Hominids cannot effectively interact-with and train dog-intelligence pets.

To effectively train dog-intelligence pets, the trainer must understand and adapt to the pet's mental limitations. In a hyperbole, a pet-incapable Hominid might speak a command to his/her dog: *“Dog, fetch me a beer-can from the fridge.”* The dog doesn't understand the speech, doesn't know what a beer-can is, doesn't know that it can open the fridge door, or that it should close the fridge door after pulling out the beer-can. The hyperbolized pet-incapable migrant space-faring Hominid doesn't realize that the dog has these limitations.

The Hominid's learned and instinctive response to their dog's disobedience would be to apply negative reinforcement to the dog until it fetches the beer on command. This leads to dogs that are at-first scolded, then locked in their room, then not-fed, then beaten, and then beaten-to-death. The dog would have no clue why it would be scolded, locked in a room, not fed, or beaten.

If a hyperbolized migrant space-faring Hominid notices that you, as a neighbor, haven't cut your grass for two weeks, you will be subject to simple negative and positive reinforcements.

Neighbor: *"You didn't cut your grass last week, so I won't invite you to my weekly dinner-party until you cut your grass for two weeks in a row."* Simplistically, *"If you're bad for one week, you must be good for twice-as-long as you were bad."*

Reasoning with them doesn't work well: *"I realize that you want me to cut my grass, but I do not wish to comply because I like longer grass... or I am saving petrol... or I don't have time... etcetera."*

If the migrant space-faring Hominid thinks they have "power" over you, their typical reply is either *"You will do what I tell you to do,"* or *"You will never survive in our society [... but you're stuck in our society, so you must adapt to it, and do what I tell you to do...]"*. Failure to comply results in no dinner invites, or candy-wrappers being thrown into your yard, as well as gradually-worse negative reinforcements.

Pet-incapable behavior is more-commonly-seen in "war-bred" and half-breeds of "war-bred" people. The progenitors of "war-bred" people are selected by governments to be ideal combatants in a war. Their population is bred-up to sufficient numbers to be of military value. War-bred people are not only pet-incapable, they also tend to be sociopathic, to follow orders without question, and to work without much pay. Half-breeds between stable-society people and war-bred people are common in regions where war-bred people have been reproduced-and-deployed for centuries.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociopath>

Aussies, a previous generation of Australopithecus-evolved people, do NOT have these problems.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australopithecus>)

Attack on the city

The first small explosion was from a piercing-missile designed to test the city's missile-deflection defenses.

The second larger-missile was targeted at war-leadership meeting in the city. The missile should have hit the leadership, but city deflection-defenses were better than expected.

After two detonations, the Hominid war-leadership would scatter. A valuable rare-occurrence military-target would dissipate. Non-Hominoid militaries weren't going to let the war-leadership scatter and escape.

Since the larger-missile was deflected by the city's defenses, a much-larger much-less-deflectable detonation was used to kill the Hominid war-leadership. The suburb's destruction, and the deaths of the suburb's inhabitants were undesired casualties of war.

More information

To understand more of the back-story behind this story, read <http://www.disclosuree.com/AfricaEarthFullEBook.pdf>.

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