

HUMAN SOCIETY

John ran along the path through the woods created for mountain bikes and the occasional runner or hiker such as himself, the spots of dirt appearing in just a few places bore witness to the battle against nature never to be won. Weeds and eventually larger growths would overcome it, if use dropped off and so John felt a certain obligation and responsibility to keep the path open enough to be followed, if only for his own benefit. The great trees towered above him as far as he could see, smaller ones and many types of bushes and plants grew to different heights underneath the tall columns of live wood that seemed to stretch on forever, even though he knew he might reach the edge of this wooded section in only twenty or thirty minutes, trudging through underbrush across creeks and gullies that crossed it.

He approached a turn in the path covered with leaves falling from the grove of oaks surrounding; this area was larger than portions of the path exposed to a few hours of direct sunlight.

As his footsteps grew louder on the dry leaves other parts of the path didn't have, he felt a strange presence in front, unlike anything before. Curiously, he felt no concern he thought should be expected encountering such sensation where nothing seen would explain it. He slowed and then walked, feeling the sweat drip from his eyebrows, this warm and humid afternoon; the afternoon sunlight poked through the trees normally. He stopped and listened; no new sounds, only the normal rustling of leaves in the breeze. The presence now felt even stronger with the sounds of his heavy breathing and footsteps. He looked around but saw nothing. He waited a few seconds, then ran back to the spot where he did not feel the presence now very obvious; he remembered a similar feeling from another person approaching a closed bathroom door, not knowing he was on the other side, or from when he'd heard somebody enter a room where he sat around a corner, knowing they could not see him after he'd heard them enter.

He ran back to the spot only one hundred or so meters before, and stopped. The feeling of being watched and followed stayed strong, but still, nothing was around him. No animal would tolerate him that so close and what animal large enough to be a problem would ever let a human to come so close, without running?

Nothing unusual in this spot, either, so John walked the one hundred meters forward to where he'd first stopped. Again under the large trees and crunchy, dried leaves, the air in front of him shimmered in silence. He stopped, frozen in place, staring intently as it grew larger, like a transparent, expanding filter being shaken. He was surprised at his missing fear; he felt no urge to run or anything else other than look directly at the visible ripples of air no more than six meters away.

Slowly, gradually and silently a greenish blue haze appeared then grew in the center. It expanded vertically about a meter up and down, towards the ground and sky, to a height of two meters, then horizontally, becoming a tall, narrow oblong shape. It held fast for a moment, and the shimmer stopped. John could still see through it but its presence was unmistakable; John still felt no worry, only curiosity.

The shape took the form of a human; torso, legs, arms and head slowly appearing, obscuring the woods beyond. The color did not change as it blocked the area behind, ever more closely resembling a tall human male, a greenish blue silhouette.

John wiped his sweat heavy eyebrows, his gaze fixed on what stood before him. The silhouette then took on depth and features appeared; feet, hands, a neck then a face and eyes, nose and mouth. The head was triangular more than a typical human skull, the eyes pointed like a human, twice the size and angled diagonally up away from the nose, itself smaller than any human. The mouth was a straight slit across below this small nose, with almost no lips. No hair and the body was covered in a one piece suit which obscured the groin, chest and features where a human would have them. Most curious were the eyes themselves; white where a human eye would be but deep red corneas!

John looked and blurted out, "Who are you?"

The thin, nearly lipless mouth curved upwards at both sides, never opening, and in his mind John heard clearly the words spoken, "Doshar; my name is Doshar. How are you, John?"