



The Traveller

Finally, he was free! Tracks stretched out in front of him across the alien planet and he started to follow. The Traveller couldn't remember how long he'd been imprisoned on this desolate rock. Days? Weeks? Months? He couldn't remember. The Traveller paused a moment, looked up into the darkening sky and breathed deeply. The free air tasted good! All around him was silent, at least for now. The pale yellow glow of the distant, sinking sun reflected off a huge, uncaring moon on the horizon; the Traveller could clearly make out the hundreds of craters that pockmarked its surface. Was that where she was?

His wife had been taken prisoner by the Argath some time ago; punishment for his refusal to co-operate. The Traveller was blessed with the ability to read and influence the minds of others but that blessing had been turned into the worst of curses by the Argath, a ruthless alien species with a hunger for power. They had demanded that he use his power to help them manipulate and control others.

The Traveller said no; this resistance had cost him dear. Should he have made a different choice? Given in to the evil of the Argath?

Angrily, the Traveller forced himself to concentrate. This wouldn't help him to free his wife, Jenath. He knew there was only one way to get to that moon; the Argath spaceport that lay thirty miles away to the South, through difficult and dangerous terrain. Gritting his teeth, the Traveller took his first steps.

At first, all was uneventful as the Traveller slowly made his way across the featureless terrain towards his goal. The dim, yellow sun slowly sank beneath the distant horizon and friendly stars started to pop into view, twinkling reassuringly in the wide blue sky. The traveller shivered and a rumble in his stomach reminded him that he hadn't eaten for several days. No matter; he would press on anyway.

He heard the danger before he saw it; a faint buzzing that barely registered with him at first, but gradually increased in intensity until it was unmistakable. It was a dreaded sound that the Traveller knew only too well. He had heard it before, and it meant only one thing. Adrenalin started to pump through his veins, readying him for action against the Argath warriors that were coming for him.

The Argath warriors resembled giant wasps. They stood over 6 feet tall, with heavy armour plating protecting their bodies. Thin, silvery wings sprouted from each shoulder, capable of propelling the warrior at great speed through the air. Their large, luminous eyes were used for hunting; they could see the slightest movement from miles away and once they locked onto their target, they were merciless. Each warrior had a razor sharp stinger that could be used either in close

combat or to spit lethal poison from a distance. Either way, they were fearsome opponents to be avoided at all costs.

The Traveller only had moments to prepare. Looking around, he spotted a small opening in the ground. He had no idea where it led, but he was out of options. Glancing towards the horizon, the hazy shapes of the warriors began to appear out of the gloom. He could already hear the buzzes and clicks that they used to communicate pierce the night sky like a needle. A bead of sweat ran down his forehead. It was now or never. Taking a deep breath, the Traveller dived into the blackness...