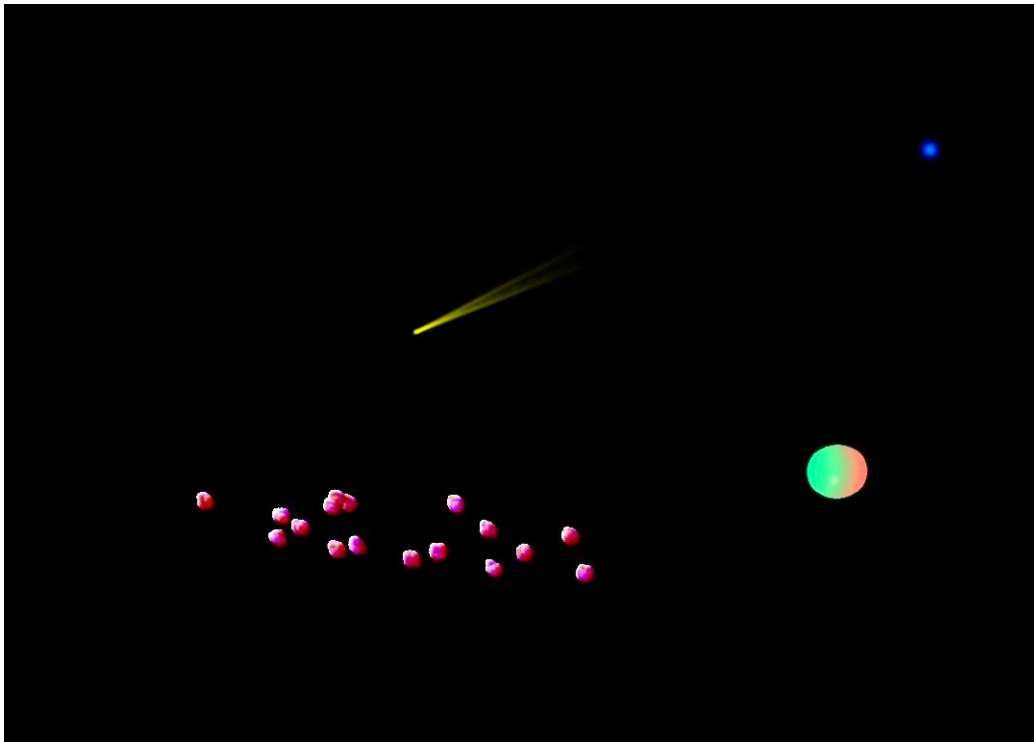


Colour Backdrop: Dark space, planets, asteroid showers, shooting comets, black holes.



*Illustration 20:*

Some men are born with luck, others make their own and some have none. The Man was of the first two categories for he was never without luck. Nature was with him for he confessed, “The swirling white clouds above me shout ‘Run with us,’ and I do.

Perhaps if he had been a silver smith in Silver Street, New Saturn 12 he would have needed none for he would have spent his life making candle sticks, never travelled deep space and so never met LADY LUCK.

It was a derelict space lab with moons, a refugee from a past aeon that drifted towards them out of uncharted space. They watched it close and at half a mile The Man did only what The Man was capable of doing and what made him The Man.

He boarded her.

And The Master Priest watched him go; now was his chance.

Poor Tintagel.

“Brutus,” The Master Priest and while Tintagel watched his friend board the derelict evil fingers switched off the oxygen to the yacht. But what about The Master Priest, surely he did die as well? But he was a geneticist and had blood cells in him that could extract oxygen from water and he was made of fluid, enough to watch Tintagel grow drowsy; become alarmed and try to throttle the scientist as he realised it was only he that was about to faint.

And he did faint so his hands relaxed on The Master Priest’s throat as he dropped to his knees.

Quickly he pushed Tintagel into an exit tube, except the tube was already gone, not to worry Tintagel was going into space the way he was.

When the deed was done The Master Priest switched back on the air supply and set course for Vegas Hotel, he was hungry, ravenous; a pity he hadn't kept Tintagel for a snack, but that was life.

\*

The Man should have looked back but didn't, an IF situation?

SILENCE inside the derelict, then the lights came on as programmed too with the weight of his feet.

Then heard hundreds of metallic things coming his way.

Worry not FEAR gripped him.

And from all sides the 5 who would later become the famous five attacked him. Mutants warriors of a by gone age controlled from their horned or plumed helmets wired into their soft grey matter.

And The Man did what he did best, gave his screeching war cry and counter attacked for there was ceiling height for him to use his silver wings.

Now the controller of the 5 knew FEAR for memory banks warned it was The Dictator who confronted him.