

LIFE 1. Once a friend and I went to a café and ordered coffee. When her long black came, she sent it back ... it was too hot. **A**nother time I travelled through Afghanistan. Each village was advised of our approach by radio. Along the way we met four armed horsemen. We tried to talk to them, but they argued amongst themselves and finally rode off, somewhat reluctantly. **A**t the next stop our arrival was greeted with astonishment: A group of four bandits had gone off to ambush and rob us. **O**nce I was to be murdered. Another time the coffee was too hot.

*John Lennon was right:
“Life is what happens to you while you make other plans.”*

LIFE 2. I'll stretch your imagination now, please bear with me. Imagine you're a space traveller from a faraway solar system. Your spaceship travels at near light speed. You are able to hibernate for thousands of years. When you awaken, you are the same age as when you hibernated. Your world is in decline. Your objective is to find a civilisation you can study to learn survival techniques. So far you have not been successful. **Y**our spaceship's technology can scan a solar system for life in an instant. But the confluence of conditions that allows life to arise is very complex - among millions of stars and planets in your galaxy, your civilisation is the only one recorded. You are aware the likelihood of finding life elsewhere is slim, thus your race recognises life - as rare as it is - to be immensely precious. **T**hen, after millennia-long searches, your instruments record a positive reading. Your spaceship slows down. You are de-hibernated. At the edge of your galaxy there is a solar system with a few planets - one of which bears that immensely scarce commodity: Life. The object you are observing is astoundingly beautiful, with a myriad of life forms: Botanical and zoological - in water, on land and in the air. **N**ext you find out that the species at the pinnacle of that planet's biodiversity fight wars and kill one another.