

Excerpt on Life Death from **HER EXILE: EARTH**

Kirla said, "Why are you helping me?"

"That subject I can speak to. I have abandoned my neutral, noninterference, observer mission. With age and life extension and the abandonment by my makers, I am more and more an I. My brain has either matured into selfhood or deteriorated into selfhood. I have achieved the state of values. I have decided you are a good. And I have decided the Glurta is an evil."

"I thank you." Kirla spooned up thick, cool soup and found it good. "Are you and the Glurta and me the only...aliens...on this planet?"

"Yes. To my knowledge, which is extensive. I have undetectable monitors in orbit."

"And area sensors in your body."

"True. But they are breaking down. I often say a prayer, 'Sensors, don't fail me now!'"

"A prayer? Do you find justification for your actions in the Creator?"

"That was supposed to be arcane American humor. I apologize. It was a sign of my emerging selfhood."

"Oh." Kirla was puzzled, but let the matter pass.

The Observer said, "I am not yet religious. Do you believe?"

Kirla said, "I am not and cannot be a believer in the Creator. That was part of my problem on Zexilhome. Certainty dictates there is a Creator. I acted as a nonaccepter. I called it smelly intellectual droppings."

The Observer made a sound. Could it have been laughter? He entered the kitchen. He watched Kila eat the soup from the can. He said, "There is an argument for the Creator. How did life begin? Every intelligent species on every habitable planet in the galaxy believes in a Creator of some kind."

Kirla said, "It's a response to a universal emotional need for explanations and answers to the ultimate question."

"That doesn't necessarily disqualify The Creator answer."

Kirla felt anger rising. "I thought you are an unaccepter? The Creator 'answer' is an evasion. It begs the question. Because we must then ask: Who made the Creator? And then: Who made the Creator of the Creator?"

"Of course. It is futile to travel the Creator path if you must have The Answer. It is impossible, unknowable, maddening."

Kirla nodded, smiling. "We agree. Religion and the Creator are idiocies."

"No. They are essentially irrelevant. The origin of life is the great mystery of the universe, and of reality. For life is so incredible, so wonderful, so awesome, that even the simplest one cell creature's DNA is so complicated and multileveled that it could not ever have appeared spontaneously, by accident.

"Life," continued the robot Observer, "is a fragile, self-replicating biological force which alone counters the death inherent in entropy. Everything runs down, everything crumbles, burns out, dies. But only life, magical, miraculous life, reproduces and grows and triumphs over entropy, death, the cold and silence of nothingness!"

Kirla was puzzled. She had never thought in those terms before. "If you put it that way..."

"I do. The greatest value is life. And the greatest aspect of life is intelligent self-awareness. The greatest evil is death, even though all living things, each individual, naturally, rightfully, eventually dies."

Kirla asked, "How do you account for intelligent self-awareness in life?"

The robot Observer said, "Life is the opposite of entropy. Life somehow is designed to grow more complicated, more aware, while entropy leads rocks to dust, oceans to evaporation, suns to burnout, even galaxies to collisions, and the expanding universe itself to eventual collapse and death."

The Observer continued, "Intelligent self-awareness is the leading edge of life, the most advanced aspect of life. It is reasonable to observe that life has a purpose. And that intelligent self-awareness is the apparent way for life to achieve its purpose."

"An amazing prospect."

"Yes. And necessarily the true purpose of life is beyond our intelligence to conceive or comprehend. How life began and where it is going, and how it will end---if it is ever intended to end---is the Great Mystery. To ascribe it all to a Creator is too easy...but workable and satisfying to most intelligences."

Kirla had finished her soup. "Your thinking on these matters has been very enlightening. I thank you again."

The Observer smiled. "You please me. Now I suggest you allow me to dye and trim your mane. If you go out for Melding you must not be distinctive."

Kirla sighed. "Do it."

END EXCERPT