

# The Amity Incident



c m Weller

# The Amity Incident (sample)

## by C.M. Weller

Copyright © 2014, C.M. Weller.

Cover art by [Erica Syverson](#).

ISBN 9781310191589

First published:

Dec. 24, 2014 by C.M. Weller.

This eBook is licensed for your personal use only and may not be resold or given away to other people. Please help support indie authors by purchasing a copy for each person. Thank your for helping me continue to write great stories for you to read.

Find other great stories at [www.CMWeller.com](http://www.CMWeller.com)!

# 1.

"Let me sort this explanation to my understanding," sang Mayor T'terik a' Ssrii. His jewel-encrusted hands re-sorted T'reka's carefully-filed science permit application in a manner that screamed of his disgust for handling them at all. "We are still settling Ru'ku'la. Supplies are still falling from Hu'lu'a, and will continue to do so on a weekly basis until such time as the wormhole closes us away from home forever." The papers were now thoroughly out of order, and the Mayor shuffled them even further. "And you wish permission to perform... *science...*" pronounced, *rotted excrement from an unclean animal now filled with poisonous larvae that smells bad*, "on the highly hazardous Toxic Island."

T'reka cowered properly on her supplicant's perch. "There is much potential," she ventured. "We have already seen anomalies in the biota of the planet. We seeded it for comfort, yet decidedly -ah-uncomfortable plants and animals have appeared."

"And been eliminated," summarised the Mayor. "Quickly, effectively, and efficiently."

"As is right and proper," T'reka chirped. "I did mention in my humble proposal that substances initially thought entirely toxic eventually proved to be beneficial. So I wish to study all toxins present in the blighted lands mentioned."

"You would be working alone," said Mayor T'terik "For years on end."

T'reka huddled in her place. Barely daring to tremble. "I... never expected to join a clutch-creche. I *am* known as insane."

Few were the normal Numidid who wished to mate with a scientist of any calibre. It had become so rife that science breeding program had become necessary. For the good of the future.

"You will be heavily monitored for the education of others."

"I expected such," sang T'reka. "I have noted all the precautions to extend my survival in the fourth appendix, as requested." She had to resist the urge to nervously preen her feathers. Not in front of such a great man. She kept her wings tucked in and her hands locked together and her beak pointed at Mayor T'terik in proper reverential awe.

Now he was spreading them out on his desk! At least he wasn't spreading them out on the floor in a very ancient gesture of disgust and rejection.

"Ah," he said. And, "Hm." Shuffle shuffle shuffle. "Camouflaged base camp. Camouflaged hide. Camouflaged *clothing*?"

"All the better to avoid any predators, should they be present," she sang.

"Mrrmmph..." shuffle shuffle. "Hu'lu'a is sending most of this nonsense anyway. For *science*," pronounced, *something hated I must tolerate for the greater good*. "We will deploy the basics and send clean food by drone. You will record all aspects of life on Toxic Island bar the normal," eating, ablution, and assorted waste disposal, "and you will refrain from any and all forms of vainglory."

"Understood and obeyed," T'reka bobbed. She would only refer to herself as T'reka the Inquisitive in her private and personal journal. For everything else, she was T'reka the Mad.

She watched with bated breath as he lined up the papers anew. And only breathed out when the stamp of approval descended on each and every page.

"You may go forth and commit *science*," pronounced, *disgusting thing I no longer have to be involved with*. "We will send the details to your domicile."

T'reka only dared breathe properly after she shut the door behind herself.

Cleared!

And more importantly, cleared to study firsthand a veritable cornucopia of new things. An entire island's worth.

Toxic Island was a dreadful misnomer. It was almost a continent.

Aside from the inland sea and the rivers criss-crossing it, it represented thousands of square Flights worth investigative research. Years and years of waking up to discover something new.

And without even the merest nod to personal supervision.

T'reka preened herself every chance she got. Almost danced all the way to her modest little cubby of a home. Not even a home. There was a tiny bunk-nest and an almost-impossibly small perch near the info-net port. The rest of it was full of books and half-finished studies. The latter of which were deemed 'unnecessary' since the lead scientist in charge of the projects survived them.

Nobody would be working with her on this one. She knew it.

It was just simply too.... crazy.

T'reka sighed as she put her books in order and reluctantly disposed of her former, almost-done presentations.

There would be no room for half-finished and never-to-be-finished projects on her expedition. But it still felt like she was tearing her own gizzard out.

She'd worked hard on each and every one of them... and she would never be allowed to complete them. As far as the Flock was concerned, all her contributions amounted to replicated data and that was that. Not even a footnote in the book of deeds.

It was illogical to mourn the loss of those things. Ridiculous. Possibly stupid. Those who shared the floor with her certainly let her know so.

T'reka put them carefully into a waste-bag nonetheless. Swallowed her noises of distress and upset, lest her neighbours hear and mock her again.

Of course she was ridiculous and stupid and foolhardy and illogical and irrational. She was a *scientist*. It was what she was best suited for and it was the best fit for her soul.

She carried the clinking bag carefully down the stairs and placed it with a whispered apology into the dumpster.

Crueller hands would have her good work, from now on.

"Spring cleaning at last, eh?" chirped Kikkiki. A student and a dancer. One of the many who lived in the small flats for economic reasons. "You do know it's unhealthy to eat the bugs who invade your nest, right?"

"I am aware," T'reka sang, trying to keep her voice and intonations positive. "I do not breed bugs in my home, and if I did I would certainly not be eating them."

Kikkiki appeared to not have heard. "You scientists have the worst habits. I swear I saw one male eat a filth-bug just because it crossed his notes! No wonder you all have bad feathers and sparse plumage."

T'reka, who kept her feathers properly groomed and released her stresses through her personal journal instead of indulging in plume-plucking, politely muttered a, "No wonder," very coldly as she returned to her little hide-away.

She couldn't help hearing Kikkiki mutter, "Ugh, antisocial scientists," to the universe at large.

*You expect someone to be nice to you when you don't listen, you perpetuate ignorant stereotypes, and you ignore anything that that someone has to say?* T'reka didn't say out loud. She would not help the cause of science by being vocal and argumentative. Keep her head down, her feathers unruffled, and her manner at least polite for as long as she could stand

it before making an excuse to leave.

That was her hidden agenda. An excuse to leave.

A life alone in an island/continent full of toxins, poisons, venomous things and fatal accidents waiting to happen to her was far preferable to life in a Numidid city as it formed.

T'reka sorted her books in the order of things that she would find most useful to least. And then made another pile of books she would love to read the most often to least. Weight would be key in her transit to the alien continent, so she also sorted her clothes from most useful to least.

She lingered the longest over a hand-stitched bridal shawl her grandmother had made for her before she came out as a scientist. It came in its own box, made of bug-repelling wood. Wrapped in delicate tissue and waiting for a day that may never come.

If she left it, there were few chances it would survive.

If she packed it, she would have to leave something else behind.

Irrationally, she couldn't bear to think of it going to the recycling salesyard. Being pawed over by hundreds of grabby hands. Delicate stitching torn by unthinking others who didn't know its history. To anyone else, it was just a shawl in a gift box.

She put it in her 'keeper' pile. If she died on Toxic Island, it would rot with her or burn with her as her fellow Numidid torched her last resting place from the air.

*My, my, we're morbid, today.*

T'reka shook herself and took a moment to take down her thoughts in her private journal. At least there, she could call herself T'reka the Inquisitive and not have to fret about anyone finding it until she was beyond care and caring.

## 2.

Susan Valentine took her first steps out of the lander habitat since the ship had come down. The gownups had finished clearing a lot of the land - sort of - and lots of them were still building a lot of houses.

The sun felt just *glorious!*

The air smelled delicious, like someone was baking, but since the smell seemed to be coming from the forest, she decided not to break the rules just yet. Which meant no tracking it down.

Besides, given the briefing she'd had about the local biome, it was probably venomous, poisonous, or out to take her life by other means.

Dad came to fetch her from the ship-creche. "Hey, sweetie. Nice to see you out, at last."

"Nice to be out at last," sighed Susan. "I was starting to forget what sunshine was like."

"Mom's at the doctors'. I have to show you 'round all by myself."

"What're we calling this town, anyway?"

"Wiwazheer."

"Da-a-a-ad...."

"No, it's real. Andropov is painting a historic sign. Welcome to Wiwazheer. We was here. Established 2093 CE."

Nothing on Earth was like Wiwazheer, and that was the point. Houses were made to become one with the environment, instead of battle against it. They used natural materials and physics and models based on nature to create buildings that needed little power to begin with to maintain a happy climate for their residents.

Which meant that all the buildings were blobby mounds with

gopher-hole vents in their curved, grassy roofs. Small crops were already starting all around the stepping-stones. The young trees looked lonely in their appointed spaces, but Susan could already see the grown future.

*I'll be a woman by the time it's happened...* she mused.

"And this park will be done sometime after we finish the hospital complex," said Dad. "Would you believe we're modelling the air circulation after a termite nest?"

"No way. How big is this hospital?"

"We're making it expandable. Wiwazheer isn't going to stay this small. And that ship isn't going to be there forever. When we finally disassemble all of it, we're going to put some kind of library, city hall there."

"Termite nest," said Susan. She could easily believe they were on another planet, even here in the town. Even with Earth food crops everywhere, it was so... weird. "Are there schools?"

"On the co-operative creche model. You learn what you want to learn when you want to learn it. As well as the basic skills you have to learn, of course."

"Reading, writing and arithmetic?"

"And tracking, hunting, and identification of all dangerous things."

"Of course." Part of her still couldn't believe it. A whole world of new things and not anyone on it to tell her that any of it was a bad idea because of traditions. A new world to nurture and learn to co-operate with.

She half expected the Media to jump out of the bushes and point cameras at her and everyone here to laugh at her. Still expected it all to be a massive joke. Still looked for the cameras and the gawkers and the people who thought they could change her and her family's mind

by yelling rude things at her like a lout.

But there was none of that. Just hobbit-houses with gopher holes and bicycles and wide, wide streets of packed soil and air so clean that it almost sparkled.

"The horses are almost ready for foaling," said Dad. "It's kind of icky, since we could only transport foetuses. Do you want to see?"

"Duh. Yeah. Of course I want to see." The chief factor in her signing up for this one-way trip was the promise of horses.

Dad turned down one wide street and headed for a lumpy building with a stylised magnifying glass on it.

Not even two months on the planet and people were doing Architecture.

But then, they were supposed to be valuing all ways of expanding human experience. And on the plus side, anyone looking at it could tell it was supposed to be the science building.

Inside was a warren, with helpful coloured lines to follow all the way to the Animal Labs.

There, in the half-light, was tank upon tank upon tank of infant creature in artificial utero.

"Look, but don't touch," said Dad.

There were lots of different breeds of horses. The draught horse, the tough Australian Brumby, there were even proper ponies with their bulbous bellies and floofy manes.

"I earmarked this one for you," Dad cycled the rack around so she could see. It was still young, yet, not nearly ready for its birthing, but it was undoubtedly the sort of horse she'd always dreamed of.

She was a Paint horse. All brown and black and white patches, with Appaloosa dapples on her rear.

Susan gasped and sprained something trying not to squeal. "Oh, she's so beautiful," she whispered.

Little baby horse hooves twitched in the amniotic fluid. Monitors on the screen to one side of the tank showed all kinds of happy green signs that this little foal was going to be healthy and fit.

"You're going to have to be her momma, when she's foaled. And yes, we have a stable-hole before you ask. With a pull-down bunk so you can sleep with her at night."

"And the formula?" Susan asked. She knew she could not pat the foal, though she dearly wanted to. She could see the tubes that connected almost seamlessly to her foal's umbilical cord.

"Synthesised out of the safe parts of the local flora. She's going to get everything a genuine momma horse would give her."

"Especially lots of loving," whispered Susan. By this time next year, she'd be saddling up and riding her very own horse!

And all those idiots who mocked her for going would be long forgotten.

### 3.

T'reka stood, arms akimbo and wing-feathers out, as the supervising technician made certain all of her straps were on correctly and snugly.

"Remember, DO NOT FLAP," the technician reminded her above the engine noise of the Flight Machine. "This pack has its own glider-wings, and any flapping on your part will disrupt the steering mechanisms and put you in the ocean!"

"Understood!" T'reka chirped.

"We're going to drop you in five."

Four.

Three.

Two.

One.

The doors beneath the pack that held her in straps dropped away.

The Flight Machine jumped away from her and wind rushed in her ears.

T'reka fought the urge to flap by increasing her grip on the shoulder straps and sinking her toe-talons into the canvas of the pack. She made her analytical mind take over for the descent.

The Flying Engine's rapid ascent was an illusion caused by the pack's bulk and apparent solidity in a rapidly-changing environment.

The apparently-ascending ground should not terrify and, though she felt the urge to slow her descent, she knew she must not.

The pack's own wing should be deploying any moment now.

Any moment... now!

She fought terror by attempting to analyse the geography of her soon-to-be home.

Better-be home.

If they didn't deploy the wing, this would be a really expensive way of killing her...

Another falling pack, apparently far below, grew a giant, multicoloured envelope that slowed its descent and shot past her and her pack.

FLUMP!

T'reka squawked as the pack's wing opened up and slowed her down.

Once again, the earlier pack was in the lead, and steering towards a sandy cove. She, too, felt like she was sailing towards that destination without any input on her part.

The urge to spread her wings and assist was powerful, even now.

T'reka increased her grip on the straps and forced herself to sing a relaxing song. Shutting her eyes made her more anxious about the inevitable impact, so she kept her eyes open and attempted to catalogue what she observed as she sang.

Naturally, the lyrics and her self-appointed purpose mixed into a jumble unrecognisable as either, and by the time she realised that, the pack, the envelope-wing, and herself had come to rest next to the first on the dry, soft sand.

T'reka allowed her grip to relax and counted the packs, each as big as her little flat, back in the city.

There should be five.

One. Two. Three. Four...

The fifth descended on its own wing and sank slightly into the sands.

T'reka breathed out.

Now she could unlatch herself from the middle pack and begin the task of settling in. Her wing-fingers trembled and, when she leaped for the sand, her arms flapped harder than she really needed to.

The sand was hot. The jungle thick. The air full of unidentified insects.

And there was not another living soul for Flights.

T'reka found the pocket with the heavy instruction manual and looked up the directions on what to do with the very obvious packs surrounding her on the beach.

## 4.

Susan swore she was the only one who noticed the plane.

Everyone else continued working, but she was the only one who registered the airborne engine as an anomalous noise.

She stopped her work with the hoe to look up at it.

Even at this distance, she could tell that that was not a human-made plane.

Susan took out her notebook and pencil and jotted down as much data as she could on her sighting. That was one of the rules, here. See anything new, take notes. She made certain to do her best work from memory. Even though she was eleven and drawing had never been her forte. She drew what she saw, described it in notes, and added her best guesses as to how the plane was built.

Then she put the notebook away in the big pocket of her overalls and got back to hoe-ing.

People needed feeding. Feeding required crops. Crops required fields. Fields need the earth turned and, because they vowed to never use heavy, polluting equipment to do so and the horses wouldn't be ready for nearly a year... that meant that it had to be done by hand.

In time, there would be other ways to do this. But they had to get through this time to make that easier.

Sweat and blisters and -yes- even blood were going to pay for the very early days of Wiwazheer. Little injuries. Big injuries. Stupid accidents. Sooner or later, someone would kill themselves by doing something very stupid and simultaneously trying to be smart.

So far, death had not come to Wiwazheer. So far.

Like the horrible joke about the man who threw himself off a tall building and, every ten floors, commented, "so far, so good" on the

way down.

They'd been here for six months and, so far, nobody had died or had a life-threatening injury.

So far... so good.

## Thank you for reading this sample!

I hope you enjoyed reading this sample of my book "The Amity Incident", I would love for you to read the whole lot, and even hear your thoughts about it.

If you're interested in reading more of this book, or to get my contact details and let me know what you thought, please visit my website at:

[www.CMWeller.com](http://www.CMWeller.com)

As an indie author, word of mouth is everything, so if you enjoyed my book, or even if you didn't but you can think of someone who would, I would be ever so grateful if you can tell some friends about me or make a post on your blog, or social media website to let folks know.

If you have a book review site, please contact me as I will give out free copies in exchange for reviews.

Thanks once again!

C.M. Weller.