

Small World

Prologue: Part 1

A figure awoke to the blaring sound of an analog alarm clock. Letting out a tired yawn, it rubbed its eyes with a pair of furry grey paws to give them time to adjust to the bright sunlight shining into the room from a nearby window. Reaching for a pair of round lensed, black framed glasses on a table just to the side of its bed to don them, the figure rose out from the covers, and walked over to a large mirror at the other end of the room. In the mirror was the reflection of a three and a half foot tall, grey furred, bipedal rodent like creature, with an upright standing, two foot long bushy tail that ended in a cream-coloured tip, blue eyes, and large, round ears that came to points at their ends. As the mouse-like creature picked up what appeared to be a comb of some kind from a small dresser next to the mirror, and began grooming his fur all over with it, the figure proclaimed out loud to itself in a confident male voice, "Today's the day. I can feel it. Today is going to be the day that I finally prove to all Ferren kind that life on other worlds exists."

A short time later, the glasses-wearing male Ferren was in another room of his house, which was filled with bulky, old fashioned looking computer equipment. As the Ferren began taking notes with a small writing utensil on a piece of paper at the computer console, he was suddenly interrupted from his task by the familiar chiming sound of the com box, indicating an incoming message. As soon as the com box had finished printing out the note, the Ferren tore the paper from the machine, and began to look over the message, which read, *'Anthony, honey, please cut out this nonsense. I know finding aliens is your dream and all that, but the odds of any of us reaching that goal anytime soon are outrageously low. It's become an obsession with you. It would be fine if it paid the bills for you, but it doesn't. You're so smart, and you could be doing so much more with your life. Why can't you just go out and get a real job like normal Ferrens do? I don't mean to burst your bubble or anything; I'm just worried about you. Message me back as soon as you can, dear. Love, your mother.'*

After gently setting the message aside on his work station, the Ferren, Anthony, murmured quietly to himself, "Sorry, mother. I can't stop now. I've worked too hard to just give up. And I'm close. I know I am. I can feel it. All I need is to find the right radio frequency..."

Unplugging the com box from its wall outlet to ensure no further interruptions, Anthony then resumed his paperwork, speaking quietly out loud as he wrote, "Interstellar transmission test number forty-two. So far, all my attempts at locating intelligent life beyond our world have been unsuccessful. But I have a feeling this time will be different. To any historians who may read these documents in the far future, mark these words as the day that Professor Anthony Gray, astronomer, finally proved that we are not alone in this universe."

The glasses wearing Ferren then began adjusting dials and switches on his control board for a moment, before lying back in his swivel chair, letting out a small sigh, and remarking to himself, "Now for my favourite part. The waiting game."

After several hours of waiting, with still no luck picking up any radio transmissions from outside the Ferren solar system, Anthony was lying face down on his control panel, snoring loudly, when suddenly, the sound of what seemed to be some form of music emanating from one of his computer speakers jolted him to alertness. Upon hearing unfamiliar voices accompanying the music, Anthony commented to himself "That doesn't sound like any Ferren language..." A realization suddenly occurring to him, the Ferren hastily switched on the computer's black and white picture tube video display, to see what appeared to be a large, white craft, comprised of a saucer and three cylinders, flying across a starry backdrop, with unfamiliar text flashing across the screen. After quickly glancing over to his data readouts, to confirm that the transmission was indeed not of Ferren origin, Anthony whispered to himself in awe, "I've done it..."