

The Chicken Sheds

Kindle Edition

By Pat Cresswell

Copyright

The Chicken Sheds

The story that definitively answers the chicken and egg
question

A short Story by Pat Cresswell

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Contents

Copyright.....	2
The Characters	4
The Chicken Sheds	5

The Characters

SI (sigh) - the former Production Director, now Heritage Director for Megacorp

Z2 (zeetoo) - the graduate trainee

DT (deetee) - the heritage maintenance operative

RG (argee) - the assistant heritage maintenance operative

XR (zar) - the inventor of reproduction

OL (ol) - the inventor of sexual reproduction and thereby evolution

VS (vez) - the creator of the Ecosystems Principle

KL (kyle) - technical Officer on the Chicken Project

The Companies

Virovex – terrorist organisation, invented viruses

CCC – Creative Creatures Corporation, rivals of Megacorp

The Chicken Sheds

“Nice day for it,” said DT, the head of Heritage Maintenance at Megacorp.

“Every day is a nice day for ‘It’” replied RG, taking a seat on a very rusty old blood barrel. RG had just joined the Heritage Department as an Assistant Maintenance Operative.

“One track mind! Always the same thing with you.”

“Especially in the morning if you know what I mean, eh?”

“Well it is a nice day. It’ll be warm later.”

“Yeah”

DT dropped the conversation. RG was younger and that, in DT’s opinion accounted for a lot. DT looked around. They were on a small hill overlooking the Fairfield Valley. The sun was climbing into a blue sky and a few fair weather white clouds lazily floated across from the west. Fairfield was the site of Megacorp old creature production facilities, all now disused and left to crumble back into the savannah.

“So what’s SI like?” RG was referring to the new head of ‘Heritage’.

“Not bad as they go, still very corporate if you know what I mean,” replied DT, still gazing into the distance, looking at everything and nothing. The heat haze was already causing the old dinosaur production sheds to shimmer.

“Not bad!” I guess it could be worse then. My old boss was a right bastard, always on our backs about making quotas. Drove me mad. That’s why I applied for this job in Heritage, bit of a quieter life I hope. ”

A personal transport came round the bend and stopped in a small cloud of dust. The gull wing doors opened and SI got out followed by another person.

“Looks like we’ve got company,” remarked RG.

The two figures walked towards them. RG stood up well before they got close.

“Good Morning!” boomed SI still many metres away. SI held out an arm and warmly shook DT’s hand, quickly followed by the same greeting for RG.

“You’ll be RG then! First time we’ve met I think.”

“That’s right, good to meet you, Boss.”

“Let me introduce Z2, on our training programme.”

Another round of handshakes completed the greetings.

“What do we want today Boss?” asked DT.

“I was so busy when I was Production Director I haven’t had time to go round the old sites for a decade at least. So now I’m retired into Heritage Director I thought it was high time to see how we got where we are. So a general tour of the Fairfield sheds will fit the bill.”

“Take the transport?” asked DT expecting a ‘yes’ answer.

“You know, it such a nice day I think we should walk!” said SI and set off downhill towards the dinosaur sheds. The others fell in behind and followed along the sandy path between high clumps of savannah grass and few small trees.

“Walks fast for an old ‘un,” observed DT to Z2 as they walked along.

“Seems OK though, picked me up in the transport this morning. Friendly and chatty.”

“No grumbles from me either so far,” replied DT.

“So what’s all this stuff ahead?”

“The dinosaur sheds. It’s where all our dinosaur production was done.”

“But that must have been eons ago?”

“My Old ‘un worked here, well, towards the end of production that is. See that taller shed over to the left?”

“That one with no roof at all?”

“Yeah, that’s it. That’s where the bone presses were. We made the really big dinos, Tyrannosaurus Rex and Triceratops. My Old ‘un used to say that when the leg bone presses came down the whole valley shook. Probably why the roof was the first fall in when they closed them down. Forged they were from white hot bone.”

“Forged! Why did they do that?”

“Didn’t have injection bone moulding in those days. Even our early mammals were forged bone, but most of that was small work compared with the dinos.”

“Blimey, real old stuff.”

The path widened into a forecourt outside the front wall of one of the sheds. Unlike all the other walls which were plain brick, this gable end had a high arched doorway, with some fancy brick work. Above the doorway, the doors for which had long gone, was a recess in the wall that was occupied by a stone statue. A faded but still just legible sign introduced the edifice as the “OL Building”.

“Who’s that?” asked Z2, pointing at the statue.

“Who’s that! Did you say who’s that?” boomed SI from across the forecourt.

“Clue’s in the name,” whispered DT in Z2’s ear. SI marched across the forecourt and joined the three of them.

“Who’s that!” SI exclaimed again. “Don’t they teach you anything in school today?”

Z2 looked uncomfortable and eased from one leg to the other.

“That, young ‘un is one of the greatest Professors that ever lived! Worked for Megacorp. That is OL. As in Professor OL, the inventor of sexual reproduction and thereby organisms that could evolve to exploit their environment. A break through that made Megacorp a top tier creature supplier to the Ones.”

SI fell silent for a moment, just gazing at the forlorn statue in deep admiration. “I just wish I could have been there. There at the meeting with the Ones. There to see Prof OL give the presentation.” The aggression had left the voice as SI took a seat on a broken bench.

“The Ones had been complaining for some time that duplicating or as we now call it, asexual reproduction meant self sustaining creatures couldn’t handle changes in the environment. A small change and they died out so

the Ones had to come back and buy new creatures from us, or any of our competitors. The costs were huge. Good money for us but they were obviously not going to carry on paying like they had. There were cut backs all over the universe at that time. Whichever company came up with a solution was going to get big orders. Old OL had been beavering away with equations and theorems for ages. When the whole idea was first presented to the Big Boss old OL was almost sacked because if the creatures adapted it was feared we wouldn't get orders for new ones. But when the Ones refused to place any more orders with any company until this problem of environment change causing an extinction was solved OL got the call. 'Tomorrow, 9 a.m. and bring all your stuff.' No pleases or thank yous." SI shifted on the bench and the others formed a semi circle in front of the bench.

"So OL goes in. There's the Big Boss and five maybe six of the Ones. They were all looking sour. OL went through the basics. There would be a male and female type of a creature. Same creature, but two types. You need to have one male and one female and together they'd produce the next generation of the creature. The new generation would have a mix of abilities of its parents so some of the new generation would be more suited to any new environment factors than others. Then OL went into some of latest R&D, well at that time

it was the latest, creatures able to adapt to a continually changing environment and the Ones started to take real interest.”

SI looked around the group, making sure they were all still with the story.

“But it was when the questions started that Prof OL’s real brilliance came to the fore. The Ones asked some real tough questions. OL handled them. The Western One had been quiet so far, just leaning back taking it in but obviously thinking deeply. Then came the killer question. ‘I can go along with these Male and Female types, and I can see how that will give the ability to adapt. But what is going to make the male and the female stop eating for long enough to get all jiggy and do this impregnation stuff?’ The question posed, the Western One sat back. All the other Ones fell behind the question. OL stayed silent for a minute. The Big Boss looked mortified thinking that OL had messed up large. The murmurs grew and grew. Finally he said, very quietly, ‘Pleasure’. ‘What did he say?’ ‘Speak up’ all the Ones were baying for OL. You can imagine what that was like. But OL just said it again, but louder. ‘Pleasure. We’re going to reprogramme the brain function so the creature doesn’t just seek food and water. It will also seek pleasure. Pleasure will be the dominant desire and the only source of pleasure will be

impregnation. Creatures will think impregnation is fun.’
Brilliance, pure brilliance.”

End of Preview