

Chapter 2

First Contact

It's now November 2009, Stella has changed jobs, she is now working as a guard at a nearby prison called Lotus Glen. However, there was only one downside to this new job, she's on a rotating roster system. So, every fifth week she's required to do two night shifts in a row. The main benefit of this new job was the generous increase in her income, which we put to good use and purchased a second car. This now made it easier for me to get to my specialist appointments in Cairns, while Stella continued using the station wagon to travel to and from work.

Timothy is now 15 years old and is in Year 10 at High School, he towers over me at 6 foot 5 inches tall. Damn, this warm climate has been good to him. Can't say the same for myself though, my health's still quite poor. I unfortunately suffered a heart attack early in August, would you believe I was totally unaware I was suffering from one at the time, all it felt like was being out of breath and a little bit dizzy when it occurred.

After seeing the Heart Specialist in Cairns Private Hospital, Dr Ming, he informed me I now have an enlarged heart with a lowered output to 42 per cent. Apparently, I have what he classed as a 'lazy heart' in non-professional terms. Oh well, my new motto is, 'what doesn't kill me, can only make me stronger'. I'm still trying hard to be positive about my condition, this way I can put myself in the right frame of mind to achieve a reasonable quality of life.

It wasn't long before Stella's fifth week of work rolled around to night shift time. I remembered the last time I'd spent the night alone was before Stella and I started dating. "This is going to be interesting," I said to both Stella and Timothy. "You're at your mates place tonight, is that right?" I asked him.

"Yep! That's right Dad," he happily replied.

"What do you and your friends, umm, Wayne and Elvis get up to?" I asked, hoping to be invited along.

"Just games-n-stuff, you know, car racing, war games, Grand Theft Auto," he said, stuffing his backpack at the dining table with an extra PS3 controller.

"Sounds like fun, can I come with you too?" I asked, giving him a hopeless puppy-dog expression. "No way Dad! You'll cramp my style," he replied, defiantly shaking his head from side to side.

"What about you Stella?" I said, turning towards her.

"Well, seeing that this is my first night shift ever, you'll just have to entertain yourself, anyway, you've got Jess to talk to," said Stella, pinning her name tag onto her uniform.

"Oh well, I suppose I'm just going to order a take away dinner then, a small meat lovers pizza for one," I remarked with a smile.

I waved goodbye to Stella and Timothy at the front gate as they drove off in the station wagon and watched it disappear into the distance. His mother was giving him a lift to Wayne's place on her way to work. I gazed down at Jess standing beside me and gave her a ruffle under the ear. "Don't worry girl, I'll share my food with you, even though you don't," I said, clicking my fingers to make her follow me. She responded by wagging her tail and trotted next to me as we walked to the back door.

After dinner, which I must admit was quite tasty, Jess settled herself down on her bed as usual. I decided it was time to keep watching my Voyager series on DVD. I'm up to the part where Nelix has his lungs removed by unknown aliens, only to find out later in the show they suffer from some incurable disease.

"Sounds a lot like me Jess," I said, to no one in particular as she was fast asleep. Roughly, at about 10:30 at night, Jess's usual piss-n-look time had arrived, we got up and headed to the back door.

"Oh crap, sorry Jess, forgot your treat," I said, grabbing her dog biscuit from the container in the kitchen cupboard. She always gets a treat when we head out for that last piss-n-look of the night, it's been a long standing tradition I've had with all of our dogs. After giving her the treat, we then stepped outside. As I reached the bottom of the small flight of stairs, I regarded the night sky and noticed it was beautifully clear again, with no visible moon.

We walked around the side of the house to the front yard. I noticed that all the streetlights were out. No moon or streetlights made it absolutely pitch black, except for the odd house lights which were on in the distance. I was watching my step and trying to avoid tripping over the plants next to the driveway, thinking to myself, *it would just be great if I fell flat on my face and broke something*, Stella and Timothy would never let me live it down.

That's weird, I thought to myself. I spotted the outline of a circle on the ground, green in color and around a meter in size. I looked in every direction to see if someone was playing a game on me, you know, some children using a laser pointer perhaps. Then the circle slowly but gradually started moving towards me.

Not really knowing what was happening, I did what most sane people would do. I froze from sheer panic. By now, the circle had fully enveloped me. If it was dark before, then it went beyond that, no house lights, nothing, just blackness. It was at that very moment I felt it. As if someone had flipped on a power switch, a massive shock ran through my entire body. My eyes slammed shut, my arms raised up like a praying mantise and my upper torso came forward, then my legs bent as if I was about to take a flying leap.

I'm not too sure, but I think I lost consciousness. When my eyes opened it was still pitch black. Although it felt as though the temperature had dropped 10 degrees Celsius. I could feel my ability to move return slowly, same as the increase in available light. When my eyes started to adjust to my new surroundings, I found myself standing in the same green circle in a large oddly shaped room.

Just then the circle faded. The light seemed to be coming from every direction; from the floor, walls and the ceiling. *This is really weird*, I thought. This place appears as though it's made out of transparent meat. *Smells like it too*, I thought. I saw thick veins running through the walls, carrying luminescent liquids to God knows where. It took me a moment to come to my senses, but when I did, I suddenly realized exactly where I was.

It can't be. SHIT! I'm in that ship I've been seeing these past years. *What do I do now*, I thought, there's no way out of here. Almost in answer to my question, the far wall started to shiver like jelly being carried on a serving platter. Appearing in the wall was a small opening that slowly grew larger. When all of a sudden the opening stopped expanding and I realized it was large enough for me to fit through. The area beyond the hole in the wall became brighter than the room I was in and enticed me to enter. *Well, I guess it's time for me to move*, I thought.

It was odd really, but it felt as though someone was guiding me forward, but I just put the sensation down to my curiosity. Reaching the opening, I noticed the gentle curve of the passageway heading to the left. Walking within this illuminated tunnel was quite difficult, the whole thing was more oval shaped than round with uneven surfaces and very damp as well. Finally, I reached the end, only to find myself in a much larger room. Mind you, it didn't resemble any room I'd ever seen before. It was covered in different sized veins pumping a myriad of colored liquids. This room had far more veins in it than the previous room and was strangely illuminated just like the other. The whole area seemed as if it had recently received a thorough hosing out.

Just then, the back walls started to shiver and vibrate, instead of a hole appearing in it this time, strange growths covered in weird tendrils started to appear on the wall furthest away from me. They were covered in what seemed like different colored lights and weirdly shaped controls. A dozen grotesque shapes in total, some small, some large. After what seemed like ten minutes they stopped moving and growing. The overwhelming urge to walk up and start touching them was very hard to resist, I was about to move forward when it projected it's thought through me for the very first time.

Please, do not touch my instruments Jim, it said into my mind.

I looked all over the strangely lit room to see who had just spoken, the feeling of mild panic rising within me again. Once I had calmed down a bit, after feeling that powerful thought go through my head, I examined the wall next to the strange growths which had appeared, when it commenced to shiver. A new opening began to widen within the wall, it was much larger than the tunnel I used to get into this room. Not exactly sure what to expect, I began moving backwards with both my hands out behind me and backed myself against the opposite wall. I knew I'd reached it when I felt something like a damp side of beef in both of my hands.

Again, I froze, *I have got to start showing more balls than this*, I thought. When the opening in the wall ceased to grow any further, it spoke through my mind once again. *Do not be frightened Jim, use the open mind I know you possess*, the strength of its thought was somewhat less than before this time. "O...K..." I replied in a nervous voice, still unable to move due to my uncontrollable fear.

What came walking into the room resembled something out a twisted nightmare, deep, dark blue in color, with odd leathery textured skin. Just then, it turned around to face me, it must've stepped through the opening backwards. "HOLY CRAP!" I said aloud. *Please try to refrain from using profanities in my presence Jim*, it's thought rattled around inside my head again.

There was no denying who was in charge here. Still glued to the spot, I slowly started to make sense of its grotesque features, stumpy dragon like head, chubby round torso and rather fat stomach. It's arms were long and slender, legs short and muscular, but that head, the more I scrutinized it, the more I was certain it was a cross between a dog and a dragon.

Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Rogand and you are Jim, Jim Wilson, its strong thought projection entered my mind easily.

"Tha... tha... that's right," I said, still in fear of losing my life. "But how do you know my name?" I asked, in a nervous shaking kind of voice.

I have been reading your mind ever since my little mishap. You are the reason why I nearly collided with the orbiting satellite, said Rogand into my mind.

"ME!" I said, putting my right hand against my chest with my fingers spread-out, wearing a somewhat bewildered expression upon my face.

Yes you. You are the first of your kind to have discovered my ship. I was studying you at the time, running several detailed biological scans, I was so engrossed with the procedure at that time, I removed my eyes away from the viewing membrane during my examination. This was when my collision alarm sounded, informing me of an object approaching. Usually I would have ample time to gradually adjust my ship's position, keeping the space camouflage projectors on. Only in order to make such a violent turn which was necessary, the projectors go offline automatically, giving the automated guidance system maximum power to avoid the approaching satellite. It was this, that caused the eventual illumination of my hull, explained Rogand, sending his thought into my mind, a very strange and new experience for me.

"So, why can I now see your ship's position in space, I mean, if you have camouflage?" I asked, with my confidence returning slowly.

At first, you were unable to, however, as your illness progressed, your muscle weakness was not only in your arms and legs, but your eyes were affected as well. Your left eye muscles have weakened, giving you a unique type of double vision, this allows you to see my ship appear to you as a darker shade to normal space. As for the rest of your population, you have an inherent trait of only viewing what is directly in front of you and very rarely looking up. In addition, there was no mention of my mishap on your global communications network, I believe you call it the World Wide Web, so my obvious conclusion was, you were the only one to have seen my ship. Imagine the odds of you being the only one to have seen me, pardon the pun, but they must be astronomical, explained Rogand's thought within my mind, this time it's intensity of reflection had decreased back to a much more socially acceptable level.

“Oh!” I said, with not much of a response to this earth shattering news. Slowly I was starting to relax a little and felt my level of courage rising again. “Do you mind if I ask you a few questions Rogand?” I said, taking my hands from behind me and wiping them clean on my shorts.

Not at all Jim, it replied into my mind.

“Are you telepathic?” I inquired.

Yes, answered Rogand.

“I thought so, I mean, I can hear you speak, but your mouth never opens,” I said, touching my mouth with the fingers of my right hand.

That is correct, our species the Stommarli are eternal and have developed this form of communication over the eons, projected Rogand’s thought into my mind.

“Wow! That’s cool, Umm... are you a male or female and why did you bring me aboard your ship?” I asked, starting to feel a little more relaxed and realizing he was absolutely no threat to me, what so ever.

I am a male by your definition and in answer to your second question, it is my plan to use you to save your World from its own eventual self-destruction, came his telepathic reply.

“I don’t know how the devil I can help you do that,” I said, rather perplexed.

Your World is one of 74 I keep watch over. I have other ships in orbit around those planets I see fit for study. When I feel the need to inspect for social and technological changes, I simply use my sub-matter transport device to travel between them. I was late in returning to the remote and distant planet named Traibill, when I found only one lone survivor, slowly dying from severe injuries, in a small one manned craft drifting away from the shattered remains of his former World, the only vessel able to escape the disaster. I still feel responsible by not arriving in time to save more lives. A rouge asteroid destroyed their beautiful World. Killing every living creature upon it, he explained gently into my mind, so he wouldn’t alarm me again with the power of his telepathy.

“Do you think this survivor can help my World?” I asked, not knowing what he had in mind.

No, his injuries were far too severe to repair, he died unfortunately, replied Rogand by thought projection.

“How is him being dead going to benefit in helping us?” I asked, completely bewildered.

He died, but his symbiotic companions are well and are currently being kept safe and suspended in my stasis chamber, these past 139 years, projected Rogand’s thought into my very confused mind.

“So, what do you have in mind Rogand?” I asked, now becoming far more curious as to his intentions.

With your permission Jim, I would like to blend you and the symbiots together, softly entered his reply into my mind.

“WHAT! Do you think that’s wise?” I said, hoping I wasn’t going to be his next science project. I could feel my fear rising within me again. *For heaven’s sake, get yourself together man,* I told myself in an attempt to boost my own confidence.

Genetically you and a Traibillian are so close to a perfect biological match, in fact, your DNA is almost identical. You vary only by a few nucleotide triplets as my detailed studies have shown. Chances of rejection are very low, thoughtfully reflected Rogand, trying to put a positive spin on his offer.

“Will there be any kind of side effects? You know, once you’ve done this mixing thingy” I asked, having learnt this from Doctor B., ‘If anyone offers you a miracle cure, don’t forget to ask for the side effects.’

Blending, he corrected. *As you will be the first human to receive these Symbiots, I am anticipating a complete return to full health, with many other benefits to follow over time.* He began to outline a list of future abilities.

An amaranthine life, telepathy, increased strength and many more abilities will surface once you have reached full body symbiot saturation, came his telepathic comment, within my mind.

“You mean no more pain?” I asked, extremely hopeful this would be one of the main benefits upon his list.

Absolutely, it is the one thing I can guarantee, was his exact reply, which popped into my mind and spurred me on by the mention of good health. I felt my courage returning.

Are you interested in proceeding? asked Rogand inside my head.

“Yes, very interested in fact, is now a good time to start or shall we do this at a later date?” I asked eagerly.

Now is a good time if you like, was the reply which entered my mind.

“Yes! Now would be good, about those other benefits you mentioned?” I continued with my line of 20 questions, wanting to know a great deal more in regard to my returning good health.

The ability to look and sound like anyone, zero cell degradation, excellent eyesight and a complete use of your mental capabilities. As I have said, many more will manifest themselves as the blending reaches full saturation. Please remove your coverings Jim, then lie down face up on the highlighted area please, Rogand continued explaining within my mind.

“Alright then,” I said, starting to remove my clothes and feeling rather embarrassed about being naked in front of a total stranger. Sensing my discomfort, Rogand shook his head from side to side.

I am wearing no coverings and you do not find it strange, yet you struggle to remove them in front me, you and your people's obsession with clothing I find absolutely absurd, remarked Rogand, whilst I slowly undressed.

With my last piece of clothing removed, a pale yellow light was appearing on the floor in the shape of a human body, with its arms and legs spread wide.

You may lie down on my floor now please Jim, suggested Rogand's thought within my mind.

I positioned myself on the floor, matching myself to the illuminated shape as best I could. Rogand moved over to his instrument panel and began the procedure, after a few deft hand movements, I could clearly hear a low hum gain in volume within the ship.

"Is this going to hurt?" I asked, praying to God and hoping, Rogand's telepathic answer was a resounding, 'Yes.'

When the blending began, I could feel the microscopic organisms entering my skin through the ship's hull and suddenly felt pain, the like I have never felt before. It ran through my entire body causing me to break a front tooth as my mouth clenched tight due to its intensity. I quickly spat the fragmented portion out before swallowing it. The pain was so strong and intense, I lost consciousness. Upon awakening, I found myself lying flat on my back in the middle of my own driveway, completely redressed and Jess standing over me wagging her tail.

"Must have been a bad dream," I said to her.

It was no dream, said the voice inside my head. *The sun is rising on your position, get some rest while the blending continues,* Rogand's thought rattled around inside my head again. One thing I do know, it's going to take me a long time to get used to his telepathy.

"Rogand how will I know when this blending business is going to be finished," I said aloud.

The symbiots will communicate when the moment is right, came his last thought.

"How?" I asked again, but Rogand was silent, I could no longer hear his thoughts.

I struggled to my feet and headed for the back door. Oh well, tonight was a night of firsts for me. Firstly, I was the first human to travel via sub-matter transport. Secondly, I met Rogand, my very first alien. Thirdly, not too sure about this one, blended with symbiots. Rogand said they would make me feel better.

"But they don't seem to be working at the moment," I said to Jess, *I still feel like crap,* I thought.

I decided to feed Jess her breakfast, then went straight to bed. Come to think of it when my head hit the pillow, I fell straight to sleep.

Stella woke me up when she opened the front gates to bring her car in. Gazing at the clock radio next to my bed, it read 07:32 in the morning. Stretching, while throwing off the covers, I was quite surprised at how good I felt after only one and a half hours sleep. Getting dressed I noticed how easily I could move, I used my tongue to feel for the damaged tooth, but gave up within minutes when I couldn't find it. I put my watch on then reached for my glasses.

Sliding them on, I was met with a pleasant surprise. This morning, I got a different response to the norm, instead of clearing my vision my glasses made everything blurry. So I lowered them from my eyes, my vision was perfect and clear again, raising them to my eyes once more, blurry, lowered them, clear. I did the blurry, clear, blurry, clear routine for a minute or two, then finally gave up and decided to leave them on top of my dresser.

Lessening pain, perfect vision and no broken tooth, I thought.

“Well blow me down! Rogand wasn’t lying after all,” I said to myself on my way out from the bedroom. I greeted Stella at the back door and watched her take-off her head kicking prison boots as Timothy calls them.

“Did everything go well at work last night?” I asked, curious to know what the graveyard shift was like.

“Not too bad, thanks Jim. Nightshift is just babysitting really, their locked down by the dayshift, we only have to make sure their safe. You know, make sure no one hangs themselves or no one is slicing their wrists, actually, we spend most of our time counting heads, just to make sure we don’t lose anyone over the fence. How was your night?” she asked in return.

Once again, I had to put my mind into gear before opening my mouth. If I told her everything immediately, I’m pretty sure Stella would call Dr Good behind my back and arrange for another visit. Don’t get me wrong, Stella and I are very much in love in spite of everything that’s happened since Tasmania. However, I chose to be cautious.

“Really good thanks, Jess and I had a ball. Would you like an omelet for breakfast?” I asked, knowing she had a much better time of it than I did last night.

“Sounds great,” she replied, placing her boots in the shoe rack I made for her at the bottom of the steps when we’d first moved in. While Stella was showering, I made her favorite chicken and cheese omelet. While I was cooking at the stove waiting to flip Stella’s omelet, I started hearing what sounded like a distant crowd of people approaching, hundreds, if not thousands of voices, then silence. Next, there was a single voice inside my head shouting within my mind.

WE ARE HERE, WE ARE HERE, WE ARE HERE, it said inside my head.

“WHO’S HERE,” I shouted back. Only, it was Stella who replied.

“What’s that Jim,” she yelled through the sound of the running water.

“Oh nothing Stella, I ju, ju, just burnt my finger on the frying pan,” I replied, trying to cover-up my slip of the tongue. I heard the shower turn off in the bathroom.

We are here, we are here, we are here, came the voice inside my head once again.

Thankfully this time they weren’t shouting, it was a gentle whisper, so I whispered in reply.

“Who’s there?” I asked, my nerves now balancing on a razor’s edge. Then the voice replied inside my head.

We are now you, for you we care, so don't despair, we and you are now the same, so please choose a name and then we can refrain from shouting again, the unknown individual stated. But I didn't have time to reply. Stella had just walked out from the bathroom in her nightie and dressing gown.

"Sit down kiddo, breakfast is ready," I said, sliding the omelet from the frying pan onto the plate and then placing it in front of her on the dining table. Stella remarked on how good it looked. "Would you like a cup of tea with that?" I asked, dreading the voice in my head may begin its ranting again.

"Yes, thank you," came Stella's reply. I turned to walk back into the kitchen, when...*WE ARE HERE, WE ARE HERE, WE ARE HERE,* it yelled into my mind. I clutched my head and stumbled for a moment at their sheer volume and power of their thought this time.

"Are you alright Jim?" asked Stella, through a mouth full of omelet.

"Yeah, I'm just getting a really bad headache. I'll get you your tea first, then I'll head to the lounge and kick back in the recliner for a while," I said stumbling over to turn on the kettle.

"Ok, do what's best and take care of yourself. Once I've finished breakfast I'm off to bed to get some sleep, so I'll be ready for another nightshift tonight," replied Stella, taking the cup and saucer from me.

Struggling slightly, I made it to the lounge room with a little bit more effort than I would've liked. I sat myself into the recliner, asking the voice inside my head the same question as before.

"Who's there?" I said again in the hope of getting an answer.

We are here, we are h..., "ALRIGHT," I said, "that's enough, I think I heard you the first time you asked me to choose a name."

Yes, yes, yes, a name, a name, so we can refrain, "Yes, I know, from shouting again," I interrupted.

"What name would you like?" I asked them.

You must choose, you must choose, for to follow and help, is what we are, you must choose, the odd sounding creatures asked within my mind.

"Ok, I get the picture," I said softly through gritted teeth. *I'd better come up with a name quickly, before you start shouting into my head again,* I thought.

"Think, damn it, think," I said, as if by video replay the events of my meeting with Rogand unfolded in my mind. "The first human to receive symbiots, Hmmm," I started sounding out some names.

"Mannie, Buddy, Rowan, no those don't sound good at all. How about Heman? No, that sounds like crap. I know, I used to have a budgerigar named Simon when I was 12 years old. I really

loved that bird. How does Simon sound? No wait! Sy-man, that's it... Syman, in honor of the first symbiot and human blending," I said to them.

We like, we like, our name we like, Syman's reply echoed within my mind.

"Well then, it's a pleasure to meet you Syman, you can call me Jim," I said to them.

Jim it is, Syman we are, for together we'll be, from here to far, they sang inside my head.

"What do you mean, from here to far, Syman?" I asked, wanting to know if it was in anyway related to distance.

We repair your cells, from now until then, so live-forever, we both together, Syman informed me.

"Holy crap! Just what other capabilities are you able to achieve?" I asked eager to know the answer.

We have in us the knowledge of all, until Traibill's fall, their history, their science, enhancements and culture of all, for speed, strength, wonders and more, just ask, we can help to get answers to all, they replied inside my head.

Just for the fun of it, mainly because I was feeling rather stupid and completely elated with my new pain free healthy body, somewhat like a giddy schoolboy, I had absolutely nothing to lose, so I simply threw caution to the wind and asked Syman. "Can you help me make my car fly," I said, expecting their answer would be "No."

We can, we can, the knowledge is here, with gravity in play the choice is clear, ten cells we make with guidance for flight, our car will lift in the air and take flight up into the night, they sang again within my mind.

"Ok Syman, show me how," I said, *what have I got to lose,* I thought.

Nothing to lose, lots to gain, if you have a question, just simply ask us again, the symbiots prattled on inside my head.

"Please Syman, just show me what you have in mind," I said aloud. If you want to know why Stella hasn't inquired why I'm speaking out aloud, well, I've always talked to myself, it's a part of my character and Stella has learnt when to listen and when to ignore me.

No need to vocalize, just ask from within, close your eyes and let us begin, Syman informed me.

So now they tell me, I thought. I kicked back in the recliner and closed my eyes. A vision of a beautiful alien city formed within my mind. A city full of amazingly shaped high-rise buildings with colored glass tinted the shade of pale green. Flying among them were these immaculately finished machines, all finished in a highly reflective gloss black paint. My vision started to zoom in on one of the occupants inside the flying machine. Rogand was right, they do appear to be very similar to us, except for skin tone, which was light gray. In addition, from what I could see clearly in my vision was the lack of facial hair, bald with no eyebrows, eye lashes or ears for that matter. Just a small oval opening where our ears would be. Then the vision changed to what could only be a factory of sorts. Where a Traibillian worker was putting together several

differently shaped small components, once completed, it resembled something which resembled a squat jam jar. The vision started to fade slowly, so I opened my eyes.

Was that one of the cells you were speaking of Syman, I thought to the symbiots.

Yes, 'tis the cell, when a charge smaller than 9 volts will push away from here, to pull you there, to make these a list of goods must be prepared. We will assemble in sequence to complete each affair, when affixed to your car it will lift in the air. Six from under, two out on front and two at the rear, guidance on board so we can steer, sang Syman inside my head.

I sent a thought to Syman, saying thanks.

This vessel empty, our energy low, proteins needed for best results, please to feed us, asked Syman clearly in my mind.

Sorry Syman, I just remembered, I had completely forgotten to get my own breakfast, I thought.

I grabbed a quick peak at Stella when heading to the kitchen. She was sleeping soundly. The frying pan was still sitting on the sink's edge, I merely wiped the pan clean and got started on the ingredients. I cracked two eggs into a mixing bowl, then felt and heard my own stomach rumble noisily. *Damn, I really am hungry,* I thought. Grabbing two more eggs to add to the bowl and a splash of milk, then began beating the contents.

How does a chicken and cheese omelet sound, I remembered to think my thought to Syman this time, rather than verbalize them.

Sounds great, we can hardly wait to consume what appears upon that plate, they sang again in reply, within my mind.

Pouring the eggs into the fry pan, I articulated myself using thoughts, *it won't be long till breakfast.* Within moments I was seated at the dining table and in front of me was a perfect omelet, we ate in silence, while finishing the last tasty morsel, Syman informed me of just how unwell I'd been.

Time for rest we must confess, your cells really were in quite a mess, rest, repair is what is needed, upon awakening you'll be completed, they said in their telepathic communication.

So, it was back to the recliner for me. Lying in bed would've been better, but I didn't want to disturb Stella. I kicked back in the recliner and got myself comfortable, it wasn't long before I was overtaken by sleep.