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**The Messenger**

"From Far Beyond" Not found. "The Sidereal Messenger"? Ideas: visitor tours by computer links. Learned about us from comsat messages. And Wikipedia. Sending back by laser, steered prism. Who built him? "don't remember" (no use of I). Who build humans? start with 1-celled… but who built those. You don't know, either. Question about God. One scientist tells of Verne's "Mysterious Island". Advice—population, education, purpose of life. "What is your purpose?" Could he kill all? Yes but what for?

2nd spacecraft, next to different comsat. Bottom line, we are being watched.

Subplot: Visiting Chinese scientist and Israeli woman join, later invited (as w. Lunokhod, make suggestions). What is purpose of visit? End with anecdote about boat, helicopter

Starting…at home, Wednesday afternoon, e-mail: appear at HQ tomorrow 9 am, important meeting, possibility of out of town assignment. Me, software engineer and mathematician. Wife, 3 grown kids—two in college, eldest daughter on track towards Ph.D atmos science. In evening, phone. Director for unmanned spaceflight. Friend. Advises—does not know what, but came from up high, asked to recommend. Spaceflight related, clearance needed.

Tell Brenda about it. I feel it is something unexpected

HQ., Administrator's conf room. Meet five others, clearly selected. Two from NASA, one NSA, two writers—well known. Room darkened—we see guards outside, no one else admitted. Computer projector—one person runs it already. Sworn in not to reveal—subject to perjury "or more". Will have chance to turn down, but even then can't do. Secret from anyone, not to tell, not to write. "I so swear"

"Good". Depuity agency chiefasks Adm Newham to start., click in "Briefing NASA HQ", slide one. Synchronous orbits, "Hilink Network". S/c handles video, data and text. Next slide.

Dark frame, but in the middle two small objects in bright light. The bigger one has extensions. Size about 20 meters. The big object is Hilink 18. The problem is, we don't

know what the small one is.

Asks rear admiral Newham to tell more. Guy at projector comes to front, gives details on comsat system. HiLink 18 quit. Completely, on all bands. We thought it was hit by something, but 3 hours later it came on. An amateur reported of seeing an object approach, so the space telescope was turned to it and this is the picture.

Lights!

NASA Deputy Chief: Nothing like this was expected or ever seen before, and NASA is assembling a team to be based at Canaveral and to investigate NASA. You are candidates for the team: if you join, you will have to move to Kennedy SFC, without family, and stay there for the duration of the investigation. The public does not know about the investigation, and no word should leak out You will be isolated like a jury, only more. You may write home, but your mail may be censored. If you feel you abide by these restrictions, you may say so now and will be excused, though you may still have to observe confidentiality. I give you an hour—be back here at 11:00, at which I would appreciate your decision. You may call home, but only say that high NASA officials talked to you, and it might be an important service to the USA. Nothing about what you heard.

I call home—we are given access to phones and I call Brenda. Tell her there is a team, I feel it is important, we got a briefing by NASA officials but cannot talk about it. Brenda: is there danger? A-don't think so, but may have to go on temp assignment to Canaveral. Will be in touch. We meet in front of Admin office and chat. How strangNSA guy says, "had such an assignment before and it was interesting. NASA thinks this is important enough to keep secret- unusual for NASA. Doesn't feel we'll be bored. If these people are involved, it is serious.

Come back to administrator office. Chairs are in front. Deputy admin, secy of admin there too, obviously trusted persons, they are introduced. All present, and Adm. Newham asks each to declare his or her decision. All are willing.

People in front come down, we settle in circle, Dep Admin begins:

You all saw strange object next to HiLink 18. There is more than we told you.

When it happened, about a month ago, the comm. people at Canaveral wondered if it was some human agency probing the s/c, or maybe an alien one. So they sent a message to the satellite command computer. It is possible to insert data into the data storage of the memory, and possible to encode a message. There is even a terminal where such signals may be read out—on the unlikely possibility of another s/c (not manned, one things) will encounter. In a simple code we sent, simply "who are you?" in several languages.

The reply came quickly. English. "Am messenger. Want to talk to you." Room silent.

pause. "So we sent other messages, and soon had a conversation." "Messenger from whom?" "cannot tell, do not know" We tried to find out several times after that, nothing useful. But We were given to understand he would like to send a "delegate" to us, and have a rocket mission outfitted in a hurry to go to sync orbit. Actually, a comsat had to be delayed., and a manned re-entry module re-engineered for re-entry. It is getting close to being ready, and we seek a team to manage contacts. Incl Dr. Fox from NSA , to help withsecurity angle—he's also very handy with computers—and two reps who may later—if we permit—present the story to the public. It's not the American way, but two keep confidentiality, we chose, no one from the press but two writers whose record suggested they may present it fairly.

Two more rockets are being tapped for the return trip, though the Messenger told not to be concerned. On the other hand, it (can't use he or she) wants the line to the Hilink 18 be kept open.

Home, packing, Bye to the kids ((John and Karen, teens). Picked up by NASA car in the morning and taken to BWI, fly to Orlando, car waiting, invited to lunch in VIP room- we get quite a few-then told we had reservations in "Astronaut" hotel, reserved by NASA, with security wall…dinner there, later we can eat in the cafeteria. Rate of reimbursement. Telephones monitored, please don't use, e-mail monitored too, I guess you tell families your address, on the sheet with the map… meet in room of NASA team-members at 8.

Some families of assigned people, incl. astronauts, in hotel. Guards

At 8, briefing. Launch scheduled in 3 days. We can walk around, library. Listen to recordings, read transcript

Describe transcript. A lot on the power plug, video plug, communication plug. Freq. compared to hydrogen emission 1420.40575177 Mhz. (WL. 21.10611405413 cm).