The horse gallops like the wind, and Alcor feels the evening breeze on the cheeks. He feels at peace with the world: at that moment, everything seems nice.

From that height he can see the Rocket Ranch, with the woods and mountains all around. The sun sets behind the peaks, lengthening the shadows. A picture postcard.

It was been a long day, at the observatory of Professor Procton: since it become a center of advanced scientific research, Alcor, who is now the assistant number one of the professor, had not a moment of pause. Dozens of tests on new types of metals and alloys, a myriad of mathematical analysis on subatomic structures, a multitude of research in unknown areas of space...for Alcor all this was exciting, but also tiring.

Conferences, meetings, discussions, organizations ... but, at the end of the day, a ride to the Ranch compensated everything.

Although Maria was happy, she did not want to see Alcor for only a little time, and often she came to see the research center. Alcor had protested, but Maria was inflexible.   
"I’m taking you something to eat and I’m coming to say how are you, what's wrong if a wife wants to meet her husband?"

Even though it was a lot of time ago, Alcor still cannot realize that Maria had become his wife. Maybe she would be more quiet after the wedding. But of course not! She is always the same, a quicksilver girl who had always something to do: to ride a bike, to put on a new fence, to help cows giving birth, to organize horse breeding and cultivation. Rigel now would not be able to do something without her. And not only this: her exceptional intelligence and acuity in some mathematical calculations surprised many people at the research center. Definitely an inexhaustible gal. With only a secret regret: she has not yet a child. Maria does not talk about this, but Alcor understands this from so many clues: the way she sets the children, some moments in which she sighs staring into space.

Alcor seeks to dispel these thoughts: *sooner or later the child will come, it takes patience!*

He tends the reins and the horse gallops toward the house.

"Hey, Alcor!"

Mizar greets him when he sees him, sitting on the fence of the ranch. He is now grown; although he is still a boy, he is beginning to work a lot with his father.

"Hello, Mizar! Where is your father? "

"He is always there, at the top, to look through the telescope."

Alcor looks up and sees Rigel fixing the sky with his telescope, then he sits screaming on the radio:

"Alieeeeeens, where aaare youuuu? We are your frieeeends!! We are waiiiiting for yoooou! " *("Aliens, where are you? We are your friends!! We are waiting for you! " : he is screaming real high…)*

Coming down from his horse, Alcor shakes his head and says:

"After all this history of Vega, how can he continue as before?"

"Well, he documented" replies Mizar "He knew that there are alien races as the Boazan, or the Cambels, even a Princedom of Zeon or something. In short, it is his obsession."

Alcor smiles. *Perhaps, Rigel does these things to not think for Venusia, light years away from Earth, there on Fleed. Although Rigel is happy for his daughter, he, like a father, lacks her daughter. Poor guy…”*

"Alcor, ugly bum that you are! Do you think to get back at this time of the day? "

The scream of Rigel shakes the ex-pilot of TFO, which is confounded, not knowing what to say.

Rigel immediately goes down from the tower of his observatory staff, using a rope. However, with a movement too sudden, he loses his grip and slams his head on the ground. But he gets up at once and walks over to Alcor with the determination of a tank. Rigel beats the finger on Alcor’s chest, yelling:

"There are a lot of things to do! Breeding, bringing the horses at the watering place, the cultivation of beets! How dare you to do **nothing** and leave everything to Maria? Eh? Make your wife work? Shame on you! "

Alcor is resumed and then he blurts out:

"But ... but what are these talks? You know I’m working at the Research Center with Procton! I cannot do two things at once! "

Rigel crosses his arms and, turning away, says:

"These are all apologies! The **real** work is **this**, not that stuff you are doing at that research center! You all are just cooking your brain! "

*You are the person with a cooked brain, you turnip head!*

Alcor was dying to tell him this phrase, but with a miraculous effort manages to restrain himself.

"Ah, I'm going to see if Maria is well!"

Alcor gets out quickly, regardless of the cries of the "poor guy" Rigel. *He has not changed an inch. With or without Venusia, Rigel is Rigel.*

Alcor and Maria’s home is close to the main building of the Ranch. Alcor reaches it with a jump and, just he is coming in, he feels that something is wrong. He does not smell of dinner: nevertheless, Maria prepared it. Turning around, he sees Maria sitting on the floor, with her legs crossed, looking away slightly upward, silentiously. Alcor, scared, says:

"Maria! What have you got? "

With that voice, Mary's eyes returned to normal.

"Oh, what? Alcor? But you're here already? What time is it? "

"It will be the past eight ... what happened?"

"Suddenly I heard something today...you know that I have a special bond with my brother Actarus!"

"Yes, I know, you have the skills of mental telepathy and the like ... what happened to Actarus?"

"I felt like a call for help. Alcor, he's in trouble! And I fear that something very serious! "

The huge dark hand progresses. One star is too close, and it flashes as if it is asking for help. Soon after, it switches off. Another star has disappeared into the darkness.

Even if it seems incredible, some planets are living in this darkness, shining a grim light. The biggest planets are seven, including the greatest: **Acheron**, where there is a castle so large to covering with its ebony towers all the globe around. Its name, **Darkhold**, is pronounced with fear, even among the planets of darkness: the horrors that happen in it would make mad even the bravest man or a sane man. Darkhold, being a castle with virtually no boundaries, is divided into many sectors, each with its own specific role: the training of armies, the construction of spaceships and fighting robots and also **Bedlam**, the most feared section, reserved for torture, human sacrifice or genetic experiments.

To the north of the planet, a huge tower soars high, surpassing all others, as almost to defy the sky, similar to the tower that once built and called Babel. It called the **Solitude tower**. In the upper floors of the Solitude tower there is the residence of the throne room, where, at the center of dark draperies, illuminated by a row of blazing braziers, lies a being nameless and faceless, which controls all the darkness of the Shadow. Once he had a name and a face, but there were forgotten for centuries: he is called now **Dark One**, because the light does not reflects on him. The black of his body is broken only by two glowing flames, which would correspond to his eyes.

Right now, he's happy, because now is the time that he was waiting for so long. Now his goal is near. Suddenly, he feels something next to him and speaks in a hollow voice:

"Who is it?"

A slender female figure shows herself before the throne, illuminated by the iridescent lights of the braziers.

"I’m Jezabel, my lord. I wanted to tell you that he has arrived. "

"Garuda?"  
Jezabel answers, hiding her disappointment.

"Yes, Dark One."

"Let him enter."

**Garuda**, one of the six generals of darkness, stepped forward, walking straight in an arrogant way and kneeling before the Dark One, almost mocking.

"Hail, Dark One."

He is covered by an extremely elaborate armor, casting reflections that vary with every movement. His black hairs rival with the dark of his eyes. He gets up slowly, keeping one hand on the hilt of the sword and the other to hold his helmet. His coat is shaken slightly.

"How can I serve my lord?"

Although the phrase is obsequious, the smile of Garuda while he has pronounced gives some serious doubts about his sincerity.

Jezabel is no longer able to restrainAscolta:

"What is this insolence, Garuda? Remember who is the person to which you are talking!"  
The air begins to crackle around Jezabel, while her eyes blaze with anger.

Even the air around Garuda takes on a strange, almost brilliant shape.

"What are you talking about, Jezabel? I'm just doing my respects" replied Garuda, still smiling.

The wrath of Jezebel is growing, but at the same time, she feels unsure. Garuda has a power that - perhaps - rivals with that of the Dark One, and Jezabel, although it is stronger than all the generals of darkness, knows the danger of a duel between them. But she cannot hold back.

"Enough!" thunders suddenly the Dark One, raising imperiously his hand, and both stop, perhaps with relief. "We're not here to argue. Garuda, I called you because I want you take care of Fleed. "

"I should personally take care of that insignificant planet? It seems a waste of energy, almost an insult. We conquered worlds and empires much wider!"

"It is indeed a planet to be nothing, but crucial to my plans. You should know that over there lives the king which led to the collapse of the Vega Empire"

"I heard about it. An empire quite poor. Does not that seem disproportionate to send me and my army against that planet? It is like sending an elephant against an ant"

"Who told you to do this in person? No, I want you to send one of your Beast of the abyss. At least, in respect of the king, and his famous weapon..."

"The robot Grendizer?"

"Right."

Garuda placed his hand on his chin, thinking.

"I do not know if Grendizer can measure up with a Beast of the abyss…anyhow, I will send it today"

"You can go, then"

Garuda turns in an insolent way and so leaves, followed by the glare of Jezabel.

Once he is out, Jezabel turns to the Dark One, saying:

"My lord, why you do not let Garuda respects you? Yes, he is said to be almost as strong about you, but ... "

"Let him believe it, Jezabel" answers the Dark One, with a smile, impossible to note in his black shape.

"Eh?"  
"Garuda serves me well: he is full of strength. So, let it be deceived. When he will be no more useful, I will cut him off"

"But ..."

"Do not think about it, Jezabel. Garuda aims only to domination and power. The same things that I wanted, once"

"And now, what you want, my lord?"

"A new creation, Jezabel. All the creation made in my image and likeness. And we are very close to this result. "

She does not know what to say: this is the first time she hears the Dark One speaking so explicitly.

"Jezabel, now Garuda will do his part. When the time comes, you know what to do"

"Of course, Dark One."

And Jezabel smiles.

Trascrizione fonetica

Dizionario

Professor Procton lights his pipe and blows a puff of smoke. It's the only way he knows to calm his nervousness. For two days he tried to contact Fleed without the slightest result. Since Alcor and Maria had come to the research Centre in the night, very worried, because they thought Actarus was in danger, he ordered to Hayashi to contact Actarus and Venusia on Fled, with no response.

*We have had the last contact only the day before! What the heck is going on? Magnetic interference? Maybe.*

But the worried tone of Mary concerns him: her mental link with Actarus is very solid, despite the immense distance that separates them, and she does not worry for no reason. Frankly, Procton does not know what to do. Fleed is too far away, and he once had spoken with Actarus about teleporters: but they were very difficult to install, and, in addition, they were still at an experimental level.

Procton inspires some more smoke from his pipe, looking out the window at the setting sun. He loves Actarus as a son, and he had suffered very much for his safeness during the terrible war against Vega. Every time that Actarus leaved for a mission, that could be the last one. Yes, Procton was worried the same also for the others: but he and Actarus had a special bond, a single understanding. He taught to him the basics of language and culture of Earth, he gave to him protection and support. Procton has no relatives, except for some distant cousin with whom he has lost contact. His work had involved him so much that he had never find time to marry and make a family.

That evening, in which he had found Actarus dying by the roadside and leading to his house, he realized he had found a family. The loneliness of both - Actarus and Procton - were filled each other with an unexpectedly reciprocity.

And now, he finds yet that sense of fear in his heart, that he hoped not to experience again: fear for a son in danger and his inability to help him.

The Grand Vizier, holding the stick, notes with concern the men who work on the computer console. Even if he is old, he can lead the problems of the kingdom of Fleed with a vigor and energy that surprised the young ones. Generally, however, these were diplomatic or administrative problems: in front of this problem, however, he feels helpless.

A messenger is coming up to him, and the Grand Vizier, without turning around, knows who is him and what he wants. Several times this scene was repeated.

"Honourable Grand Vizier, his majesty the king Duke Fleed wants to know if the communications with the Earth have been restored"

The Grand Vizier sighs and smooths his long white beard: he has never seen the king Duke so concerned to be nagging. Clearly, contacting Earth must be of exceptional importance, given the insistence of the king. But a king cannot be send to the devil: with calm, the Grand Vizier must find the right words to answer to him, even though he knows that any answer will be unsatisfactory.

"Unfortunately, there is nothing new. The technicians are working, but I think there is no failure in the machinery. There are outside interference. I do not know whether these interference are casual or wanted. Tell the king that, if possible, I would like to talk to him"

The messenger nods and walks away. *There's something underneath,* thinks the Grand Vizier. Every meeting with the ambassadors was canceled, and the hangar and the launch pad of Grendizer were tested, along with the powerful robot. And the king is not one person who worries about nothing. No, I really have to talk to him. I do not believe that these "external interference" are casual...Dizionario

1. **sostantivo** 
   1. cheek
   2. jowl