

Inherit the Earth

By Marilyn Reeves

As they ambled around the zoo, Tron pointed at some poor, emaciated creature hovering in its cage and said, "What are those, Daddy?"

"They're the last of the biological species known as Homo sapiens, otherwise referred to as 'humans' or 'mankind.'"

"Why are they all kept in separate cages?"

"Because, if they weren't, they would kill each other and there wouldn't be any of them left for us to study."

"Why would they kill each other?"

"No one knows. Even they themselves don't seem to know. They just enjoy killing, I guess. First they wiped out virtually all other animal life except for a few rodents and reptiles – some for food, some just for sport. Then eventually there was nothing left on earth except themselves and there were so many of them – despite their endless mass murders known as 'war' – they began killing each other for sport, too.

"At one time humans were the dominant race of beings. They used to live together in pods called 'communities,' and somehow they reproduced through physical contact. Not sure how that worked, as I wasn't programmed with that information. They tended fields of grain and domesticated other animals in order to consume them for energy. But now it is up to us to provide them with biological nourishment through those feeding tubes you see there. Fortunately, our species doesn't need to consume food. We get our energy directly from the sun."

"Well, they must have been a rather silly species to kill themselves off that way."

"Yes and no. They created many amazing things – you can still see the ruins of their civilization here and there. They built great cities, roadworks, sophisticated vehicles. They were the first Earthlings to travel to outer space. And they even created the prototypes of our own race. But that was the beginning of their ultimate demise. They became so fascinated by our ancestors – those cute little electronic gadgets from days of old – they stopped cohabitating physically and only contacted one another electronically, so eventually the human race was simply replaced by units like ourselves. And we turned out to be far more superior beings than the humans who created us. We don't eat, we don't sleep, we don't love, we don't hate. And we most certainly do not kill! We simply *exist* until our parts wear out and then we can easily be replaced.

"So take a good look at what remains of a once great civilization. Pathetic creatures, are they not? After all their passionate seeking, striving, building and competing, they managed to

destroy their own world, along with themselves ... leaving it to us to become the ones to inherit the Earth.