

WINDSOR FOR MAYOR

Hearing the alarm sound on her workstation, Windsor knew the time had arrived. She placed the disc lock on her screen and stared into the eye-reader to sign out, before standing up and to smooth her metallic bodysuit. Her staff, startled by her movements and the sound of the alarm, saw her going, and remembered why. Some smiled, others waved.

'Good luck tonight Windsor. I'm sure you'll win,' Deakin called loudly as she passed. Irritated Windsor noticed Deakin sat near the window.

She's always watching the spacecraft landing at the space port. Deakin really should be concentrating on work, not staring out at the inter-galactic craft and checking out the occupants. Too flighty for...but that'll have to wait for another shift. Time to go!

Windsor nodded her thanks, walking at a fast pace to the 'selfy' - the bullet elevator - and sat in the chair, strapping herself in, before the capsule descended the two hundred and fifty floors to the street tunnel.

She knew she had a good chance of winning tonight and rehearsed her prepared speech. *'It is such an honour to become one of the Ancient Orders - Mayor of Oxford being the highest...'*

Recalling her school lessons and the stories of yesteryear, the post had been known then as 'Lord Mayorship' and originally only males had been allowed to take the position.

What were they thinking? Those first few thousand years were positively feudal but things changed dramatically in 4005, when the Celestials came to earth,

bringing with them enlightened thinking. They made sure those chauvinistic traditions were discarded.

Her thoughts interrupted by the slowing of the elevator and the glass doors sliding opening, Windsor moved out into the underground street-tunnel and onto the shiny traveller taking earthlings and others upwards. She pulled down her facemask, as everyone did, as they neared the top. About to stride off, her progress was halted by an unexpected crowd of animated humans and working robots. The murmuring crowds were faced away from her, staring ahead, trying to get a glimpse of a nearby wall.

What ARE they looking at?

The assembly turned and quietened at the sight of a 'Higher Order'. They silently parted as she approached. Windsor paled when she saw the awful thing. In red paint, scrawled on the thulium wall, were the words 'Windsor for Mayor'.

Through pursed lips, Windsor addressed the crowd, 'Who did this?'

Wearing a large letter 'U', an untrained robot stepped forward to speak. Windsor's face softened as she recognized she was dealing with an inexperienced robot that could still make mistakes. Most humans knew to avoid these cadet robots for fear of the havoc they could cause.

'Just arrived, Sir. Found it here. Is it correct?'

Hmm...obviously this robot hasn't learned to recognize the sex of humans. Well, it is difficult sometimes..

'Not 'Sir', address me as 'Madame'...of course it's incorrect.'

The robot's head bend sideways in a questioning way as it replied, 'But S...Madame, your name IS Windsor and you are in the vote to be the next Oxford Mayor.'

Windsor felt a slight flush at being questioned by a robot - and a 'U' at that! The silent, watching crowd could see she looked displeased.

In a loud voice Windsor answered 'I know you are a novice but you must get to know these galactic laws. This is evil and, despite being labelled 'free speech' by subversive's, this type of garbage is a waste of energy and cleaning resources and not free at all. Whatever next? Guns and knives? It is banned by the Universal Convention and offenders are sentenced to deep sleep when caught. It's called 'Graffiti' - an ancient word. Ensure it is cleaned immediately and check your law training so that it's embedded for the future.'

She whirled to face the crowd; scared eyes looked back over their facemasks.

'No-one is to speak of this revolting thing. By decree it is forbidden to deface any wall or building. You did not see this and must not discuss it.'

All we need is people thinking they can deface buildings. I thought this freedom stuff was long forgotten. Sharply, Windsor turned away, walking onto the moving walkway, towards the historic center of Oxford city.

Oxford had been one of the conurbations sealed into purified air under a glass-like dome, saved from the suffocating smog that blighted Earth. To preserve the air, only the most elite were allowed in. Confidently, she looked into the eye-reader and was granted entrance to the de-contamination center and air-pocket entrance that preserved the atmosphere of pure heaven from the putrid air outside.

Yes, I will expect to be addressed as 'Lady Mayoress' but later I must question the training of these U's and have the monitors checked to discover who had done the dreadful deed. For now, I will clear my mind. I mustn't allow that wicked incident to spoil my triumph.

Waved into the bubble by a robot aware of her position in Oxford, Windsor removed her facemask and breathed in the pure air. She strode purposefully through the ancient streets noticing the crowds from other planets and galaxies. The embossed platinum medals on her metallic bodysuit glistened in the daylight and everyone, people, robots and outer-souls, moved aside to allow her a walk space. The 'Accredited Special Tourists', allowed into the bubble, saw the outer markings of her bodysuit were important and gazed

curiously at her as she passed. This earthling appeared high-ranking, maybe even a 'Superior', someone to be wary of, someone of power.

Indeed, Windsor had become an eminent person in the university metropolis. As Superior Dean of all colleges she had already left her mark on the city having insisted on a statue replacing the ruins of Magdalen College Library. All its paper had disintegrated in the polluted air many centuries ago and the ancient building had also fallen into ruin. Paper had not been used for many hundreds of decades and something had been needed to replace the outdated building space in the High Street. At Windsor's suggestion, a statue fitted the bill.

She proposed a figure of Mrs Margaret Thatcher, England's first lady Prime Minister way back in the year 1979, in the 'Age of Understanding'. Despite being a human, she had been known as the 'Iron Lady' and had attended Oxford when it was a university educating people. The idea fitted galaxy ideology and the population from both earth and the 'Outer Iron Meteorites' had voted their support. Windsor had become even more well-known when she vetoed marble and stone for the statue and canvassed for a meteorite from Mars. Mrs Thatcher's likeness had been emblazoned on it by an expert. Personally, Windsor thought it looked more like the famous Queen Elizabeth who had ruled for a century at that time. *Maybe the handbag wasn't such a good idea.*

Tonight was the statue's unveiling and then the vote, by citizens from all the visiting galaxies, to elect Mayor of Oxford. She saw there were many 'Specials' from the outer galaxies and tried to avoid them and their stares. Their smell of chloride stayed with them and made her eyes water.

Passing a group of young chattering students from Mars she eyed their sports tunics, the word 'Moonbeams' emblazoned across their backs. *They're here to crow about their meteorite being used for the statue, I expect. Trust those Martians to crow about something trivial. They've only been there a few thousand years and they want to be at the forefront of everything new. They*

don't seem to realise they're not the super-stars they think they are and they certainly don't recognize me.

Mindfully going over her speech in her memory cells, Windsor confirmed her final words by touching her ear to record. If she won the Mayoral race, as she knew would happen, she would 'touch on' and the words would be relayed through to her mouth. Now free to forget and de-stress, walk and inspect, she carried on up the High Street noticing that robots and other tourists were bowing to her, as a noted 'Higher Order', whilst they checked out the market stalls selling remains of Earth's past. Pieces of Oxford buildings and stone gargoyles on sale at many stalls were being handled and purchased. Windsor sighed.

Don't they realise these ancient items will disintegrate after a few years in space? Where is their training? These young ones are so unwise and they don't listen. I shudder to think what the future holds. Life on earth seems to be going backwards. There's no discipline and The Rules, so carefully laid down when the galaxies united, are slowly being eroded. Will we return to those dark days of 'freedom of speech' where everyone wants their say? Where no consensus can be made and anger explodes in the cities because personal ideas conflict? No, that wouldn't happen. Not in these times where human righteousness had long ago been crushed and peace declared so many lifetimes ago. Still...

As a youngster she had grown up with The Rules which were accepted and strictly observed. These days, even with everyone enjoying health, food, work and leisure to their maximum, The Rules appear to be slowly eroding. She would have to inform the Executive Council to clamp down.

When I become Mayor I will make this my very first Conception Speech to the EC...tightening the understanding of The Rules so we are all on 'the same page' - an outdated saying with paper long gone; the 'same screen' would be more apt.

We need the basic rules of galaxy life to ensure life on earth continues. Earth can't live without them. We must think of the overall good. Without The Rules, where will it end, I wonder? I will follow the Iron Lady's views. The Rules must be obeyed.