

# The Virus

Word Count: 1,246

At first everyone thought the problem was under control but then it exploded, much like the titanic explosion of a star when it becomes a supernova. How could that have happened? Chief virologist, Xavier Yee, warned the council of the impending disaster.

Seated around a magnificent table of gleaming silver metal, sixteen councilpersons nervously looked to Dr. Yee to explain. From different nations, they had assembled to assess the danger and discuss what to do. What would be best for all nations? They needed a survival plan.

Dr. Yee sat at the head of the table. His face did not betray the desperate fear he personally felt. “If we don’t stop the spread of the virus, it will overtake and kill us all. We must find a way to exterminate it before it exterminates us. It has already exploded fivefold, and once it begins the doubling phase, which is near, it will be almost impossible to stop it without danger of killing our own selves. It increases its virility as it doubles and will infiltrate our cells, then replicate in our body, millions of cells at a time, until it takes over and we no longer exist.”

Of course, there were the naysayers. The part of the population that said the virus was too small to be a danger. That it had taken millions of years to get to the state it was now... and that part was true. It *had* taken the virus several million years to go from barely slithering along from one rock to another, to being airborne. How had such a tiny, insignificant virus been able to mutate until it had the ability to travel so far away from its home base?

Those same naysayers were the first to expire in an incredibly short and violent period. Their bodies betrayed them, denying them the ability to exchange air and maintain life as the virus invaded every cell. They virtually melted from fever and expired in agonizing pain before

anyone could even begin treatment. And the smell... like the fusion of decayed metal and acid, it permeated the air and choked anyone nearby.

It had taken a ten-million-per-parts microscope to even detect the virus, and now it was endangering the entire galaxy. A high energy micro-beam had been directed on a tissue sample and it had been seen... or rather *they* had been seen, as there were now billions of them. They scurried from place to place without any semblance of direction or meaning. Funny though how they also assembled in groups like they had some form of intelligence, but that was ridiculous, wasn't it?

Apparently, although similar, each particle of the virus was different. It had the same number of appendages, but diverse colorations and wildly different sizes. Modes of movement were different too. Some moved slowly on the sample and others flew from place to place, airborne. And the rate of replication was amazing. It had gone from just a few, to billions in how long? A short time, a mere few millennium. And now it was exploding and growing at an astronomical rate.

The only thing the council knew for sure was that a certain formulation of poison killed it. Dr. Yee had developed the poison as a spray, and the first trials had been effective. If the virus was exposed to the poison, it died almost immediately. But the virus had to be almost completely saturated in poison before it was effective. It had to virtually rain poison to successfully kill it. The problem was that it was also poisonous to every living being when exposed in large doses. How could it be eliminated without killing the entire population of the galaxy?

Dr. Yee faced the council representatives, each formidable in their own skin. "The only way I can see to exterminate the virus is to implement the poisonous spray I've been testing. My results

show we can kill the virus, but that we are also vulnerable to it. If we use the poison, we take the chance that the spray will damage our own cells. Theoretically, we all could be extinct before we complete the spraying of all nations.

“If we knew how the virus replicated, maybe we could stop it by ceasing reproduction. Without the ability to replicate, it would be extinct in a very short period. After all, in the scheme of things, the life span of the virus is extremely short, less than a century. But since time is of the essence I am asking permission to proceed.”

The council all nodded in agreement.

Then the council president, spoke, “I don’t see any options Dr. Yee. At least we will be acting in a proactive manner. We can’t just sit here, doing nothing, and be decimated by a virus. Who would ever dream a virus could endanger our future? When can the poison be ready to distribute?”

Dr. Yee turned toward the president. “As soon as the testing of the equipment for spraying is complete we will be ready. Testing should be concluded by the end of this hebdomad. Right now, the passing of even a nanosecond counts. Our time frame may not seem that long, but it’s long enough that by the time we begin we will be dealing with an even denser, more virulent population of virus. What I suggest is, that between now and when we launch the operation, our entire population be quarantined, so those who have not yet been infected stay safe. Also, those who are infected and have not responded to treatment must be immediately eliminated.”

The president nodded. “Yes, I agree with you. I will send out notification across the nations, even to the outposts, and mandate everyone stay in their quarters. We will have androids deliver necessary supplies to every entity. No one will go without. Anyone found outside their domicile,

or who are infected and untreatable will be eliminated immediately. Hopefully, we will be able to secure our future. All agreed?"

The council members concurred, and the task was left to Dr. Yee and his staff of thousands of androids to implement the destruction of the virus. They would have to manufacture large quantities quickly and then develop a method to keep each individual safe while drenching the land in poison. It was an overwhelming task, but he and his staff could accomplish it. Oh, some would perish of course, but he hoped most would survive.

The spraying of the land commenced, and Dr. Yee, dressed in hazmat gear, monitored samples to evaluate the effect. The virus withered before his eyes and dropped in place as the spray hit it. All movement stopped. Particles of the shriveled virus lay lifeless on the samples. It would be a success if they hurried.

Dr. Yee's lead android, one he had himself trained, asked, "Do you think there will be any repercussions for your species if the virus is completely destroyed? I have read about the eventual extinction of certain life forms when others were destroyed."

"I don't know, but right now we have no choice."

The android swiveled around and eyed Dr. Yee. "And what is the name of the virus?"

Dr. Yee thought for a moment and said, "It's called The Human Race, an unusual name for a virus so tiny. I suspect it may have possibly had the capability to think. Maybe it even thought it's world was the only one."