

Planetary Fable

By

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Gaia groaned.

It was all very well to become self aware but as a result she was also aware of her own pain. Sometimes she wished she was just like her brothers and sisters who were just rocks flying around father sun with no consciousness and definitely no feelings.

She appealed to the Other, whatever and wherever it was. If she had used words they would have been 'Help me', but she was a planet and a planet's consciousness is subtle and its communications must take place over vast distances so using vibrations in the air was far too slow. Instead she signalled with gravitational and electromagnetic energy at a level too slow and delicate to be detected using constructed devices.

The Other responded almost instantly, in just a decade, as usual. It also didn't use speech, of course, but if it had a mouth, a tongue, a throat and if it had breathed air the words would have been 'Yes, I can see what's wrong. And it's getting worse isn't it?'

'Yes,' answered Gaia. 'My living layer seems to be unbalanced and I'm feeling very ill. What should I do?'

'I'm afraid that the problem is very serious. That terrible case of intelligent life that you develop has become technological. Normally your own immune system would have created a huge natural event to remove a single species before it can become so dangerous but this species seems to have developed very quickly indeed.'

'No!' Gaia would have sobbed if she had eyes and could make tears. 'Surely, there's some hope. Is it terminal?'

'It's hard to tell for sure,' communicated the Other, 'but it doesn't look good. It's developing at the most appalling speed. It's changed even as we are having this conversation. Now it's not just pollution but I just detected some terrible flashes of energy. I think the technology is using atomic energy.'

'Can't you help me, like you did last time? Couldn't you inoculate me with another asteroid? That got rid of those dinosaurs before they could develop intelligence.'

'If you only had case of intelligence there would have been no trouble but we're too late. With technology they might be able to repel an asteroid. And your illness is so widespread, that I'd have to send a huge asteroid and I might wipe out all your life. No I'm afraid you'll have to hope that you get over it.'

'What will happen?' pleaded Gaia.

'It could go one of several ways,' responded the Other. 'I've just discovered that the technology is based on constant expansion and exploitation. That's why it's spread so fast and is so self-destructive. The species could learn its own mistakes and stop expanding, reducing its numbers and learn to exist within you. Or it could destroy itself but leave enough resources for the rest of your life layer to survive and recover. Or it could upset your careful self regulating system and destroy all your life leaving you dead and unconscious.'

Gaia did not respond, for the technological intelligence had reached a crisis point already.

The Other could see the way that life was disappearing at an alarming rate. It could see the imbalance appearing in the weather and the terrible collapse of entire eco systems, leaving new and empty deserts behind. It waited quietly praying that Gaia would be okay. Praying to the God of planets and universes that the intelligent life would destroy itself and not Gaia as well for that would be the best possible outcome.

THE END