



# WHAT'S THE CATCH?

Maybe We Should Have Run Away

The best advice given to the question: “What do you do in the unlikely event an alien lands in your backyard?” is – run. This from the top minds on the planet. The argument is, any race capable of crossing the vast distances of space to arrive on Earth would be technologically beyond anything you could do. Best to run away to tell the tale. You’d at least have a good story to tell.

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**H**e didn't have a name; not in the way we understand names. Everyone simply called him the Ambassador. Frankly, I don't even know if he was male. It was anybody's' best guess. Outwardly, he resembled the result of a consortium of octopi... who'd had an unfortunate accident involving radioactive materials in a particle accelerator. Not the prettiest of sights I can assure you. When I met him, he had the strongest smell of chlorine about him... as if he'd recently climbed out of a swimming pool. Of course, it would have to have been an Olympic-size pool as he was rather on the large size. There was the taste of copper in my mouth. I think I bit my tongue. "What brings you to our world?"

His answer was terse. "Colonization."

"When you colonize, what happens to the original population?"

The Ambassador had a voice with tonal qualities of machine parts scraping together. He waved several tentacles about. "I think we both know the answer to that question."

"Any way we can talk you out of it?"

He didn't hesitate with his answer for a second. "No."

"What if we decide to stop you?"

"Your efforts would be pointless. Although I'd find it personally amusing."

"So why have you come?"

He let out something akin to a deep snort. "We're intrigued by your stories of jinn. We have no such storytelling skills on our world. No one would even consider communicating a false narrative involving a mythical being. Like your jinn, we have immense power. So, we'd decided to grant you the traditional three wishes. The usual rules apply. No wishing for more wishes, no changing history, no wishing for unlimited time to make your wishes. I also feel I should warn you – we are going to come. There is nothing you can do about that." He paused for a moment to let his offer sink in.

I crossed my arms over my chest. I had a grin bigger than all outdoors. "What's the catch?"