CHAPTER 5: That Sinking Feeling

[Woob and her animal friends are confronted with Whoob and a throng of Hoomans. All the animals hit the temporal splicer and immediately disappear]

WHOOB:

WAIT!

WOOB:

Great... There goes my ride out of here.

WHOOB:

Aw, they look like they were a lot of fun to draw.

[NARRATOR: They were.]

WOOB:

What do you want Whoob?! You’ve gone and made yourself king of the Hoomans so you can live forever in ignorance?

WHOOB:

Yes, well, uh, actually...I wanted to tell you...that...you were right...

WOOB:

What’s that? I couldn’t hear it?

WHOOB:

....uwererite...

WOOB:

Sorry, one more time?

WHOOB:

YOU WERE RIGHT OK?! IT’S GETTIN’ HOT IN HERE AND IGNORING IT WON’T HELP!

[Human begins gesticulating and grunting wildly at Woob]

WOOB:

Ahhhhh! I’m sorry! Don’t eat me!

WHOOB:

No, no, leave her be. She’s the one I told you about?

[Human stops and grunts back at Whoob]
WOOB:
Put me down you darn dirty apes.

Hooman:
Ook ook, oook?

WHOOB:
Yeah, the lonely nerd one.

WOOB:
Wait. You can talk to these things?!

WHOOB:
I know, right? It also turns out that they dig this whole alien thing too. One of their scientists said they really wanted to get inside my head.

WOOB:
I think they meant that literally.

WHOOB:
Well, it turns out a lot of the Hoomans know about the warming too, and they’re as concerned as you.

[Humans look concerned and nod at Woob]

WOOB:
Wow, I’m impressed. Ok then, let’s compare notes.

WHOOB:
Well, start right here. New Orleans, like most Hooman cities, is near a major body of water. Any continued rise in sea levels could flood these cities out.

WOOB:
Yeah...this city seems to be close to sea level.

WHOOB:
Actually, parts of the city are BELOW sea level. Much of New Orleans would be under water with a 1-4 foot rise. In fact, the sea level has already been going up 0.14 inches since the 1990’s, a lot of Hoomans just don’t want to consider what that means.

[the two appear on a large map of the world with regions shaded grey to indicate the level of flooding]

Sections of New York City and areas in Florida and the Gulf of Mexico are also vulnerable to flooding. But that’s not the worst. Large areas of China, India, and island nations, like the Philippines, will be under water, and these areas are homes to millions of Hoomans who would need to find a place to go.
WOOB:

Why is it so bad for the Hoomans to move around?

WHOOB:

It’s not that simple with hoomans. If a million Chinese Hoomans need to move to another city or country, all the other Hoomans start arguing about who is going to pay for what, how these refugees will affect their economies, and all other manner of nonsense. And with 7.5 billion of them, it gets ugly.

WOOB:

It sounds like it takes forever for them to get anything done, even important stuff!

WHOOB:

Oh, wait ‘til I tell you about this place called the DMV.

WOOB:

But wait, all this flooding is salt water...

WHOOB:

Yup, all this salt water can ruin their drinking supplies. Hoomans can’t drink salt water, and this stuff could get into their wells, ground water, lakes, or rivers. Not all Hoomans have many options for clean drinking water already, a 1-4 foot rise in sea levels will only make things worse.

[Molly mosquito can be seen sucking blood from Whoob’s back]

OW!

MOZZIE:

Oh, my goodness, did I hurt you, sweetie? I’m so sorry.

WHOOB:

What the—YOU DID THAT!

MOZZIE:

I know darling, but you have to understand, I’ve got to do it.

WHOOB:

YOU’VE *GOT* TO STAB ME WITH YOUR FACE AND DRINK MY BLOOD?!

WOOB:

Actually, Whoob, she does. That’s a mosquito.

MOZZIE:
Name’s Mozzie, look, I’m just trying to provide my darling little eggs with a meal before I let the little angels hatch in that puddle over there.

WOOB:
You see, her eggs need the nutrients from blood to help them develop, then the larvae develop in the water.

[Wriggler larvae are hopping near the surface]
LARVAE:
Thanks momma! We love you!
MOZZIE:
Oh, you children are so sweet, I could just spin you up on a stick and sell you at a county fair.
WHOOB:
...SHE FEEDS HER MAGGOT CHILDREN THE BLOOD OF INNOCENT MAMMALS. THIS IS NOT WHOLESOME FAMILY TIMES!

WOOB:
It’s not her fault. That just what mosquitos do. But you should be careful about getting bitten by them. Since mosquitos hop from animal to animal stabbing their noses in the animals’ blood, diseases can take advantage of them. Many pest species are what we call a vector species. They can carry the diseases from one host to another without being infected themselves.

[images of a tick species, *Aedes* mosquito, and *Anopheles* mosquito appear with their transmitted diseases listed under them.]
MOZZI:
My poor babies...
WHOOB:
Many of these species can’t tolerate the cold, so winters kept them in check. However, with longer warm seasons, these vector pests are active for longer times of the year, and some are even moving into new territories.
BABY MOSQUITOS:
Uncle WHOOB!
WHOOB:
She could have made me sick?!
WHOOB:
Well, technically the virus or bacteria did it. She’s more like that friend who always drives because they’re just a sucker like that.

WHOOB:

[points at Mozzie, glaring] You’re still an accomplice.

WOOB:

Well, the best thing to do is discourage mosquitos from hanging out in your area.

WHOOB:

[holding up cans of pesticide] Oh ho...I think I know what you mean...

WOOB:

Insect repellant will work, but only temporarily, and that stuff isn’t exactly great for you either. You’re better off not giving them the opportunity to live near you. Remove any standing water in buckets, puddles, or old tires. Without water, there’s nowhere for the young to develop, and no reason for the adults to hang around sucking your blood.

[Crazy storm hits the second Woob finishes her point]

WOOB:

Bit hard to do when you’ve got rising ocean levels and intense storms.

Is this normal?

WHOOB:

It seems like it, yeah. With warmer air and warmer oceans, that means a lot more water evaporates and gets into the clouds. This may not mean more storms, but it definitely means more intense storms.

WOOB:

Well, at least it’s freshwater. It will replenish drinking water and help the crops grow.

WHOOB:

You would think that, but rain like this happens too quickly. There’s no chance for the water to absorb into the ground. It’s just going to flood everything and make a mess.

[area begins flooding and Whoob and Woob have to take shelter on a small boat]

People could be directly hurt or killed by the flood, damage, power outages, or food shortages caused by this flood. Even after the fact, all this standing water can spread disease from the raw sewage that gets in.

WOOB:

So that’s it? The Hoomans are going to live in WaterWorld now?

WHOOB:
Not quite all the Hoomans [smacks temporal displacer. They are teleported to a dried up lake in California. Minimal water remains and the surrounding homes have dead lawns]

WOOB:
Woah, did you teleport us to the apocalypse?!

WHOOB:

Nope, this is present day California. A state known for its amazing produce and lush Hollywood landscape. But in the last four years they have gone from a little dry to one of the most severe droughts in the history of the state.

WOOB:
But how?

WHOOB:
Well, remember, more evaporation meant more water in the sky to fall down. But what if the evaporation rates are higher, and it never rained much near you to begin with?

[They pass by some fish that look like war boys wheezing out “witness me”. It’s a Mad Max reference...trust me, it’ll kill]

WOOB:
Then you get a drought...

WHOOB:

Bingo. Many of the world’s most fertile farming locations are drying out, and ALL the Hoomans are going to be affected since they depend on these areas for food. Sure some area in Canada might become the next central California, but this is happening too fast for anyone to adapt to.

[diagram of the human body functioning then not is shown]

We also forgot to consider this. Even in a normal summer, thousands of Hoomans die from heat stroke. Hoomans and other mammals are made to moderate their own body temperatures. They can do this by pumping blood to different areas, shivering, or sweating. But when they get heat stroke, their bodies are not able to regulate temperature anymore. This can kill them.

The very young or old, the poor, or those working outside are the most at risk. With hotter and longer warm seasons, Hoomans can expect more heat stroke.

[A celebrity is shouting and grunting at Whoob]

[Woob and Whoob are now walking down a busy street. The Californian Hoomans are doing all manner of hilarious stuff that I can’t think of now]

WOOB:
Let’s even assume that the Hoomans who ignore climate change are right. Let’s assume their burning of fossil fuels isn’t making the greenhouse effect stronger, and let’s assume climate change is totally out of their control. They should still knock it off.

[a truck pulls away and leaves behind a smog cloud. Woob and Whoob start coughing]

WOOB:

I think I get where you’re going. All these electrical appliances, engines, and power plants don’t just give off CO2, there’s a whole cocktail of other stuff in there too. There’s oxide gases, ozone, and all kinds of gross particles.

WOOB:

All of these chemicals can create an environment that aggravates asthma-like symptoms. Even in people who don’t have asthma! Some of this air pollution is so bad, that it can give you respiratory, cardiovascular issues, or even kill you, if you’re exposed long enough.

[The two stop infront of a Sixbucks Coffee]

WHOOB:

Hey, want to get this awesome Hooman drink that’s basically a milkshake but everyone pretends it’s coffee?

WOOB:

Sure do!

[As the two walk in, Woob is still talking while Whoob looks shocked]

There’s really no way the Hoomans can lose if they clean up their emissions...What?

[Woooob can be seen sitting in a corner of the Sixbucks furiously typing on a laptop]

What the-

WHOOB:

MOM?!

[Narrator: To be continued]