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There's no Place like Home

by Richard Rewell

He was just over three metres tall and was clad, from top to toe, in a grey plastic-like armour. He cradled a mauve pulsar rifle in his arms and observed the world through the slit in a helmet that bore the white numbers that identified him as a platoon commander, second class. He was on Star Hunter 617. A galactical fleet troop carrier.

He marched purposefully along the metallic corridor that was lined on both sides with the fifty troopers from his command. All obediently rose to attention as he passed and headed for the void at the end of the corridor. Here he turned to face his platoon, nodded, adjusted the silver jetpack on his back and thumped his heart twice with his right fist shouting "Hail the great leader." The platoon responded with the same cry. Then silence and he began to think.

Any second soon he would hear the order to jump through the void and lead his platoon down to the surface. He hated the surface. He hated the planet. He hated the inhabitants. All different. Colours. Speech. Gender. He momentarily considered the gender difference. Blocked it from his mind and moved onto beliefs. Beliefs. Religion. What was all that about? He hated the forests. Wild. No control. Just a disobedient mess of trees and foliage. And the creatures. Disgusting. Again, all different. The Oceans. Oh, how he loathed them! Unpredictable! Smooth. Rough. Cold. blue, grey. So uncontrollable. And the cities! Not one was the same. Not one building was the same. Horrible smelly hives populated by those diverse humanoids and smaller creatures. Some humanoids and creatures lived in the same dwellings! Together. Repugnant.

What was wrong with everyone and everything looking the same? Speaking the same language? Being one sex. Being the same colour! What could not be nicer than walking through the beautifully regimented plantations of neatly trimmed trees that gave us our food? Or swimming in the warm placid orange waters of the lakes. Who needed oceans and seas? What could be lovelier than living in the uniform caves below the forests and oceans? With no creatures. Only us. That was his home world. Clear, concise, simple. Uncomplicated.

"There's no place like home," he said to himself.

"There certainly isn't," said a sub-commander who stood to his right, "it's a dump. I like this place below. I've read the scout's reports."

"What?" queried He, angered by this outrageous comment but strangely finding himself softly responding "Careful sub-commander that's almost treason."

"I agree. Our so-called home's a dump!" said a voice from the row of troops on His left.

"I love their mad forests. Apparently, most of the vegetation that thrives down there would be fine for us," said another trooper known by the numbers on his helmet as 1313.

"I like the little creatures. The ones that often live with the humanoids!" shouted trooper 3459

"With the waggy tails. I love them too!" screamed trooper 4667.

"It's the two different genders I like the look of," shouted trooper 6969 way down the line and whose statement was met by a loud cheer.

"About twenty-five percent of troopers have deserted already. And it's getting higher" said a trooper to He's right. They say the Supreme commander's even gone."

Helpless he stood and witnessed his men discard their pulsar rifles and stream through the void. But 6969 remained.

"Don't you get it Sir. Two sexes. That's got to be good!" and he leapt into the void.

He, our platoon commander thought one thought for one nanosecond and then screamed

"Wait for me!"