

The Windownesian

Chapter 3

It Comes From Above

On the 8th of September 2027, we have the second lesson of Ecology class. In the second lesson, we are already watching movies, and the movie is *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* directed by Miyazaki. “I don’t know why,” I whisper to Alex who sits next to me as the TA Eric is setting up the computer, “we only have 14 lessons in a semester, and we are just using them to watch movies?” “I don’t care. This is fun” says Alex.

Right after the movie, Professor Wong makes use of the remaining time and does some class discussions. After talking about nature in movies, the protagonist Nausicaä and ecofeminism, he talks about Anthropocene.

“Ah, Miyazaki has a lot of movies, that can relate to anthropocene! Human World. we will learn about this, on week 10!” This is how Professor Wong speaks, chunks of words, and rising tone at the end of a sentence. “There are two parts of this word! Anthropo, human. And the cene, world. Together they are anthropocene. Now, anthropocene, is started after holocene. The time after ice age, when the temperature rise D-RA-STI-COL-LY. Anthropocene, is about the human impact on the world. And the impact is GRA-DU-AL, D-RAS-TIC! When did it start is still argued. Some say it started in in-DUS-trial age. Some say it was a lot earlier when humans started agriculture.”

“Now the movie. Umm...Eric, show the questions again. [Eric highlights question 5, the last question.] Good! How does this movie relate to anthropocene. A huge part of the movie, is ‘Sea of Decay’. That, is the impact of humans. Humans, in the film, creates the ‘Giant Warriors’. The bioengineered creatures are for military use. And they end up destroying the world in seven days. Humans make impact. Humans make gradual impact. And they end up endangering themselves. They now need to live in the Valley of Wind because wind blow away poisonous particles, in the air. It is anthropocene, it is man-made catastrophe.”

“But when human harm their world to be uninhabitable, animals and plants adapt, to make their own cene! The Ohms, the huge bugs, will turn angry and fast, when humans enter. But they can live well in it. And oh, they use tentacles to interact with world, is also a biosemiotics. We will talk about it in week 7. When the female protagonist Nausicaä falls into the sea of decay, we find out they clean the world. The nonhumans, plants and animals, they

adapt to the environment, and they survive. This is anthropocene, it is human impact the world. Now good enough. Any questions?"

"Is our anthropocene that bad?" I say, "I mean, do movies have to do it that way."

"Plants and animals can adapt like that?" asks Alex.

"Ah, nonhumans are more than we think. We humans always think humans are the only lifeforms adapt, but animals and plants do that better than us. And that is biosemiotics. Of course I am not optimistic that they can survive the huge changes humans made. Human is really THAT bad! That's why movies film us like that. We as humans need to learn to be responsible humans. And we must learn about the anthropocene. Scientists can do their job. But we are English majors! We help the world in our own ways, we learn from cultural texts. But Jonathan, anthropocene is just an impact. Impact can be good, there can be good anthropocene. Now you are all final year students and may have your own future. If we can give you inspirations, we succeed. No matter where you go, what you will be, we want to give you this mindset. English department is, practical in this way."

"So, no ,more questions? Good. If you have questions, you can find me, or find Eric. He is an expert of *Valley of the Wind*."

9th September, Thursday. I join up with Meander for her programme of 'The People'. She is interviewing the Vice Secretary for Education on the Issue of Children Education. A topic I am highly interested in, but fail to join. Usually when she is hosting 'The People' as a part-time member, I sit there and listen to the live broadcast. Today is a bit different, I need to look after Meander's nephew and nieces. Her elder male cousin's children to be exact. Her cousin Kelvin often visits her family with his Taiwan wife Mei Ling and their four kids, one boy and 3 girls. Mei Ling stays in the studio, wanting to hear the broadcast live. Just for not disturbing the programme, Kelvin and I take the kids out for a walk. Meander's studio is located in Tsim Sha Tsui by the Victoria Harbour, which has a great waterfront for a walk.

"Daddy, what is that?" Amy the oldest asks, pointing at afar.

A huge object is falling slowly. It's white but it doesn't reflect the light, it is a dim white, a little bit golden under the resting sun. It is a round flat balloon. No one actually knows how big it is until it is a hundred meters from the ground. The van-huge pod softly drops, making no sound. It looks like a dough, yes it looks like a dough. Strangely, it doesn't really land on the ground, but floats. It floats just in front of us.

“Kids, don’t touch it,” Kelvin orders his kids, “Amy, you take Diana. Jonathan...where is Cathy?”

I have been watching the second kid Billy, not noticing the third kid already in the middle of touching it. I leave Billy and intercept Cathy, and push her to her father. I want to touch it too, but not directly. I fetch a pen in my bag, and touch the object. The white dough-looking object has a small part extending out, and it shapes itself like my own pen, and the colour blue paints all over the extension. Amazed at what I’m seeing, I really couldn’t notice Cathy under me who broke free from her father. She touches the thing with her palm. Parallelly, the thing grows out what looks exactly like an arm with a palm as small as hers, its palm touches her palm. She giggles and retrieves her hand, and the arm which the thing grows turns back to white and returns back to the object.

“What have your father told you?” I pet the girl.

“Sorry Uncle Jon,” she giggles. I am just twenty something, from when on I became an uncle?

Seeing that the thing doesn’t do harm to the kids, I let go of my pen, and touch the thing with my palm. Upon contact, the thing grows a shape as same as my arm and a hand, and it eventually becomes a hand, feels just as same as my own. I withdraw my hand to observe, and the palm lines are accurate. Diana breaks from her eldest sister and wobbles to the thing. She has just learnt to walk. As she almost hits the thing, she takes out a candy from her pocket. She holds the candy with both hands high, and pushes the candy into the object. That thing pours out something that looks exactly like her candy. As that replicated ‘candy’ falls onto Diana’s hand, she turns around, squeaks excitedly and waves her candy as high as she could. She attempts to tear it open, but it doesn’t work. She is too young. I lay my hand on her sight, and she places the candy on my hand, a gesture inviting me to open it for her. Like most packaging of most candies, its side is jagged for easier tearing. Yet as I try to tear it, it feels solid and does not open like candies should. I laugh uncontrollably, this thing has only replicated the plastic packaging. Disappointed, Diana is about to cry. As I am about to give her a new one, Billy rushes in, and gives the thing a punch. As soon as he punches, an identical forearm with fist grows quickly from Billy’s side, and punches him in the face. Judging from his wild laughs right afterward, he is not doing this to defend his sister, but just to have fun. It is Amy, the eldest sister who comforts Diana.

As Amy takes away Diana, another kid shows up. It’s a little boy, nowhere older than Diana. He stands idle in front of the white thing, opening his arms. We look around, and his

parents are rushing to him. I come to my senses, about to grab him. Who knows if this is safe. Too late, he hugs the thing. I afraid that the thing may swallow him or something. Instead, the thing grows two chunks of rod surrounding the kid to hug him, and the chunks become arms, sharing the same colour and I touch it, the same texture. As the boy detects his parents and lets go, the arms retrieve themselves. The object is still white.

Kelvin walks to me, looking at the “candy” I am still holding. He gives me an evil smile, and pulls out 500 from his wallet. I know what he wants. I giggle. And so he shoves the bill into the thing. A thin piece of the thing emerges out, coloured and falls down. He takes the replicated bill, touches it and gives a disappointed face. It looks exactly the same, and the texture is on spot. Even the anti-falsification details including the logo which should reflect sunlight are here. The thing is, it is why Kelvin is regretting, it only captures the folded shape since it is how Kelvin inserted it, and cannot be unfolded. So, it replicates the very state of the thing it touches. He looks at the ‘money’ and looks at me,

“Hey Jon, do you have cash for dinner?”

Seriously, even if he inserts them flat one by one, it cannot fool people since there is a way to check it. Kelvin’s holophone rings, it is the song Arrival of the Queen of Sheba quartet. Amy happens to be holding his father’s phone. He loses balance trying to take it from Amy, and the holophone flies straight onto the thing. After a few seconds of idling, the thing throws out Kelvin’s phone. Two black speakers grow on the object, and it plays loud elegant ringtone.

A while later, Meander and Mei Ling find us. The kids rush to their mother and auntie. When they arrive, there are more people surrounding the thing. Two policemen are here to stand by just in case things happen.

“Mami, that thing can grow hand!”

“Mami, that thing eat my candy.”

“Mami that thing punches me.”

“Mum, that thing eats daddy’s phone.”

“Is that why you don’t answer my call?” Mei Ling pets her kids.

“Not the worst thing happen today.” Kelvin sighs.

I am looking at the crowd. Some are trying to touch it, some put things into it.

“Hey Jon, can we go?” Meander asks, “the kids are waiting. We can return later.”

After dinner, we bid Meander's cousin and his family goodbye, escorting them to the MTR station.

"Mei Ling, it's just 830, are you going home this early?" Meander asks.

"The kids need to sleep. Besides, I need to buy some salt on the way."

"There is a local store nearby," I suggest, "I buy salt there."

"Not any salt can do. Experts say that even sea salt is unhealthy."

"Even sea salt is not safe?" I exclaim.

"Well," Kelvin says, "due to the pollution to the sea, sea salt has microplastic. And we are not going to feed ourselves plastics. Only himalayan salt is safe, because it is extracted from the ancient sea with no human pollution."

"Ironic, humans throw trash to the sea, and we eat the trash back," comments Amy.

"When did you become so clever?" Meander rubs her head.

"General Studies teach these," replies the girl.

"But mountain salt is so expensive, 30 per pack?" Meander exclaims.

"It's 40," says Mei Ling, "must be considerate when you are feeding 4 kids."

Once we have sent them away, I rush back to the landing point. The crowd is noticeably bigger, but not entirely crowded. People of all ages are taking photos with it, touching it, or trying to put things into it. Several are standing on the side. Meander manages to touch the thing, and it grows an identical arm. That surely amazes her. A bunch of teens are approaching the object.

"C'mon Byron, give your best punch!"

"Yea, go Byron."

The teen they are calling is Byron, he and his sister Anna are members of the daycare center Athena works in. He is with a few older teenagers. Byron walks to the thing, and he moves elbow back for strongest punch, and he punches the thing with full force. The thing immediately launches a fist and hits Byron in the head, stunning him on the ground. The other boys step back. One, seemingly their leader, walks to it and chok it. The thing grows a hand, copies his act and chokes him, lifting him up. One of the stand-by policemen rushes to it once Byron is punched, rushing to the boy and checks if he's conscious. This policeman is Byron's father Guo Zhong. He points his gun to the teen, and fires one shot at the thing, avoid aiming at the kid. Upon the gunshot, the thing retrieve the hand strangling that youth. Consecutively, at the spot it was shot, an identical bullet-shaped ammo sparks and launch to the same direction, hitting uncle Guo Zhong, knocking him down. The surrounding crowd

disperse once hearing 2 gunshots. The other policeman quickly talks to his comm “Tsim Sha Tsui Waterfront A34 needs reinforcements. 2046 is down. Civilian is down”. Emerges from the crowd there comes Zedekiah.

“Let me through! I am a medic!” he shouts. But once he sees that it is an officer, he stops and looks confused.

“Zed,” Athena appears behind him, “you check the boy over there, I see if uncle Guo Zhong is okay.”

Guo Zhong and Zedekiah had a complicated experience. See story “On Both Sides of War” for reference.

“Byron is fine,” he reports. Then he squats to inspect Guo Zhong, “luckily he is using plastic bullet and it is not a serious wound. I suggest hospital.”

“Why are you guys here?” I ask once the wounded are sent away.

“We work for the police,” says Athena, “Just kidding, we are here to look at this thing which falls from above. Now people are hurt, I guess they are going to seal the place.”

And she is right. More policemen soon arrive and start setting a parameter around the thing. The crowds are soon behind the fence 50 meters away. We all stand behind the blockade, trying to figure out what is happening there. But since there is nothing to look at, we decide to return to hall.

Midnight, the windows are closed, the windownesian’s radio is playing soft music (finally, Bobby finds a music channel everyone won’t mind listening to all night long). Meander is sleeping by my side. I quickly fall asleep after a long day of dealing with professor in the morning, notes in the afternoon, and kids at night. However, I wake up soon, it is 3am. Cannot actually sleep well when you know big events are happening. I turn my body up, and right, Meander is not there. I sit up, looking at my seat, and Meander is there, in her pajamas, watching a holophone projecting a screen on the wall. I climb down the bed ladder. It is a live broadcast with a few thousand people watching. On the screen, it displays a line of policemen at one corner, surrounding a huge white object. It must be the screen or that thing does not seem as white as it falls off, it is chalky, even under the strong lights in Victoria Harbour. In fact, I quite remember right after the policeman shot at the thing, it is not clear white anymore. The live broadcast has nothing to look at, other than police oftentimes walking back and forth. Can’t blame Meander dozing off. After sitting there for half an hour, I doze off too.

Someone shakes me in my sleep, it's Meander, and it is 4:45. She points at the screen. A guy in white scientist robe is walking slowly to the object, escorted by 2 armed policemen on each side. The camera angle changes, facing the scientist. He is holding a huge syringe. His assistant by his side is holding a tray of containers and surgical knives. It's obvious, they are trying to take some samples. The screen breaks into a dual screen, one facing the scientist from above, one facing the thing from the police line. The scientist lands his hand in the thing, and parallelly the thing grows a similar gloved arm. As he moves his hand across the surface, the thing lands and moves its 'hand' on the scientist as well. The scientist has been doing this for a few minutes, perhaps because he couldn't really find a suitable spot. At a certain spot, he pats the spot. But its 'hand' touches the scientist's palm, looks as if he is having a high five. Quite honestly, I don't know why can't I hear laughter. This should be a hilarious scene. At least Meander and I find it funny. He then takes his empty syringe, and pokes at one spot. Zedekiah would tell you from his experience that that is the R54 syringe sampler, one of the easiest medical tools to use. Before the scientist can pull samples, the thing grows a large syringe, and pokes it into him. The assistant drops his tray, all 4 policemen behind have their guns pointing at him as well. Under great pain in his chest, he starts pulling, hoping to get the sample, and the thing simultaneously does so. Perhaps because the thing is solid, or is an unknown matter, there is nothing in the guy's syringe. That 'syringe' on the other hand, has a full tube of blood from the scientist. The scientist faints, and drops. Two officers quickly pull him away from the scene. Angry, sad, or just to complete the objective, the assistant takes a scalpel, and quickly cuts a piece of the thing. He succeeds, the piece drops into the container. Yet aligned with his actions, the thing grows the same knife as the assistant cuts it, and cuts a piece of meat the assistant. The assistant screams in agony. Under the shout of the commanding officer, the policemen shoot several shots at the thing. The scene quickly turns into chaos. Once the bullets hit the thing, the thing absorbs them, and returns the exact same amount of bullet to the policemen. The four policemen fell, and some bullets hit the police defense line. The thing turns light grey. The commander shouts several orders, grabs the fallen comrade and the scientists. Meanwhile two rolls of police with shields march forward in front of the thing. At a shout, a few balls roll to the thing, and grey gas comes out from those balls. Typical way of police using mixed poisonous gas to stun animals. Yet the thing absorbs all the gas, and shoots a bigger amount to the police. Some without masks drop and some run away. The thing now turns grey.

"When was that thing there!" Bobby shouts behind the stunned us.

We look at him, not yet recovered from the surreal horror we have just watched.

“Stupid Earthlings,” he runs to his seat and grabs his breathers, “we must stop them before worse could happen.”

“Bobby,” I ask, “you are going out?”

“Yes Jonathan Wills, I am going out.”

“What does this have to do with you?” asks Meander.

Bobby doesn’t answer Meander, and he shakes Alex’s bed.

“Alex, Alex! You are AI, help me check which road is the fastest to the Harbour.”

“I am AI,” Alex murmurs drearily, “I am not Google map.”

“Quick, I don’t know the traffic here in this world.”

“You think I know?” mumbles Alex, “the furthest I have been to is the supermarket 10 minutes away.”

“Actually,” I interrupt, “we have a thing called taxi, rental private car. I have booked one. I know the way. I can take you there.”

And so the gang is off, with Bobby packing his breather and his protective suit just in case it rains.

None spoke a word in our journey. Alex is charging himself via a portable charger Meander lends him, still sleeping. Bobby is anxiously checking his air tank. I am watching the live broadcast from my phone. Only Meander is talking a few lines about where we are going to the driver and the driver thinks we are crazy. Once we are off the taxi, I lead Bobby to run to our destination. Meander pays the fee and grabs Alex to follow. That thing is black when we see it again.

Policemen in blue or green uniforms are already gone. Securing the area are lines of persons in green camouflage military suits with a batch of “eight one” written vertically in Chinese letters. Military vehicles are parked everywhere. No shot is fired, but it looks like a battlefield.

“The liberation army? What is the Chinese military doing here?”

“I need to see your commander!” Bobby shouts to a high ranking officer who wears a brighter uniform.

“Zhu Kai. Zhè shì gè jìn qū.”

“Do you know what is that? Do you know how to deal with that? I know what that is! You should let me through!”

The commander looks confused. A police officer, uncle Guo Zhong, recovering, sees him and tells the commander,

“Ah, he is a scientist, Kē xué jiā. Let him in. Ràng tā jìn lái ba.”

Bobby’s breather and protective suit makes him look like a scientist.

Once Bobby is through, he tells the commander about the thing, and Alex translates it. “That thing is called a chug-a-lug, or some people call it The Swallow. It is a technology from Kepler-22b which is made of negative neutrons. Our planet sends them to planets wide across the galaxy. Wherever it lands, it copies the stimulus it receives to collect the data from the planet. You touch it and it will touch you back. If you shoot it, it will shoot you back!”

It is at this moment gunshots are heard around the thing. The officer rushes to the place. I trace back the live broadcast and see what’s going on. A minute ago, in a checking of the Chugalug, a soldier accidentally drops the detector into it. Before the Chugalug spits out another detector, the soldier shoves a whole arm into it, and he is pulled into The Swallow, emerging into it. Two of his comrades try to pull him and their effort ends in vain. A lieutenant witnesses it and fires a few shots at it, and he ends up getting shot back by it. All men are pointing guns and vehicles are aiming at the thing.

“You guys do not shoot! You guys do not shoot!” Bobby shouts behind the blockade.

“Nǐmen bù yào kāi qiāng! Nǐmen bù yào kāi qiāng!” Alex shouts behind him.

And we are all intercepted behind the military defense line.

“Nǐ yǒu bànfǎ jiù tā ma?” The commander asks us.

“You have ways to save him?” Alex translates.

“It should be ‘do you’” Bobby corrects him.

“I saw that thing spit the things it swallowed,” I say, and Alex translates.

“But does it return everything?” Meander asks.

“It really depends, I don’t know,” Bobby says, “but if you fire it will get worse!” He continues, “it is not without limit. It collects stimulus, and when it reaches full capacity, it will leave.”

“So what we need to do is to continuously feed stimulus to it?” I ask.

“Yes, anything, but definitely not bullets or missiles.” Bobby responses.

“You have watched Ultraman Max?” Alex asks after he translates.

“It’s ‘have you’” groans Bobby.

“What does a Japanese TV series have to do with this situation?”

“In one of those episodes, there is a monster called Leaf Rot. It is similar to this Chugalug. It copies everything it receives. It reflects everything shot to it. Even the ultraman’s laser attacks don’t work.”

“It should be ‘doesn’t’, watch the subject verb agreement,” Bobby corrects.

“How did that end?” asks Meander.

“The ultraman was defeated. But then a little girl plays flute in front of it, and it grows musical instruments, and flies away peacefully. We should try some music.”

“Alex, gimme that.” I grab Alex’s holophone, search Canon in D, turn on 3D project function. On my palm there is a band of 4, violin, violin, viola and cello. And I throw it to The Swallow.

“I need it!” Alex protests.

“You are going to buy a new, better one anyway.”

The holophone is still playing music inside the Chugalug. It swings left and right with 4 cello notes in the string quartet. It grows eight hands all around it, and on those hands there grow violins, viola and cello, with the hands holding bows, and starts playing with the wooden instruments. The sound does not come from the holophone anymore, but the quartet itself. The Chugalug turns from black, to dark grey, light grey, and white each time it finishes a corus. The soldiers are dazed, we all are. We forget that this is a military blockade. It is a live music show by the promenade.

“Jī huì lái le! Kāi huō!” A man shouts. A missile vehicle fires a rocket from our behind, it hits through the cello and into the Chugalug. The Chugalug throws down all the strings, and beyond the ‘hands’ it launches a rocket back. I look back, the rocket hits the missile vehicle and it explodes, shooting rockets facing the Chugalug. Those rockets hit The Swallow and it shoots one back to another missile vehicle, two tanks, destroying them. We drop to the ground.

“Dài zǒu píng mí! Bù yào kāi huō!” the commander orders once confirming the Chugalug is idle.

Some soldiers are on their feet, pulling us up and escorting us away with walls of men around us. No shots are fired. But in the smoke, I see a uniformed man lying next to the opened vehicle door. That should be the driver of that missile vehicle, barely escaped. I look back, the last line of soldiers, closest to the vehicles, are hurt by shrapnels. They lead us to a safety line, and we can now spectate the ground. The army is in chaos, arranging men to take away

the wounded, and some pointing guns at Chugalug. The Chugalug is black again. It does not fire. It stands there, behind the randomly dispersed troops.

As the army regroups, there is a young woman standing in front of the Chugalug. She stands there, between The Swallow and the armed dense line of men. From the live broadcast, I recognize her. She is none other than Athena. Step by step she walks to the thing when the men behind her are still and afraid. Splitting the soldier's line into two is Zedekiah, standing next to her. Not looking concerned, not looking frightened, holding his medical kit. Everyone who knows these two knows, he is not here to stop her. Athena walks to a distance where she can touch the thing. She opens her arms, and gives it a hug. The Chugalug grows two hands on her sides, and hugs her. Its colour is a bit lighter. Zedekiah joins his girlfriend, and hugs it. Soon, Meander walks through the blockade, Alex walks through the blockade, several people walk through the blockade, all walking to the Chugalug, and hug it. The soldiers, they drop their weapon, and join as the last line of hugging. The Swallow withdraws its many arms, and grows a pair of gigantic arms, surrounding all the people hugging it. It turns grey, and it turns light grey. It is then it withdraws its 'hands'. And it starts to float up. At the bottom, it drops a pair of human legs, then a hip, a torso, a head, a full military person. The Chugalug rises slowly all the way from the ground, to the clouds, above the rising September sun, and disappears in sight before the sun starts burning.

"Where is it going?" a random guy asks.

Meander says, "perhaps to another planet, or its own planet. We will never know."

"Well that planet will be doomed," Zedekiah suggests.

"I don't know," says Athena, "it has learnt a lot from us, both good and bad. We will never know."

We look down and see the standing confused soldier.

"Lì zhèng!" the commander walks in and shouts.

He salutes, "Èr děng bīng Wáng Dà Wěi, bàodào!"

The commander pats his shoulder and they walk away from the crowd, joining the retreating troops.

"So," Athena talks to Bobby when we walk away from the place, "you said the Chugalug is for collecting data. How will the data be used then?"

“They will use the data,” Bobby looks at the sky, “to create new technology. New technology like me.”

“Wait, that is how you are created?” Meander asks.

“Yours fell onto a stubborn man who is water allergic, oxygen allergic and sensitive to grammar?” Alex asks.

“It’s ‘did yours fall’,” Bobby corrects Alex, “but yes, I guess more or less.”

“Ahem.” A white robe man appears behind us, “I am Doctor Yuen Kwok-yi. I overhear you guys. This guy you call Bobby here is special.”

Zedekiah and I quickly step in front of Bobby.

“I would like to invite him for a visit.” The man says.

“You are not taking him away,” Zedekiah rumbles, “not under our watch.”

“Why are you guys so overactive about a visit?” Bobby asks.

“He is not just inviting you for a visit,” I explain, “he is doing some experiment on you. To get what they cannot get from the Chugalug. He may dissect you, and even kill you.” Bobby knows the danger and brace under us.

“I promise, I will do no harm to him,” Dr Yuen claims, “I am just running some tests and see what I can do.” We are at ease. “You will see your friend intact.” He promises.

“Guys,” Athena says, “I think he can be trusted, I have been reading this man’s blog. This might be good for Bobby too if the tests help him. Just,” she steps to the man face to face, “if anything happens to him...”

“Sure sure. I hope it won’t take long.”

Under most of our agreement, Bobby leaves with the white robes.

10th September, Friday. After our lesson, Alex and I return to our room. We cannot concentrate on the lesson, thinking of Bobby. At around 3pm, someone knocks at our door. It’s Bobby, alive and intact, still wearing the mask, but the protective suit is gone.

“So, they didn’t dissect you,” I say.

“Well,” Bobby takes off his mask, takes a wet towel from my desk and throws it on his face. His skin is not red like last time, and he gives out a relieved sigh.

“You are not afraid of water now?” Alex observes.

“Wait, how?” I ask.

“Doctor Yuen used some nanotechnology and replicated human skins on me. Now I can touch aqua.”

“Wait, did they fix your lungs so that you can take in more oxygen?” I ask.

He walks to close the windows we have just opened, “yes, but not much to survive this,” and he returns to his own seat.

Feeling the room stuffy again, Alex and I ask at the same time “Can you open the windows please?” “You can open the windows please?”

“Alex, it’s ‘can you’. I have the ability to, but no, I don’t want to,” says the windownesian.

Drafted on 30th August, 2021

by The Sapient Sabre