

Searching for Signs of Intelligent Life

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

"I come in peace," the little green fellow with the short antennae said, offering his three-fingered hand up in what he hoped would be understood as a greeting.

The horse standing in the field shook his mane and stamped his hoof. *What was this? One minute I'm grazing grass in this quiet pasture, and the next this crazy silver spaceship appears out of nowhere.* The horse did not like being disturbed. He tried to make his displeasure known. He neighed loudly. The little green man backed away from the very large animal.

Obviously, this life form wasn't interested in communicating. He hopped back into his spacecraft and zipped away to find a friendlier species. He made his way further across the world when he spotted two large groups of people down below. They were headed toward each other. As he got closer, he could see the people were adult men, carrying large, long objects in their hands. They pointed them at the other group, and the ends of the objects exploded suddenly. The noise and smoke caused chaos as several men on both sides fell down, screaming.

Well, that certainly seems stupid, thought the alien. What are they fighting about that is so important it means they want to hurt each other? Do they not have another way of communicating? How very primitive. He flew past them without stopping.

He visited with several other lifeforms as he flew about the Earth. The spiders were fascinating and loved sharing the mathematical principles they used to create the most intricate web designs. They offered to share some flies with him, but he politely declined.

He listened carefully as the elephants gave him a history of the world as they knew it. They remembered everything from their earliest days roaming free across the planet to the heartbreak of how deforestation was decimating their environment. They told of how they were hunted by man for the ivory of their tusks. It made the traveler so sad he thought he might cry.

The bees were buzzing to talk; they wanted help since climate change was causing them great distress. Many of them were even dying because of it. Without bees, there would be no pollination, but they couldn't get the humans to understand. The alien offered his sympathies but wasn't sure how to help. He wished them the best and continued on his way.

What a strange planet, he thought. All these wonderful, unique species but they don't talk to each other and listen to their concerns. They kill each other and destroy habitats without care. He wondered if mankind was indeed the problem, why didn't the other species join together to conquer him? The alien prepared to leave the planet and file his report to the others back home. As he flew over the ocean, he noticed movement in the waves below. He flew down to investigate, and met a pod of chattering, inquisitive

dolphins.

They had lots of questions for him about life, the universe, and everything. He answered them, and he had questions in return. They ended up having a lengthy conversation, so long that it ran past dinner time. The dolphins invited him underwater for a meal, and he agreed.

With the push of a few buttons, he readied his spacecraft to descend under the waves. He followed the dolphins to a coral reef, exploding with color and life. Once there, they all enjoyed a dinner of fresh seafood and learned more of the universe from each other.

The green traveler soon concluded that the life above the water seemed doomed to struggle against the destructive tendencies of mankind. But, in the wet world underneath, the dolphins were clearly the most intelligent, caring, and fun-loving creatures he had ever met. He decided to stay with them, and he lived happily ever after.

Questions

1. Why do you think the alien chose to live underwater with the dolphins?
2. What was happening with the groups of men?
3. Who seemed to be causing the problems the different species on land were encountering?
4. What is a way that we could solve one of the problems the species are facing?

Vocabulary List

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. Greeting
2. Disturbed
3. Chaos
4. Alien
5. Primitive
6. Intricate
7. Decimating

Context Clues

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1. "I come in peace," the little green fellow with the short antennae said, offering his three-fingered hand up in what he hoped would be understood as a **greeting**."

- a. message b. signal c. salutation d. song

2. "The horse did not like being **disturbed**."

- a. threatened b. bothered c. confused d. alone

3. "The noise and smoke caused **chaos** as several men on both sides fell down, screaming."

- a. confusion b. fire c. worry d. upset

4. "Well, that certainly seems stupid, thought the **alien**."

- a. stranger b. citizen c. brother d. criminal

5. "How very **primitive**. He flew past them without stopping."

- a. strange b. fancy c. naïve d. awesome

6. The spiders were fascinating and loved sharing the mathematical principles they used to create the most **intricate** web designs.

- a. simple b. complex c. rough d. jagged

7. They remembered everything from their earliest days roaming free across the planet to the heartbreak of how deforestation was **decimating** their environment.

- a. building up b. blocking c. fogging up d. wiping out