ANGELICA

AN ALIEN GETS SHIPWRECKED

by *Ola Montán*

help with pictures and corrections: Sarah



ANGELICA

AN ALIEN GETS SHIPWRECKED

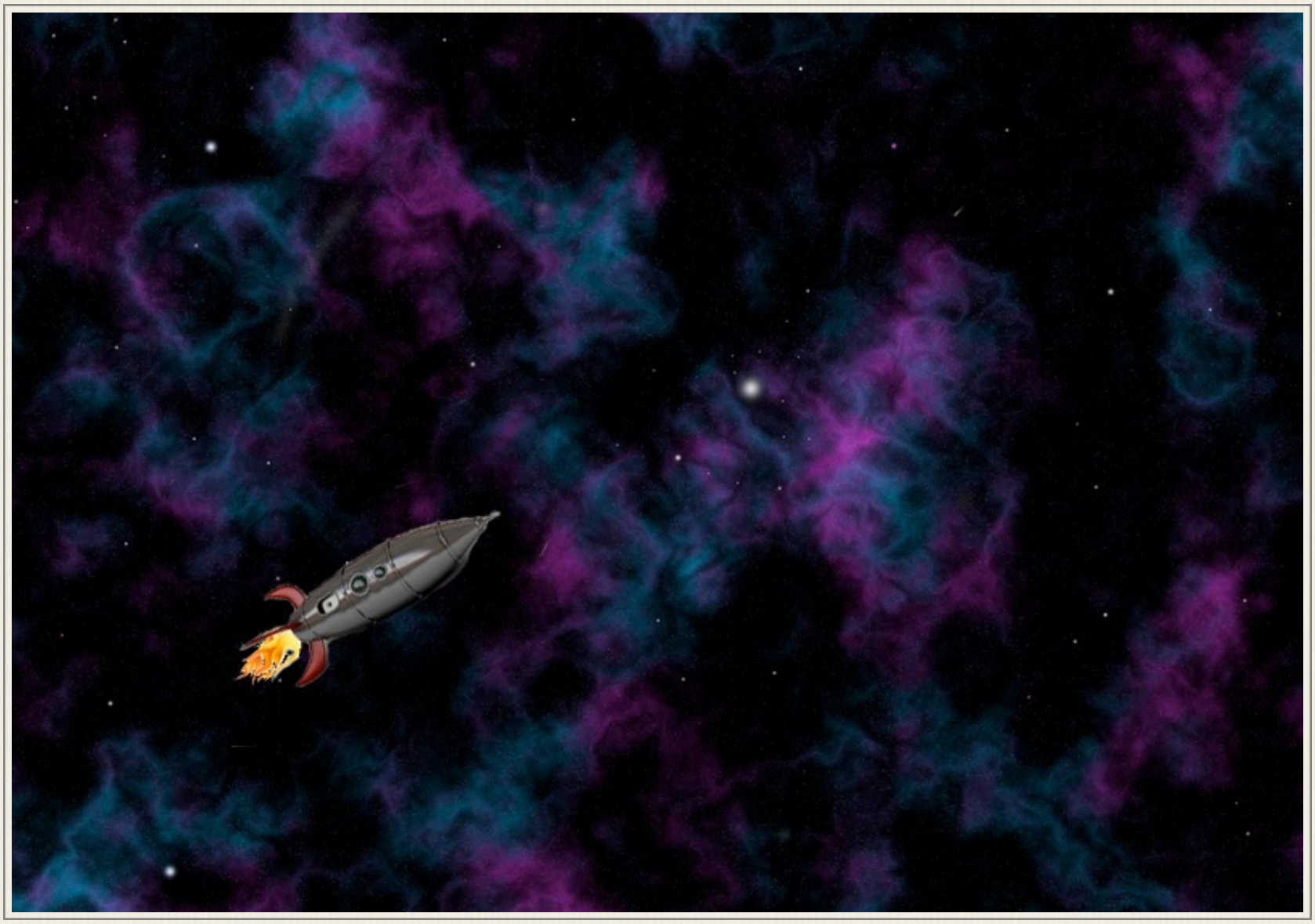
Part I

Looking for a new life



CHAPTER 1

Drifting in space



She was rushing through the dark space. The space around her was filled with nothing but a empty, deserted and hostile vacuum. As usual she sat in front of the trekking computer. Ever since she entered this rescue capsule she has been trying to improve the planet searching software to make it possible to finally escape this prison that they called rescue capsule. “Rescue”, she thought. Just a nice rescue to be stuck in deep space day after day, not knowing how you would die. Are you go-

ing to die by starvation when the food is out, by suffocation when the oxygen is out or maybe freeze to death when the fuel is out?

She tried to shake of all dark thoughts. It just got to exist some planet out there in the big nothing where she could land! If she just could find a way to improve this lousy computer software so it can find a habitable planet before it was too late! Her eyes begun to feel heavy. How long has she been awake? Day and night has lost their meaning. She went to bed and let the rescue capsule drive for itself. It was totally against protocol, but right not the protocol didn't seem too important. She was alone on this flying, cylinder shaped vehicle out in Gauntness, so who could complain?

~ ~ ~

A couple of hours later she was awakened by the computer alarm. She felt something cold grab her heart. Not again! What kind of disaster has happened this time? She ran to the control room to investigate. The computer's alarm has went off because it has found a solar system that contained planets. Maybe even stone planets with an atmosphere that was not poisoned for her. Her modification of the software has given some result at last!

While the rescue capsule approached the solar system more and more she was wondering about how the future could be. Would she even be able to survive alone on a planet, even if atmosphere, plants and animals was adapted to her needs? She that was raised with silver, no with golden spoon in her mouth. Although she had managed it on her own the last three years, it had always been in different cities with people swarming around her. She had never had to live by nature. Why would she even try to do that when there are restaurants where you can buy food if you are hungry? Yikes, what she felt hungry! The emergency food from the rescue capsule made it possible to survive, but it certainly was not particularly tasty.

She saw herself alone on one of the planets. Sure, she had been on an alien planet once before, but it had been completely different. That time the spacecraft was within walking distance from her, and it was easy to just go back. This time there would be something entirely different as the spacecraft was scattered in small, small parts in space along with the remains of the other crew's bodies. In

her mind she once again saw the horrible picture that she had dreamt nightmares about every night since it occurred.

She shook herself again to try to remove the horrific memory image. This will not do it! I have to get through this one way or another! She sat down at the computer and asked it to analyze the planets around the star. Hmm, the fourth planet from the star appeared to be promising. It seemed to be a stone planet anyway. There maybe it could be possible to land. But why does it look so red? It got atmosphere anyway, it's a good start. She requested data on the planet's atmosphere from the computer. After a while it was finished with the analyze and showed large concentrations of carbon and iron. It was not entirely wrong, but not a place where she could survive. But the next planet then? It appears to have water at least. Without water, she could never survive. But no, the temperature was too high.

She felt hopelessness penetrate every part of her body again. Here she had a solar system that actually had a number of stone planets. But no one she could survive on. Almost unconsciously, she steered her rescue capsule into a path that would throw her straight into the star instead. What was the point of even trying? Better a quick death in the heat from the star than a slow death in the empty space.

The computer's alarm went off and woke her from her slumber. Of course, the trekking computer would not allow her to steer towards a certain death. She began typing on the panel to find a way to disable the security feature so she could force it to steer right into the star. Then she saw that her new program had chosen the third planet from the star as a potential candidate to land on. OK, computer, I'm giving you one last chance, she thought, and requested an analysis of the planet.

Soon all the numbers came up on the panel. Much oxygen in the atmosphere, a lot of water in the seas around the entire planet. This looked quite OK! A lot of green areas on the land surfaces of the planet too. She could not help but giggle at it. It would match her green skin and hair perfectly! She started laughing uncontrollably at this, perhaps because she hadn't laughed for, well, how long ago was the disaster anyway? She calmed herself and looked at the date on the panel. She

had lived in this rescue capsule for over 100 days! It was about time to get out of this solitary confinement!

She zoomed in the planet on the computer panel and started to look for a suitable place to land. It should not be too cold but not too hot. Then there should be a desolate place, because she could clearly see that there were cities around the planet. She wanted to avoid any contact with the inhabitants of the planet, otherwise she could be taken to a laboratory to be examined and dissected. Or maybe some kind of zoo for exhibition to anyone and everyone. She shuddered as if a cold wind had come through the rescue capsule. No, thank you! After some searching, she found a place far away from settlements with many high and dense trees that she could hide rescue capsule underneath. She decided to wait approaching the planet until it became dark at her intended landing site.

It's time to land, she thought after a few hours. Then suddenly she remembered that she had not been trained on how to control a spaceship. Or maybe it was at the lessons when she had been sleeping at the Space Academy? She had not even acquired a license to drive a car! Until now the ship's computer took care of all steering. She didn't have a clue on how to land this thing. Wait, isn't it possible to program the computer to land on autopilot? After a lot of tinkering and reprogramming she managed to get an automatic landing algorithm, but now it had already become day at the place of landing. Oh well, another day in space would not kill her.

Finally she entered the command to land. The rescue capsule made a quick last rush down towards the planet's dark side, a rather rough and bumpy entry into the atmosphere and finally touched down on the ground in a clearing in the otherwise dense forest.

She had succeeded, she was finally rescued from the dark inhospitable space! But saved to what? Could she really survive on this planet? Or would the inhabitants of this planet have to dig her grave instead?



CHAPTER 2

Stranger on the planet



The rescue capsule was firmly anchored on its four legs to the ground on the alien planet. She wondered if she would dare go out. According to the computer panel the air outside was quite possible to breathe, the temperature comfortable, and no harmful things seemed to be around the capsule. She studied via the cameras around the entire glade to see if there seemed to be any hostile animals, but she didn't find any. Yet she dared not really to trust that it was safe.

"But if I should die now, so I might as well die outdoors than in this isolation cell", she thought. So she opened the door, walked down the ramp and took her first steps on the alien planet. It actually smelled absolutely wonderful from the trees and flowers around her. What a difference from the bad air in the rescue capsule, or in the spaceship for that matter! "This will work out just fine, you'll see", she said aloud to herself, as if she wanted to convince herself. Like when you whistle in the dark so you would not to feel alone.

Talk about darkness. It was still totally dark around her except for the rectangle of light that streamed out from the door of the rescue capsule. "There's a day tomorrow too", she thought, and went back in to try and get a few hours of sleep. She twisted and turned in her bed and was thrown from the nightmare of the spaceship which was crushed by meteorites again into a new nightmare of large animals with sharp teeth who attacked her as soon as she walked out on the surface of the planet.

Finally the morning came and she woke up in a puddle of sweat. Now there was no turning back! To stay in the capsule was not an option. 102 days of pain and hopelessness was more then enough. She thought back to the years after she ran away from home with just a backpack with the essentials and she lived from day to day sleeping in parks and doorways. This was about the same thing, she tried to convince herself. So she packed a backpack and left.

She went straight ahead without looking back. After a few hours, she found a creek and tasted the water in it. It actually tasted fantastic! She picked berries she found along the way and ate them without worrying about whether they were poisonous or not. When night came, she was still quite hungry. She also got a stomach ache. Maybe it was not too smart of her to eat anything that came in her way. It would just end up with that she died of food poisoning, and then all would have been in vain. She lay down to sleep under a couple of bushes.

The first night on the planet was very hard on her. This was something completely different than sleeping on a park bench at home on Knimbo. The sounds of the city at night was not nearly as scary as the sounds of nature was. She heard all the time how it was rustling in the bushes around her, and felt that at any mo-

ment some large animals would show up to eat her. And it was cold too! This cold she had never experienced in the parks.

In the morning she woke up with pain in her entire body, frozen to the bones and starving. She realized that she just was not used to live on what nature could provide. “It will work out, I’ll just have to learn”, she thought. It was too early to give up yet, especially considering all she had overcome the last three years. She continued to look for berries and other things she could eat, and made sure to stay close to the creek so she at least did not suffer lack of water. “Maybe I can catch a fish in the creek”, she pondered. All day she walked along the creek, trying to catch something, but was not able to do it.

Several days passed and her mood changed from hope to despair. She had not been able to catch any fish, no meat either. And the berries she could find was not enough by a long shoot to fill her increasingly empty stomach. One morning after yet another restless night with nightmares, aching stomach and cold, she went up on a high cliff and stood on the top and looked down. It would be so easy, just jump down then all the problems should be resolved. She hesitated for a long time, then she took off and jumped. But at the last second, she chickened out. It would hurt just terrible to land on the rocks down there. And what happened if she did not die right away? She sat down on a rock and didn’t know what to do.

Then she saw a column of smoke rising not too far away. When she went a little closer, she saw a farm that was next to the creek. She crept closer and lay down behind a woodpile and looked toward what looked like the main building. Then she saw a farmer coming out from the door while his wife stood in the doorway and shouted something after him in a foreign language. After hesitating for a long time, so she finally walked up to the door and knocked.

The farmer’s wife heard someone knock on the door and walked to the door and opened it. Her first impression of the one outside the door was that it was a girl who has was lost as her clothes were shredded, she was dirty and emaciated. But what she most noticed was the pain and hopelessness in the eyes of the girl. Then suddenly it felt like she was punched hard right in her stomach when she realized that the girl was not a girl but a woman with green skin, graygreen hair and

two antennas sticking up from her head. It was an alien who was standing on her porch! The farmer's wife got hard to breathe and it felt like she was going to faint. But then her maternal instinct took over when she looked the alien in her eyes again. That hopelessness that reigned in the hollow green eyes melted her heart, and she took a step aside and invited her in the house. "She can not be dangerous, she's so small and exhausted", she thought.

The farmer's wife asked the alien what her name was, but got no answer. She soon realized that she did not understand the language, so she pointed at herself and said:

– Fiona. My name is Fiona.

The alien pointed at herself and said:

– Añeđliká.

Añeđliká went into the kitchen and collapsed exhausted on the sofa. Fiona fetched a glass of milk and put it in front of her. She grabbed the glass and drank it in one gulp. It tasted wonderful, she had never tasted anything like this before. Fiona looked at Añeđliká's tattered clothes and dirty face. So she took her by her arm and pulled her gently to the bathroom. Añeđliká looked around. A funny little chair with water, a kind of container that appeared to be used to wash oneself and then a large container at the far wall. She saw Fiona starting to pour water into the container. Then she pointed on Añeđliká and pointed on the water. She understood, and thanked in her own language, and Fiona left the bathroom.

The water in the tub was absolutely fantastic. Nice and warm. Just what she needed now. Fiona had also pointed to a small block and called it "soap" and pointed to Añeđliká's dirty face, so she used the soap to wash herself from head to toe. Then she used it as Fiona called "shampoo" to wash her hair that had become totally rigid of all the dirt. After getting off all deeprooted dirt she felt so much better. She stood up and wiped her in a kind of cloth that Fiona also had shown to her. Then she found a set of new clothes that Fiona must have put in while she bathed. She took the clothes on and found that they fit almost perfectly. It could never be Fiona's clothes, for she was both bigger and longer than Añeđliká. Maybe she had a daughter?

Añeďliká went back into the kitchen where Fiona was standing at what looked like a stove and was cooking. In any case, that what Añeďliká thought because it smelled amazing. She rubbed her stomach and pointed to the food to show that she was hungry. Fiona smiled at her and took a plate, fork and knife and gave the food to her. Añeďliká gobbled all the food as if she had never seen food before, and then she stretched the plate towards Fiona and asked for more. Fiona did not understand what she said, but understood what she meant, so she added another portion to the plate.

While Añeďliká enjoyed the taste of her second portion as she heard steps in the hallway. She froze and realized immediately that it must be the man she had seen before, and got scared again. Fiona saw her reaction and went out to meet her husband before he came into the kitchen.

– Honey, you know what happened this morning? We got a visitor!

– How nice, it's someone we know?

– No, it seems like someone who got lost or something. The poor thing was exhausted and starved. I lent her some of Laura's clothes and she took a bath. It's not as if Laura needs her clothes anymore now that she moved out.

– Is she that small, it is a child or something?

– No, she seems to be an adult, just a little short. She's not from here...

Fiona hesitated in her voice. She was not sure how she would explain that it was an alien who had came to visit.

– You mean it's a negro, or?

– Hey, you know we do not use such words!

– No, of course. You mean she is colored.

– Yes, she is. Just not black... Rather, green...

The farmer looked at his wife without believing in what she said. Green?

– Yes, she's probably not from this planet, I think. But she seems friendly and helpless, so I do not want you to scare her more. She's already terrified.

The farmer could not bare it any longer, so he went into the kitchen to take a look at the visitor. Fiona introduced them to each other.

– Honey, it is Angelica. Angelica, this is Frank.

"Angelica", she thought. Fiona is certainly not very good at saying her name. But Angelica sounds pretty good anyway. She stood up, walked over to Frank and held out both hands, palms upward to show her respect as is the custom on her planet. Frank turned her right hand and took it and shook it up and down. "Very well, so maybe this is how they are greeting each other on this planet", she thought, and let Frank shake her hand.

Frank and Fiona sat down and began to eat too, so Añeďliká took a third serving mostly to keep them company, but also to try to forget those terrible berries in the woods, and all space food. After lunch Fiona went with Frank to the door when he was returning to work. Añeďliká noticed that they were talking to each other out in the hallway. She assumed they were talking about her and what they would do with her. And of course she was right, for Frank said:

– What are we going to do with her anyway? It's an alien!

– It is also a fellow human in need of help, Fiona replied firmly. I do not care if she is from the town, from another country or from another planet. She needs us!

– You're right, I guess. Alright, she can stay here for a while, we will see later.

When Fiona came back to the kitchen she found Añeďliká asleep at the table. Fiona made the bed in her daughter's old room and helped Añeďliká in bed. Just before she fell asleep again, she was thinking of what would happen now. She realized that the only thing she could do right now was to trust the couple and hope that they would not contact someone who would lock her up somewhere. It was the last thing Añeďliká remembered that day.

☆ ☆ ☆

CHAPTER 3

Life at the farm



Añeďliká woke up with a snap. At first she did not know where she was. She looked around and saw all the girl's stuff and the bed she was lying in. "Of course, Fiona helped me into bed", she thought, "How long have I slept actually? It was bright outside, but the sun was very low. "It's evening already", she guessed. Then she kept thinking. "But the sun did go up right there yesterday morning! I must have slept all afternoon and all night". It was no wonder she felt so rested, then.

She got up and went out to the kitchen. There was Fiona and Frank already awake and was about to eat breakfast.

– Good morning sleepyhead, smiled Fiona.

Añeđliká did not understood the words, but guessed that it was some kind of greeting, so she responded:

– Good morning sleepyhead.

Fiona and Frank could not keep from laughing. Añeđliká laughed too, although she had no idea what was so funny.

– It's called "good morning", said Fiona and pressed extra on "good" and "morning".

– Good morning, Añeđliká replied.

It felt like they had not contacted anyone yesterday, and she felt somehow spontaneously that she could trust them. She realized that the first thing she must do here on this planet was to learn the language so she could communicate with these friendly people. So all day, she went around pointing at things, and Fiona said patiently what she was pointing at.

– Chair. Table. Door. Stove. Food.

And so the days passed. Fiona felt as if she had a new baby to bring up and she had as much patience as she had with Laura when she learned to talk. Añeđliká felt that she could not just walk around and let herself be serviced, so she tried to help the best she could. And after a while she really became a good help for Fiona when she cleaned and washed dishes and helped with laundry. One day she took courage enough and cooked for Fiona and Frank. She made food she used to eat on her home planet Knimbo to their great delight. They really liked the food that Añeđliká had cooked, so she started to help more and more often in the kitchen. But out to the yard she didn't dared to go. What if someone else came passing by and saw her?

It had become easier to communicate with the peasant couple. Linguistics was included as a course at the Space Academy, and it was actually a topic that she

had liked, even though it otherwise was just computers that interested her. She was happy that she had put so much effort into linguistics, because it made it so much easier to learn English. She read Laura's ABC books and Frank had also bought a course for her on CD with accompanying book that helped a lot to teach her the language. One day Fiona asked her why she never left the house. Didn't she want to have some fresh air?

– I'm afraid that someone will see me. Someone who does not accept that I am alien.

She felt really proud that she could express herself already, and even throw herself with unusual words as "accept" and "alien".

– There is no risk that someone will come here. We almost never get visit, and if we do get a visit sometime we can see them a mile away, so you can go inside before you get caught.

Añeďliká thought about what Fiona had said. Sure, she had begun to feel trapped in the house already. Almost like being back in the rescue capsule again. So she went out with Fiona and got a guided tour around the farm. Almost imperceptibly, she started to help out outdoors too. For example she learnt how to milk and feed the cows and take care of the other animals. She just could not sit still and do nothing. Not when the peasant couple was so kind and helped her with all her needs. However she could never really relax, but always scouted around to see if someone was coming. And to follow into town when they run their errands was obviously out of the question.

Frank realized this, and tried to find a solution. So one day when he came back from town he brought a bag for Añeďliká. It contained a black wig and a box of theatrical makeup.

– If you want to walk around the on the farm or in the town, so you can paint your face and hands and put on the wig, said Frank. Then no one will know that you are alien.

Añeďliká tested the wig next morning. It hid her green hair, but the antennas was sticking up anyway. She tried to put one of Laura's hairband on that pressed

the antennas along the sides and then she pulled the wig on top. It looked better. She experimented with then theatrical makeup until her skin was the same color as the peasant couple. Then she went out and took care of the animals. When Fiona saw her she was startled. Who was that that women that was about to milk the cows? Had Frank hired a maiden without asking? And how he thought we could have a maiden here when Angelica was here also? Then Añeďliká looked up and smiled at Fiona.

– Oh it's you, Angelica! I did not recognize you.

– It was just as it was intended. Can you give thanks to Frank for the wig and makeup, now I feel much safer.

– It 's really nice. You might even want to come to town with us next time we go, Angelica.

– I'd love to, Añeďliká replied although she felt a little anxious.

The couple still had not learned to pronounce her name, but "Angelica" sounded pretty good, so she thought she could very well use it here on Earth.

~ ~ ~

Next time Frank went to town then Añeďliká came along. It was wonderful to be able to walk around in a city again. She had not realized how much she had missed it until now. But she was, after all, a city child who had always lived in or near the cities. Well city, by the way. It was perhaps a bit overkill to call this a "city". It was more like a large village with a railway station and a single main street with shops on. Frank showed her around and introduced her as a maiden at the farm who "comes from another country." The wig and the makeup worked perfectly, no one suspected that "another country" was actually on another planet than Earth.

Frank took her to the library in the village. He introduced her to the librarian, and said there was no problem if Angelica borrowed books in his name. Then he went off to carry out his errands. Añeďliká was surprised that the librarian accepted it without any discussions, until she realized that there was a reason for that. It had to be Frank's daughter, whose clothes she wore and in whose bed she slept! "I

wonder if she knows who I really am", she thought. "She must surely recognize her own clothes and begin to wonder."

She glanced sporadically at Laura as she walked around the library. Laura looked a little curious onto her, so Añeđliká finally went up to her and asked carefully:

– You are Frank's daughter, right?

– Yes that's right actually, how did you guess?

– I saw how you talked to each other and I do think that you resembles Fiona. You do not think it's weird that your dad and mom hired me as a maiden?

Laura giggled.

– I have known for long time that you are not a maiden there. You come from another country, and it is far from here, right?

Añeđliká was still unsure of what Laura really knew. Would she dare to tell, or would the whole town then find out that there was an alien at the farm? She looked a little uncertain at Laura.

– Yes, it's pretty far away.

– How many light years? Laura giggled again.

Añeđliká became silent and did not know what she would answer.

– Could you show me your antennas? I've never seen anyone with antennas before! And your skin is really green as a frog?

Añeđliká looked around to see that no one listened. But they were currently alone in the library. She lifted up her blouse and showed little bare skin for Laura.

– Hardly as green as a frog, acknowledged Laura, but green are you, anyway, Angelica.

Añeđliká sigh of relief. It was not just Fiona and Frank who knew who she was.

– My name is actually Añeđliká, but your parents have never been able to learn to pronounce my name. But Angelica sounds pretty cute, so I let them call me that.

– Añeđlika, Laura said slowly. Not too hard to pronounce. Añeđlika.

– You should emphasize the last letter a bit harder, otherwise it was good.

– By the way, Añeđliká, did you know that they've found your spaceship?

Añeđliká froze. "Spaceship", she thought. "Do not tell me that someone has found her rescue capsule! She could not let anyone examine it under any circumstances, it would also be a serious breach of the Intergalactic Law[1]. I have to stop them! But how?



CHAPTER 4

The Rescue Capsule



– Laura, what do you mean with that my "spaceship" has been found?

– The military has sealed off a large area north of Big Mountain. No one knows why or what's there, but I definitely think that it's your spaceship. Why else would they seal off a deserted forest?

– Do you know how I can get there? I must stop them from destroying it, or even to investigate it.

Laura told her where the place was but also that there were no buses or other easy ways to get there, because it was the middle of the forest. Añeďliká tried to figure how she could get there. She went out into the street and looked around. Down at the café she saw a bunch of tough guys in riveted leather jackets that were about to step onto motorcycles. "That's the solution", she thought.

– Laura! Can you tell your father that I will go back to the farm on my own?

Before Laura got time to protest Añeďliká ran away towards the café.

– Hello, she said to the motorcycle bikers. I need some help, you can please drive me to that military sealing north of Big Mountain?

The leader of the bikers turned to her and gave her a nasty smile.

– And why should we help you, then? What can you offer us?

– You will have the pleasure of fucking a bit with the authorities, is that not enough? It's supposed to be a kind of ship in the middle of the forrest. I have to get there, because it's my ship, and I have to take it away from them.

– A ship? Are you saying like a spaceship?

– Something like that, yeah.

– Are you some kind of alien or something? Show us how a pair of alien tits look like and we will help you!

Añeďliká froze. Did he really think she would show them her boobs?! After some hesitation, she pulled up her blouse and showed her green skin and breasts. The bikers whistled in surprise. They had not expected that!

– Jump up on the pillion, alien chick, the leader said then.

So Añeďliká sat up behind him and the whole gang pulled off along the way. When they arrived at the barricades the leader drove into the woods to circle around the clearing while the rest of the gang drove straight towards the barriers.

Colonel Steiner stood near the rescue capsule and supervised those who tried to penetrate the wall to get into the "spaceship". It had proven to be harder than any material he had heard of before. Suddenly a gang of motorcycle bikers came

through the woods. He immediately ordered all soldiers to stop them from getting too close so they could see what was in the clearing. All soldiers rushed towards them with drawn weapons. The colonel looked anxiously after them to see how they solved the task. Suddenly he heard a sound behind his back. He turned around and saw a motorcycle coming in full speed through the trees straight toward him and the spacecraft. The motorcycle did a skidding stop just in front of the ship, a woman jumped off and pressed some sort of button panel on the ship. A door opened and she jumped in and closed the door behind her. The motorcycle took off with gravel spitting from the rear wheel and as quickly as he appeared, he disappeared and all other motorcycles went with him.

Colonel Steiner awoke from his shock. He had just frozen and had become completely paralyzed. But now he got his voice back and shouted out orders that echoed throughout the woods that everyone would return to turn a put a circle around the ship. The soldiers immediately came down into the glade again. The colonel explained that someone or something got into the ship.

After over an hour of nervous waiting nothing still had happened. Añeđliká had just been washing off all theatrical makeup and dressed up in one of her space uniforms again, so that she would look like the alien she was. Then she programmed a start and a route to get out of there.

Suddenly the door opened right in front of the colonel and an alien with a green face, hair, antennas and shiny uniform looked him straight into his eyes.

– I suggest you withdraw your men outside a 200 yard safety zone, because I will start soon, she said and closed the door as fast as she opened it.

Although the soldiers were on the edge, no one had time to react while the door was open. Colonel swore loud. Once again, he had been taken by surprise! He thought about what the alien had said and took a safety percussion and ordered a 200 yard safety distance. After just a few minutes, the engine started with a giant puff of flame and smoke as a result. Even 200 yards away, it felt almost too close. The ship slowly lifted straight up for a couple of hundred yards, then began to move northward, slowly at first but then it just disappeared with a whining sound off in the horizon. “Well, that was it”, the colonel thought, “nothing else we

can do then to just pack up and return to the camp. We have to call the helicopters and air force to look for it again".

~ ~ ~

Añeđliká had landed on an inaccessible mountain, fully aware that is was in totally wrong direction in relation to the farm. She spent the rest of the day to program a route back to the farm. At two o'clock at night she started the automatic pilot that guided the rescue capsule back only a couple of feet above the treetops to escape detection. She looked for others and flew around a couple of helicopters which she assumed was looking for her. She landed outside one of Frank's barns close to a field, and walked back to the house from there.

Frank and Fiona were still awake in the kitchen. None of them had been able to sleep out of concern for Añeđliká. Also Laura had followed them to the farm. She found it hard to forgive herself because she "allowed" Añeđliká to just leave. Suddenly the doorbell rang. All three ran to the door and opened. Outside stood a smiling Añeđliká, dressed in her uniform.

– Hello! I'm sorry I went off like that, but there was one thing I was just had to do, she said. Frank, I actually have to ask you a huge favor. Hope you're not mad at me!

– It's okay, what kind of help do you need?

– Would you be please take the tractor out and drive me out to the barn near the cottage? I'll show you there what I need help with.

– Sure, I'll do.

– I'm coming too, Laura said.

Laura found it difficult to remove her eyes from Añeđliká's green face and antennae.

– It will probably take me a while to get used to how you look, she said. When they got close to the barn, they all saw a large, dark silhouette next to the barn.

– This is my rescue capsule. I wonder if you can store it in the barn, so that no one can find it?

Frank said nothing, he just strapped the rescue capsule with chains to the tractor and pulled it into the barn. Then he attached a plow to the tractor and plowed the entire field in front of the barn to hide all traces. Then they all went with the tractor back to the farm.

When they came back, Laura asked how on earth Añeďliká had managed to take back her ship from the military. Añeďliká told them everything, and Frank, Fiona and Laura laughed happily about how she managed to fool all the soldiers with the help of a motorcycle gang.

From that day on Añeďliká became a regular visitor at Laura's library. She borrowed several books a day, and everything was fiction. It was history, geography, civics, but most of all it was books about computers and programming. She was, after all a computer nerd, and she wanted to understand how the computers here on Earth worked. Since Frank and Fiona have decided to pay her a small salary as she, after all, worked on the farm, she could afford to buy a small laptop to learn from it.

More and more days passed and turned into weeks and months. Añeďliká became increasingly restless and wanted most of all to get away from the farm. It was not because she did not like Fiona and Frank, but rather because she did not like the quiet country life. She was accustomed to noisy traffic, packs of people and lots of shops. In short, she longed for a real city. But she did not want to offend her hosts in the same way that she hurt her father for a little more than four years ago, so she suffered in silence and said nothing. Fiona saw at her that something was wrong, and asked her. But Añeďliká just shook her head and said that everything was fine.

But late one evening, she could not keep quiet anymore. She had to tell them that she was not happy and had to leave them. She was so afraid that they would become sad from it!



CHAPTER 5

Breaking up



Añeďliká brought up the sensitive subject at supper.

– I have to get out of here, she said with tears in her eyes. But I do not want to make you sad, for you have become like a mother and father to me.

– Why, asked Frank, looking at his wife. Is it something we did?

Fiona just nodded slowly. She had anticipated this moment.

– No, it's not that. I just don't feel comfortable to stay so far away from a big city. I miss the pulse, the crowds, the streets, the shops. Then I also feel that I can not live on you forever, but must prove that I can handle myself.

Fiona nodded slowly again.

– I have already realized that. You're not a child, you are already an adult woman with more life experience than most others. Of course you do not want to stay here where you cannot develop. But you're not going to leave today?

– No, of course not. But maybe early next week. I am thinking about moving to Jacksonville.

– The largest city in Florida? Why?

– Because it is the largest city in Florida, of course!

Said and done. Añeďliká began packing what little she had. She went to the rescue capsule inside the barn and took her personal belongings as well. Frank drove into town without telling why he was there. At breakfast the day when she was leaving Frank picked up a small package and pushed it towards her across the table. Añeďliká looked inside the package and saw that it contained money!

– That is $10 000, Frank said. Fiona and I want you to have this. You can see it as a way to keep you afloat until you are established in Jacksonville.

– No! said Añeďliká. I just can not take it. You do not have to...

– Take it please, Fiona said. You have given us so much joy and excitement, and we do not want to be worried about what happens to you in the big city.

Añeďliká exhaled deeply. Then she went around the table and hugged them both with tears in her eyes.

– Thank you, thank you. But I only accept it as a loan. When I got myself a job and earn my own money, I will come back to return every dollar.

– Sure, sure. Do that if it makes you feel better, Frank replied.

After breakfast, they drove Añeďliká to the train station in town. Laura was already there, waiting to wave her off. The train came and after many hugs and even more tears in Fiona's eyes Añeďliká went away to another adventure.

~ ~ ~

Once in Jacksonville Añeďliká walked around for several hours enjoying the noise and pulse of the big city. As night began to fall, she realized that she had to find somewhere to sleep. "Not a park bench again", she thought. There was a funny little train called the "Skyway". She jumped aboard and went to the end station. After going around for a while she found a rough apartment building. She went in and asked the landlord if there was anything available, and there were a free apartment. He looked a little suspicious at her. "Why would a good looking girl that she want to live in this dump anyway", he thought. But when she gave two months rent in advance and promised to pay each month in cash, he saw no problem with renting out to her. She looked around the shabby and filthy apartment, after all satisfied with his first day in the big city. No one had understood what she was, and she had already found a place to live. Now she just needed some furniture too. She fell asleep on the floor from exhaustion.

The next day she went around and bought a bed, table, couch, china, mobile, and everything else she needed. She scrubbed the entire apartment from top to bottom and furnished until it got really cozy. It was fortunate that she had that money from Frank, otherwise she would not have been able to do this so soon. She sat down at the computer to look for jobs. It was important to find a relatively large computer company seeking staff. Her eyes got stuck on an ad from "Computer Nerds", a company that apparently worked with portals. "It seems to fit, given the name", she giggled to herself. Although it was nothing that said they were looking for staff, she decided to check with them anyhow.

She simply walked into the company and asked to speak to the site manager. Since he did not have any meetings at the time, he accepted her mostly out of curiosity.

– Hello, my name is Angelica, she said. I wonder if you need a programmer that can revolutionize how you work?

The manager, whose name was Charles, smiled a little at her cockiness.

– What makes you think that you can revolutionize the way we work?

– I'm for sure the most nerdy computer nerd that you'll ever meet, I promise you! In addition, I carry a secret that will prove what I say is true. But if I should be able to tell you my secret, you must first promise on your mother's grave that you do not tell it to anyone.

– My mother actually still alive, I'm not that old even if I have gray hair. There is nothing illegal with your secret, right?

– As far as I know, it's not illegal, but many people may be chasing me anyway. I'm sorry about your mother, by the way.

– Well, I swear on my grandmother's grave that I will not disclose your secret.

– Hold on to your chair, so you do not fall off then!

Then she took off her wig and headband so her green hair and antennae came out. She also rolled up her sleeves to show that her skin was also green. Charles gasped and became quite pale at first and then pion red.

– Breathe, Charles! You must not forget to breathe!

He breathed out and hissed:

– You're an fucking alien!

– And thus proving that I can revolutionize the way you work. My education is alien too, so you can not say that I do not know of at least other ways to solve things than you do here on Earth.

Charles began to breathe again and realized when he looked into her intense green eyes that this was a woman who had such a confident aura that he almost forgot that she was an alien. Especially when she put on the wig again.

– True, so true. But I guess you neither have a residence permit nor have a work permit here?

– No, of course I do not. I didn't find any U.S. Embassy on my home planet, she giggled. Is it illegal?

– It is certainly not good, but I do have other people working for me who are illegal immigrants. But that's my secret, you should not spread that to anyone.

– Sure, sure. I am employed then?

– Do you think I'm stupid, eh? Would I really not take the opportunity to get an alien on the payroll! You are definitely employed, you can start on Monday. I have a project in crisis where I are going to throw you in directly.

When Monday came, Añeďliká was introduced on the job and became familiar with the project. It was a client project that was delayed, they were already two months behind schedule and it only got worse every day. She realized fairly quickly what the problem was, and used her knowledge to start fixing it. If she could reprogram a computer so that it could find this planet, this should be a pice of cake. The rest of the project members was not fond of this cocky woman coming in and do some sort of oneman show. Añeďliká preferred to sit alone and work. The project manager often complained to Charles that she was not a part of the team, but as he knew what she was he asked for patience with her. So the project leader gave her the biggest and hardest module to build to teach her a lesson. He was convinced that she would fail miserably, and then maybe she was not so cocky anymore.

~ ~ ~

After about a month, it was a scheduled project meeting. All members presented their progress, and it turned out that no one had managed to reach the goal with one exception. Añeďliká showed off her module completely finished. The module would have taken three months to build according to the plan, and was completed in just one month!

– How did you manage this? he asked.

– I use slightly different methods.

– Those methods you really have to show to the others as well, he said firmly.

So Añeďliká was forced to work together with the others. It went better than she had imagined. At at the next monthly meeting, the whole team actually had

cached up and had also come a little bit ahead of schedule. Finally, they could indeed deliver the project on time to the customer, even though they have been so late before. Añeďliká had lived up to her cockiness and revolutionized how they worked.

So went the months and she even felt very pleased to go to work every day. It was something totally different from jumping from job to job and from city to city as she had done at home on Knimbo. She even started to get a little crush on a colleague, John. He seemed to be interested in her too, but she kept him at a distance as she didn't want to reveal that she was alien. Every morning she had to go up one hour earlier than most others to put on her mask so that her true identity would not be disclosed. She was getting so tired of it, especially as she was not able even go down to the local shop if she needed to buy a bun in the evening, because it took so long to put on the disguise.

Her mood went down more and more for every day. What has seemed as a good idea from the beginning started to feel like a mistake now. She was getting tired of living a lie every day. Boyfriends was out of the question, not even ordinary friends was possible. The apartment had become like a new jail. "I wonder how much it would hurt to jump off the roof ", she thought.

Then the doorbell rang.

Añeďliká froze. Who could that be? Someone who had found out that she was an alien? She raised her hands to her head and realized that she had not taken off her disguise yet, so she opened the door. Outside her neighbor was standing with her fiveyear old daughter by her hand.

– Hi my name is Maria, she said. I'm sorry that I just knock your door like this, but I have a huge problem and wonder if you can help me?

– No problem, what is it about?

– I gotta go to work now, but my babysitter just called and told me she could not come. So now I have no one that can watch over Jennifer here.

She pointed to her daughter, who waved a little shyly.

– I've seen you in the stairs so many times, and you seem to be single too, so I was wondering if you can watch her while I work. I can pay you...

This was unexpected, but she accepted. Now she suddenly got something to do on weekends, because Maria was mostly working weekends as a hotel maid. Life was still troublesome for Añeďliká, but Jennifer was such a breath of fresh air in her life, so she got back the urge to do something about her situation.

The Secret must come out. No matter the consequences.

✯ ✯ ✯

CHAPTER 6

Coming out



Añeďliká contemplated about the consequences of her decision. If she revealed to the whole world that she was alien then it would for sure be no place where she could hide anymore. Everywhere she went she would be a public person, and everyone would notice her. Then perhaps intelligence agencies or military would chase her, perhaps the police and who knows who else. If only she could get some sort of guarantee on that she would be left alone by the authorities in some way! Probably the only one who could fix that was the President. She had seen him on the

news, he seemed also to have a different look. All around him was white guys but himself was black. He would surly understand her wishes to be able to walk around in public, although she was green.

Añeđliká had no respect for authorities and very few blockings against doing crazy things even since before, so she called up the White House and asked to talk with the President. After a lot of nagging with the women at the switchboard she was connected to his secretary, mostly because the switchboard operator gave up.

– This is Anita Decker.

– Hello, my name is Angelica. You are the president's secretary, aren't you?

– Yes, that's right.

– I would like to meet President Obama, and wonder if you could help me with that. It is enough with an hour of his time.

Anita was amazed at the nerve of that women. Who did she think the President was? Who did she think she was?

– I can not just book a meeting with the President to anyone, you must surely understand that?

– I'm pretty sure he wants to meet me. Just tell him this: a forest clearing in the Ocala National Forest, an mysterious craft, lots of soldiers, a motorcycle gang, and then one single woman. I am that woman.

– Should there ramblings mean anything?

– Just say it to him and ask if he wants to meet me, please.

Anita became more and more convinced that she was talking to a crazy women, but because she was so stubborn, she anyhow asked her to wait and went into the president's office. She told him what the woman had said. Obama first became a bit confused, then he sat straight up in his chair. "It cannot be... It must be...", he thought and started sweating. No one else could know about what has happened in that forest glade.

– Set up a meeting with the woman as soon as possible! he said. Make sure you don't mess this up, it can be the most important meeting any president has ever had!

Anita was surprised. What was this about? But she went back to her desk, picked up the phone and booked Añeďliká to a meeting with the president a few days later.

Añeďliká took the train up to Washington and arrived to the White House almost a full hour before the appointment. The girl at the front desk looked a bit confused when she mentioned her business, but she called a guard that came and took Añeďliká inside the building. He looked suspiciously at her bag.

– What's in your bag? You realize that you can not bring it to the president. Security reasons, you know.

– No problem, I just need a toilet where I can redress, then I can leave my bag there.

– We also need to do a full body search on you. Standard procedure to assure that you don't carry any concealed weapons when you meed the president.

– Nothing wrong with that either, if you can find a female guard who can do it. Otherwise, you would like to do it yourself, huh?

The guard didn't change his face, but followed her to a large toilet near the president's room and pointed with his thumb.

– You can not close the door, I need to see what you do, he said.

– Sure, as long as you are prepared for a shock.

She first took off her wig and headband. Then she began to wash off the theatrical makeup at the sink. The guard's eyes got bigger and bigger, and his legs began to shake more and more as big and tough he was. "It's an alien", he thought, shocked to his bone. When Añeďliká was ready, he reached for his radio with shaking hands to call for a female colleague.

– Jessica, can you come to the toilet department to body search a female visitor. But get ready for a shock! This visitor is not even close to anything that you have ever met before.

– I'm coming, the radio crackled.

Jessica came into the room and froze to the floor. She looked at Añeđliká with big eyes, not able to accept what she saw.

– This one is supposed to meet the p .. president, stammered the guard. You need to check for hidden weapons and so... Jessica, wake up!

She found herself and began to investigate Añeđliká. Of course, she found nothing, so they both went with her to the office room where the president sat. None of them had particularly steady legs. The president looked up from the table when they came into the room, looked at Añeđliká and establish that he had guessed right about who she was.

– Welcome, miss. Come in and sit down!

– Thank you, Barack, she replied.

The guards looked at Añeđliká and then at the President. Did he not understand that it was an alien! And how dare she call him by his first name! Didn't she have any respect for authorities! But Obama just smiled mildly.

– What can I do for you then, miss?

– First of all, stop calling me "miss". My name is Añeđliká Croëlño, and if you have not already guessed it, I am born on another planet, namely Knimbo. What I really want is just to live my life here on Earth without having to be afraid of the CIA, FBI, NSA, military and others. Right now it feels as if everyone is a threat to me. You are the only one I can think of who has the power over all of them.

The president was astonished at her cockiness. It was as if she was more important than he himself was, and could decide over him. Añeđliká noticed that he looked annoyed and continued.

– I was thinking that since you have the same problem as me, then you are one of the few who can truly understand my problem.

– What do you mean with that we have the same problem?

– Well, we do have both a different color. You are black and I am green. I know what problems blacks have had, and still have here in America. Most other are white, she said, pointing with her thumb towards the guards who got quite hard to restrain from laughing.

The president also smiled a bit, but had to agree. No one could be more aware of racial problems than he. How he had to fight to get anywhere, just because of his skin tone!

– I guess it would be a good idea for many reasons, to gather a meeting with top officials of all the major organizations in this country, and that you are invited too. Then you can explain to everyone at the same time what you are doing here and how you got here. Everyone gets the information they want and then we can jointly decide how to deal with our first alien.

– Thanks, it would be great if you can do it. But I need some kind of guarantee that I come out of that meeting as free as I am today, so none of them knocks me out and drags me away to some underground lab somewhere.

– You have my personal promise that I will not permit any person to take any liberties with you during the meeting.

– I'm very grateful for that. But I also want to get permission to come armed with an alien weapon to the meeting, to be able to defend myself if necessary.

The president looked at the guards.

– Is she armed now?

They shook their heads. Obama thought for a bit on the problem.

– Sure, sure, Obama finally said. It is completely contrary to our rules, but I guess this is not a normal situation.

Añeďliká smiled. She had no weapons she could bring. It was just about making them believe that she had it, so no one tried something.

– Call back to my secretary at the end of the week, so you'll know when the meeting is scheduled. Because I guess you do not want to give out a phone number where you can be reached?

– I'll call her in the end of the week, she said.

Now it was getting started! This meeting would change her life forever!

✯ ✯ ✯

CHAPTER 7

White House meeting



The conference room began to feel crowded. Everyone seemed to be there, the CIA, the NSA, the FBI, the Mayor, the Army chief, the Marine Corps chief, the police chief, head of Immigration Agency, yes almost all large organizations were there. No one really knew what the meeting would be about. “How we should relate to aliens’ was the only information in the invitation. The Army Chief had a guess, and therefore he had brought with him Colonel Steiner. He had a suspicion that it could concern this mysterious woman who had stolen what they thought

was a spaceship right under their noses. The conversation was loud and everyone discussed about why the president had called them to this meeting. No one of them was prepared on what was about to happen.

A guard came into the room and requested silence. Then he said:

– The President of the United States.

All rose and turned towards the door. Into the room Barack Obama came, but no one looked at him. All eyes fell on Añeđliká, who had dressed up extra nice for the meeting. Her green hair glistened and her antennas had a small piece of jewelry at the top. Someone scratched with a foot, and it sounded like an explosion in the dead silent room. Obama broke the silence and asked everyone to sit down. No one said a word, everyone was too shocked to even breathe.

– And you are also allowed to breathe now, Añeđliká said with a smile.

That lightened the mood a bit, but still everyone was to shocked to speak. Instead Obama was the one to start.

– I have asked you all to come here so we together can come to a consensus how to handle any aliens coming to Earth, especially how to deal with Miss Añeđliká here.

He was able to pronounce her name surprisingly good. The was obvious that he had trained himself to speak foreign names as part of his duties.

– First, I think we should go around the table and everyone introduce themselves with their name, position and what your respective organization are responsible for. We can start with you, he said, looking at Añeđliká.

– Thank you, Mr. President, she said. My name is Añeđliká Croëlño but many call me Angelica here on Earth. I was born and raised on the planet Knimbo. However, I represent no organization, I represent only myself as a private person. I guess you all want to know more about me, but let me save that for later. Most likely I will talk a lot during this meeting anyhow.

She nodded to the person on her left. He found himself and introduced himself as Mayorkas, the head of the Immigration Agency. Then everyone around the

table introduced themselves too, one by one. Añeďliká looked everyone intensely in their eyes during the presentation and nodded a greeting. These deep green eyes were almost enchanting! When Colonel Steiner presented himself then Añeďliká smiled and said:

– So we meet again, colonel!

Everyone looked surprised at both of them. After all presented themselves Obama took the word again.

– With that said, the idea of this meetings that we all agree how we will treat Miss Añeďliká. First, I want you all to know that during and immediately after this meeting, she is under my personal protection. Nobody, and I mean nobody touches her.

He let his eyes slide over everyone around the table. The guard behind him spoke out.

– I can tell you that the metal detector alerted when she passed it. She is supposed to be armed with some sort of extraterrestrial weapon to defend herself.

– But she should not have to do that, Obama said emphatically. Now, Miss Añeďliká, I ask you to please explain how you came to Earth.

– Sure, I will do that, Mr. President.

She did not call him by his first name anymore. She was not so stupid that she didn't understood how to get the respect of the assembly.

– It's a long story, so I hope you have plenty of time. Well, I was part of a crew of ten people from the planet Knimbo. The purpose of the trip was space exploration, especially to find and explore other planets. We found a planet that we landed on to find out everything about. Well, I did not do that myself. My duty was to be responsible for all the computers on board, so I did not leave the ship. The planet we landed on had a lot of life, but no intelligent life. After about one hundred days we went on.

Everyone in the room was glued to her lips.

– One day I was sitting in the computer room in the ground floor of the spaceship when I suddenly felt that the whole ship shook. Not once but several times. I tried to call the bridge to find out what happened, but got no answer. Then the evacuation alarm was automatically triggered. It was really scary, so I followed the protocol and ran into one of the two rescue capsules that was placed next to the computer room. I waited in the capsule for the rest of the crew to come too, but no one else joined me. Eventually my capsule automatically evacuated itself. It is much like an ejection seat in a fighter aircraft.

Yes, Añeďliká had learned a lot from the books she borrowed at Laura's library.

– When I looked out towards the spaceship, I saw that it was caught up in a meteor swarm. I saw with my own eyes how the spaceship was torn into pieces, with the rest of the crew on board.

Now her voice broke up, and she got hard to keep her tears away. The guard discreetly handed over a handkerchief to her. No one in the room said anything, and the atmosphere was so thick that one could cut it with a knife. Añeďliká got control of herself again.

– Well, then I went just around in space and tried to find somewhere to land where I could survive. A rescue capsule can not take one home, it has only limited reach. So I finally found Earth, partly of skill but mostly of luck. So I landed here and all I want to do now is to get myself a new life here. For back to Knimbo I will probably never be able to travel. I can not "phone home" like in the movie E.T. and probably no one from my planet will look for me here. That's about my story. Does anyone have any questions?

It became so quiet in the room that a bomb could explode without anyone had heard it. All tried to drown out each other to ask questions, comment, or just simply scream. Añeďliká looked despairingly at Obama, who eventually managed to restore the order in the room. Then she continued.

– Anyhow, I have a few things more to tell you that is important so that you can understand my situation here on Earth. I rather don't want to have to repeat myself, so if you kindergarten children can be a bit quiet and listen, it would be good.

The guard giggled, but the others looked a bit annoyed.

– The first thing I want to be very clear about is that I do not represent my planet here on Earth. I have no mandate from Knimbo to be some sort of diplomat on other planets. There were others on the spaceship that had that role. So it's no use asking me to make some diplomatic messages or so. The only thing I represent here on Earth is myself, nobody else. Is that clear?

Everyone on the room nodded affirmative.

– The other thing I want to talk about is the Intergalactic Law[1]. I see that you look confused, so let me explain. You are certainly aware that there are laws in every state here, and then there are federal laws as well. Finally, there is international laws here on Earth. What you do not know is that over all these laws there is the Intergalactic Law. It regulates how planets should relate to each other. Although you may not be bound by the law yet, I am bound by it. And I will not break it. Before I explain what it contains, I will tell you a story that unfortunately is true of how the law came about.

Añeďliká paused and drank some water. She could see in the faces of the others that this was a lot for them to absorb. Most of them looked confused and uncertain. But no one was unfocused but listened to her every word intensively.

– Our planet had a research space ship many years ago that for the first time found a planet with intelligent life. The crew was very excited and happy about this, and managed to learn to communicate with them. They then found out that the people that they had landed among belonged to a race that was oppressed by the ruling race. One of the crew as very interested in weapons, so he taught them how to build weapons to be able to defend themselves. Unfortunately they where not satisfied with that, but instead when they gained access to superior weapons, they began to terrorize the former leading race and enslave them by force of arms. The result was that they fought back and before the crew from Knimbo knew it, the whole planet was involved in a global war that destroyed everything. They managed to escape from the planet in the nick of time, running for their lives. We have visited that planet again, and then found that everything that could be called

a civilization is destroyed and people now are living in caves and ruins and misery has become global.

Añeďliká paused and looked around the table to make sure that everyone had listened and understood this whole tragic story.

– As a direct result of that serious incident, the Intergalactic Law[1] was instituted to ensure that this never happens again. It says in short that a crew landing on another planet may not, under any circumstances, share information of any importance if not all on the planet at the same time get the same information. Precisely this is in §12. Since it beforehand is not possible to know what information can be used in a destructive way then, in principle, nothing can be said about any technology, and no spacecraft must also be examined by strangers according to §11. That explains why I took back the rescue capsule from you, Colonel Steiner.

Confused faces from everyone except the colonel and his superior.

– The consequence of this is then that regardless of who asks anything important, I'll just answer "§12" and nothing more. So there is no reason for any of you to chase me. If you feel that this is wrong because you think that you belong to the "good side", then I want you to think what it would be like if I landed in Iran or North Korea instead, two countries who also consider themselves as "the good side" and told them everything. Would you have liked that?

All shook their heads. It looked like Añeďliká could control the movements of their heads.

– So are you prepared to let me live my life as I want to live it then? she said with a cocky voice.

President Obama spoke again.

– There are many more questions that we want you to answer before we conclude this meeting.

– §12, responded Añeďliká.

– Well, not that kind of questions, I hope. Does anyone have a question for Miss Añeďliká? One at a time, please.

– I have a question, the NSA representative said. How long have you actually been on this planet?

– For almost two years.

– What have you done since you came here, except to steal a spaceship from my men, the Chief of the Army asked. And how it comes that you speak English?

– It's a rescue capsule, not a spaceship. Well, first I lived on a farm together with a nice couple who helped me. They taught me the language and helped me to borrow library books to understand your planet. The I moved to a major city, but not to Washington.

– What do you do all the day then? You have to eat, too, someone else asked.

– I work at a major computer firm and work with web portals. Do not look so astonished! I go municipally from my apartment every day to work, receive my salary and buy food in the shops as anyone.

– How is it possible that we do not read in the papers all over the country about it? I mean an alien walking the streets in a big city. That should all over the news, don't you think?

– It's amazing what a wig and theater makeup can do to change one's appearance. I can walk around among you at any time, but you still can't see that I'm alien. But I got tired of denying who I am every day, and want to come out of the closet. That's why I'm here today.

Now everyone started asking questions to her about the spaceship, rescue capsule, how the rocket engine worked, what weapon she had, how they are able to travel such distances. Añeđliká replied, "§12" to all questions, so after a while the questions petered out when they realized they would not get any more information from her. Instead Obama said:

– Now I want us go around the table again and all give their views on how to treat Miss Añeđliká seen from your organization's point of view.

– Before we do that, I would like to say one thing, if I may, Colonel Steiner said. It can be important for the decisions.

– Go ahead.

– Well you see, about a year ago we had found Miss Añeďliká's spaceship ...

– Rescue Capsule, Añeďliká interrupted.

– ... rescue capsule in the woods and was trying to get through the walls. What is the material anyway? It was terribly hard.

– A type of metal alloy ... eeh, §12, I mean.

– In any case, we were all distracted by a motorcycle gang that made it possible for Miss Añeďliká to sneak aboard the ship ... capsule behind my back. What impressed me was what she did after that. While I had the whole sh ... capsule surrounded by soldiers she opens the door suddenly, looked straight at me and asks me to evacuate my men because she would start up the capsule. Then she shut the door. If she had not warned me, I guarantee that many of my men had died when she started the engine.

The colonel looked straight into the eyes of Añeďliká.

– I want to thank you for risking everything, your safety, your rescue capsule, and even your own life to warn me. Any soldier could have shoot you, you know. Yet you took the risk.

– Well, I could not have on my conscience if any of you would be harmed. Besides, it would be contrary to §10.

– It is really appreciated from the bottom of my heart. And now you all know what kind of person Miss Añeďliká is. She is the one that is even willing to risk her own life for others safety.

– OK thank you, Obama said. Now we go around the table.

The FBI Director said they had no interest in Añeďliká at all, as long as she did not violate any federal laws. And then she would be treated as anyone who broke the law. The same thing said the Police Chief, the NSA, indeed all around the table. Until the turn came to the CIA.

– I think it is my organization's duty to protect this country against any foreign power. And this alien represents a foreign power, then we need to find out what it knows before anyone else does.

– I told you before that I only represent myself! Añeďliká responded angry.

Obama raised his hand and pointed at Mayorkas on the Immigration Agency to ask him also to express their opinion.

– I need to in a way to agree with CIA that I cannot ignore Miss Añeďliká. Instead it is my organization's duty to chase her. Not because she's from another planet, but the reason is that she after all is an illegal immigrant in this country. But if you would apply for a residence and work permit, it comes in a completely different light. I do not know if there are sufficient grounds to grant you a residence permit, but I'm willing to write a letter that you can show to the officer where you apply to ease the way. But I want you to you promise to submit an application within a week.

– No problem, replied Añeďliká. That leaves only the problem of the CIA ...

She looked angrily at CIA boss who squirmed a bit when all eyes were turned towards him. Añeďliká's intense green eyes felt as if they drilled into his brain. But he did not back an inch on his view that she was a target for his organization. The president tried to intervene.

– But if Miss Añeďliká would get permanent residency, then would she not rather be part of the group that you must protect, not hunt down, right? It will then be your duty, as well as police and military, to protect her against the ones that threaten her.

– I disagree with that ...

– I do not care if you agree or not. You are hereby received an order directly from the President of the United States that you personally have to ensure that no one in your organization will do anything against Miss Añeďliká the moment she receives a residence permit.

– But...

– Are you defying your President? You know it can be considered as treason of the state to do so? You do not want to go that way, trust me!

CIA Director faded noticeably and became silent. Obama turned to Añeďliká and continued.

– I will write a letter of recommendation along with Mayorka's where we ask the officer who read it to help you to get a residence permit, of course, within the limits of the law. I will also write that your entire application should be regarded as top secret until you or I revoke the security level. Will it be good so?

– Yes, it will be excellent. I promise that I will contact the Immigration Agency as soon as possible. And I also promise that I will not bother or harm anyone in this country, or this planet.

– Are we all agreed on how we treat Miss Añeďliká now, Obama asked.

He let his intense eyes sweep from person to person around the table. Everyone hummed and nodded in agreement except for CIA director who just looked down at the table. Then Obama thanked the participants and went out with Añeďliká and Mayorkas to write the letter. The rest left the meeting room, chattering excitedly about what had occurred at the meeting. Everyone felt a certain devotions and realized how significant this was!

Añeďliká got her papers signed by Obama and Mayorkas and the latter shook her hand and left.

– I can not express how grateful I am to you, Barack, for helping me with this. Now I feel so much better than it did just this morning.

"Well, now it was first name base again", thought Obama. "Probably just as well that I get used to this woman."

– It is me who should thank you for introducing yourself. This is going to be big, really big. I guess you understand that I will be strengthened in my political position of this.

– You're worth it.

– Would it be able to see the weapon you have with you? I have some suspicions about it. Just to satisfy my curiosity as a thanks for the help.

Añeđliká smiled and took out the hard drive she had put in her pocket to get the metal detector to respond.

– You guessed that I was only bluffing, right?

– I found it hard to believe that you would actually bring any weapon here. But still, you do have access to some extraterrestrial weapons, right?

– Of course there were weapons on the space ship, but it's pure defense weapons. But the rescue capsule has nothing. At least not that I know of.

Then she thanked the president warmly and went back to the bathroom where she had her bag with wigs and theatrical makeup. After taking on her disguise again, Añeđliká left the White House discreetly. Now she would just contact the Immigration Agency. But how could she get to and from there? The officer must surely see her real appearance, but no one else should see it. This disguise took far too long to put on and take off.

How could she solve this?



CHAPTER 8

Immigration Agency



Añeďliká pondered all the way on the train home from Washington how she could get to and from the Immigration Agency office unnoticed but still be able to show her real identity inside. When she came through the door in her apartment building she suddenly got an idea. One of her neighbors was going into her apartment wearing a niqab. She had heard that it had some kind of religious meaning. Giving in to her habit to follow her impulses she stopped the woman and asked:

– Sorry to bother you, but I wonder if I can ask you a question? Or rather ask for a favor. You've probably seen me, my name is Angelica and live in fifth floor in this house.

– My name is Rabbani. What is it about?

– I would have to walk around without anyone recognizing me. And I wonder if you do not have an extra costume that you can lend? I do not want to offend you or anything, but I really need help.

– It is about something illegal? Seems a bit strange that you want to use a niqab if you are not Muslim.

– I promise, it's not illegal. If you let me into your apartment then I can show you what it's all about.

Rabbani looked a little hesitant out, but Añeďliká was just an small, short woman so it should not be so dangerous. Once inside, Añeďliká removed her wig and showed that she was alien. Rabbani was not as shocked as she had believed, apparently, she had already sensed that there was something different about her. Añeďliká explained to her why she needed a disguise and Rabbani lent her a niqab to her because she was the a kind soul.

The next day Añeďliká dressed up in the niqab and went to the Immigration Agency. It worked great, no one could see that it was an alien under the clothing. Inside the office, she went up to a desk and said she wanted to apply for a residence permit.

– Fill in this form and submit it to me, the receptionist replied.

– I do not want to create any trouble, but I have to leave my application directly to an officer, because it is classified.

– All applications will be treated with confidentiality.

– I'm sure they are, but probably not as top secret.

She showed her the paper from the president. The receptionist was reading the paper and became first a little provoked by the text, but when she saw the signature, so she realized that it was not a joke. She took the phone and called the office

manager and explained. Then she asked Añeđliká to sit down and wait for a while. After half an hour an officer named Ashley came out and invited her to get inside. They went into a small room with no windows. Ashley looked a little curiously at her. "I wonder what it is the big secret that she carries on", Ashley thought.

– Have you filled out the application while you were waiting?

– I have, but you must sign this paper in duplicate before I'm allowed to show it to you. It is an NDA where you guarantee that no one else may have access to any information from my application. I must send a copy to the White House, and a copy I will keep for myself.

Ashley got a knot in her stomach. What was this about? But she read through the paper, signed them and gave them back.

– Now, I have signed them, so I need to see your application. I also want to see how you look under the niqab. That should be no problem for you, because I am also a woman.

Añeđliká pushed the application papers over the table and Ashley began to read while Añeđliká stood up. When she read the first few lines that dealt with her origin as she became upset.

– You can not be serious with this that you are born on another planet!?!

She looked up from the paper and looked at Añeđliká which had removed the niqab, and was sitting down again. Ashley felt like she got a fist in her stomach, and she could no longer breathe. She just had to get out of here!

– Well ... I ... I will ju... just get something, she stammered and left the room quickly.

– Do not forget the confidentiality, Añeđliká shouted after her.

Ashley went into the break room to pour a cup of coffee to calm her nerves. But her hands shook so she couldn't pour without spilling hot coffee all over her hands. The office manager heard her scream and came to her. He looked at Ashley's pale face and trembling hands.

– Is it that Muslim woman? Has she threatened you, or told something horrible? You look terrible!

– Top Secret, Ashley mumbled.

– Well, okay. But regardless of the horrible stories you hear, it's best that you simply follow the routines, and not think so much of what you hear. Just accept the application today and book a new appointment. You'll have to make sure that she is interned as well, because I guess that she's an illegal immigrant? She must be kept in custody until we decided on her application, it is routine.

He helped her to pour the coffee and she went back with both hands on the cup to avoid dropping it. She sat down again with shaky legs. Añeďliká looked pitiful upon her.

– I did not mean to scare you. I can not help that I come from another planet, after all. Your boss Mayorkas said I have to go here when I met him in the White House, and that's why I'm here.

– Excuse me, Ashley mumbled, I just was not prepared for this.

She checked the application, which looked complete even though some items looked strange. She thought about if she should demand that Añeďliká got imprisoned, and realized that there would be some problems with it. How would the others in custody react to live with an alien? And how could it continue to be top secret?

– Is this address and your employer correct, so that we can get hold of you?

– Everything in the application is correct.

Ashley called Computer Nerds and asked to speak to the site manager. Charles answered and Ashley said she had a woman with her that applied for a residence permit.

– Is it Angelica you're talking about? Charles asked.

– Yes, it's true. Can you describe what she looks like, just so I know that she really is who she claims and that she works with you?

– Sure I can. She's not wearing her disguise, I guess? You know that you understand what I mean if she showed you how she really looks.

– She has taken off some sort of disguise, Ashley replied carefully.

– So then, don't you think that Angelica looks very exotic with her green skin color and antennae on her head? She is also quite short, not more than 5 feet or so. Isn't it true?

– Yes, so you know what she is?

– Let me say this. She is extraterrestrial good at the job she does for me. Hehe.

– Ok, thank you very much.

After a short reflection she told Añeđliká that she could go home. She would get an invitation to an interview sent home within a few days. Añeđliká dressed up in the niqab again and went out. The manager saw when she left and questioned Ashley's desiccation to just let her go out.

– There are specific reasons for that, but they are top secret.

He was quite confused but had to settle with it.

~ ~ ~

After a few weeks Añeđliká took on the niqab again and had her interview. Then Ashley processed her application and came to the conclusion that it was not actually possible to grant it. But if she is denied the permission, then Añeđliká had to be deported to her home country, and how would it be possible? Would she ask NASA to build a custom space craft? Ashley went to her boss.

– I have a problem with that top secret application. It feels as if I have to deny the permit, but both the President and Mayorkas wants her to get approved. Furthermore, it is technically impossible to deport her. What should I do?

– What do you mean by "technically impossible"?

– Unfortunately, it is top secret. You have to believe me.

– OK, then let's see. Is there any other reason why she can stay? Persecution in her home country? Political prisoner? Family ties? Special competence?

Ashley shook her head. Nothing like that. But wait a minute! Special competence? She got an idea and called Charles.

– I'm working with Añeđliká's application now, and have a question. Is it possible that she have an education that can not be obtained in this country, and in that case is that education something you have use for?

– Well, her education comes from another planet, so it is quite clear that exact same education does not exist in this country, or even on this planet. And we definitely need her different way of solving problems.

– Thank you, that's what I was hoping to hear.

She went to her room and sent a letter to Añeđliká that she should come to the Immigration Agency to receive it's decision. When Añeđliká got the letter she immediately called to the president's secretary to hear if they had been contacted by the Immigration Agency. They had not. Then Añeđliká felt sure that her application got accepted, because otherwise the White House would had been informed of it according to the letter that Obama had written.

Now it was just a question of what happened if she took off her disguise for permanently. Would there be panic in the city, or what?



CHAPTER 9

Unmasking



Añeďliká went to work as usual the next day. She was going to pick up her residence in the afternoon, so she disguised herself as usual in the morning. She was still afraid of what would happen if everyone could see that she was alien.

She was very joyful and happy this morning. Today was the start of a new and better life, without secrets, masks or fear. When it was time for the morning coffee break she heard how the debate went unusually high out in the break room, so she

decided to go there for once. Her mood was on top, so why not? But the moment she entered the break room it went dead silent.

– Wow, how quiet it became! You must have been gossiping about me, she chirped.

From all the red faces, she realized that she hit the nail.

– No, no, Anders insured. We only discussed whether there exists intelligent life on other planets.

– So to what conclusion did you come to then, she smiled.

– We have different options. I believe that there must exist somewhere, but they can not possibly come to the Earth, because of the vast distances in space.

– No, there is no life elsewhere, Peter interrupted. God created only one world, and that's the one we live on. The mere thought that there would be more life is totally absurd.

– What do you think, John?

Añeďliká challenged John, because she was pretty sure that he was fond of her and would not lie to her.

– I'm pretty sure that there exists life on other planets as well.

– But that was not what you were talking about, right? You were talking about me, right?

– *Keep quiet, John* Anders whispered so that the whole table could hear it.

But John didn't care and answered anyhow.

– There are some of us who think you're an alien, that's why we started talking about aliens.

– Well, what do you think, John?

– Maybe you're an alien, you're a little crazy sometimes, he smiled. But what do you think yourself, Angelica? Do you believe there exists life on other planets?

– I don't *believe* it, she replied. I *know* it exists. I have seen them myself, and you can take that to the bank!

Everyone laughed because they thought she was joking. Then she took off her wig and the laughters got stuck in their throats. Peter became red in his face but John just nodded a little. Nobody could find anything to say, and Añeďliká just giggled at their faces. Just at that time Charles happened to pass by to get a cup of coffee. He didn't look one bit surprised.

– Hello, everyone. I see that you have taken off your wig today, Angelica!

– What, said Anders. Did you know that she is an alien?!?

– Of course, why do you think I hired her? Have you received your residence permit yet?

– I will get it after lunch.

– Good, it will be nice not having to pay your salary black.

Charles continued and left the rest stunned.

– I'm sorry if I upset your faith, Peter. Hope you can continue to believe in your God, even though you now know that you are not the only intelligent race.

~ ~ ~

In the afternoon, she took the bus to the Immigration Agency. She had washed off all makeup and left the wig at work. What people stared! Añeďliká was amused at all funny things people did. A teenager walked into a lamp post, a woman sat down next the seat on the bus, the bus driver looked in the rearview mirror more than through the front window, a child crept under mom's skirt while another came up to her.

– Are you E.T.?

– It is true in a way, she replied. I am an alien like him, and just as nice.

Once at the Immigration Agency, she showed the invitation letter to the receptionist, who looked down at it and called for Ashley.

– Ashley is coming soon, she said, looking up.

When she saw Añeďliká she flinch herself back so violently that she fell backwards off her chair. When Añeďliká couldn't resist laughing, she became red in her face and sat down on the chair again. She glanced curiously on how Ashley would react when she saw an alien in the waiting room. When Ashley came out and saw Añeďliká, she just greeted her and took her hand. The receptionist was very surprised. Why did not Ashley get a shock just as she had?

After Añeďliká received her permits and instructions what to do next, where to obtain identification and register with the tax office and other stuff, she picked up a bag.

– I have a little cake with me as thanks for the help. Now that the decision has already been made, it can not be anything wrong with that, right?

– No, no, you can just bring it to the break room. I think everyone is there now. How about the top secret status, anyway? You're not wearing the niqab any longer.

– You can ignore the top secret privacy now. I lifted it.

The receptionist had just told the others that an alien was visiting Ashley. No one believed her and she fought hard to convince the others that she was telling the truth when Añeďliká came into the room with Ashley. Everyone looked at her in surprise. Ashley presented her:

– This is the woman in niqab, her name Añeďliká. And her secret is not that she is a Muslim as you can see.

Everyone looked at her without being able to believe their eyes.

– Are you just going to stare at my antennas, or do you want a piece of this delicious cake?

She handed out the cake, and soon all sat and talked. It was quite easy to get used to talking to an alien, it turned out. The unit manager came in and was startled when he saw Añeďliká.

– Now you might understand why I sent her home, said Ashley. It was just not possible to put her in custody with other illegal immigrants. And she also had all reasons in the world not to come forward before.

The manager nodded, too shocked to find any words.

~ ~ ~

Añeďliká passed her job on the way home and approached John. Now she must find out if he really liked her or not.

– Hello, John. Do you have anything to do tonight, or can I serve you some food from my home planet? Or at least with recipes from my home planet...

Before John realized what happened he already had followed her home, eated the food she prepared the night before and landed beside her on the couch cuddling with her. He was very surprised in a positive way. The same morning Añeďliká had been totally frigid and seemingly uninterested, and here they suddenly sat tangled up with each other in a sofa in the evening!

– Not that I want to complain, on the contrary, but how come that you suddenly become so interested in me? I had a feeling that you did not like me.

– I've had a crush on you a long time, but I felt that my secret was more important than my happiness. Then there is probably an element of that in my last job, it was in fact prohibited to have emotional bonds between crew members. It can be quite a pain with love relationships on a spaceship that might not come home in a whole year or so.

– I can understand that. I have not even thought that your last job was an astronaut. But it's obvious that it must have been just that.

– You'll stay overnight? I have not had sex in over two years ...

John did not need to be persuaded. He wondered just how life would be now, when his girlfriend was alien. Tomorrow it all begins ...

☆ ☆ ☆

CHAPTER 10

Life as an alien



Next morning, Añeďliká stayed in bed a little longer than usual. She did not have to hide the fact that she was an alien any longer, so she saved the time to put on her disguise. It was also so nice to wake up next to John in bed. But finally she still had to leave the cosy bed. She fixed breakfast for them both, it felt really good to fix breakfast for two for a change. After breakfast, they left together to get to work.

When Añeđliká opened the door to the street a gigantic pandemonium broke out. The entire street outside was filled with reporters and cameras flashed off without end. Everyone was shouting questions at her, and the sound was cutting into her ears. They had to plow their way through the crowd to reach the Skyway. Once inside it all the reporters pushed to get inside too so that the guards finally had to intervene to get any order at all. The carriage she was in was so packed that she could hardly breathe. Once on the job, so she finally got some breathing space.

She shut herself in her office and became even more introverted than before. Maybe it was not such a good idea this, anyway. On the way home she slipped out the back door and got a couple of blocks before the "mob" caught up with her and followed her all the way home. After a few days the photographers stopped chasing her, but instead she saw paparazzi in trees taking pictures through the bedroom window. When she went shopping, everyone stared at her and walked away. When she went on Skyway or by bus most small children got terrified and hid with their mother or father. Most of the other passengers went off or choose to wait for the next bus when she was sitting in the bus. When she went to the police to apply for a identification car, it was almost as if they pulled guns when she entered.

It did not get better after a few days, but it only got worse. Wherever she went, there was people who were frightened or shocked. An elderly lady fell down on the sidewalk from a heart attack and all looked accusingly at Añeđliká. Her cheerfulness of people's reaction when they saw her was quickly replaced by despair. She stayed at home all the time with the curtains closed, and never went out. It was as if she was still in jail, and nothing had gotten better, everything had just gone from difficult to disaster.

She turned to John to find some consoling. He did not care if she was alien anyhow. His strong arms and soft touch might make her feel better. But he suddenly seemed to have became a bit distant from her.

– I do not know how to say this, Angelica, but I've been transferred to the office in Los Angeles. I'll start there on Monday.

– It's because of me, right?

– No, not at all, he replied quickly, too quickly. It just happened.

But he could not meet her eyes so she realized that it was not true what he said. It probably had been too hard for him with all the attention around her. She got even more depressed and sneaked back home through the backstreets. In the night she could not sleep, so she went up to the roof. Unconsciously she climbed up on the baluster around the roof. It was so simple, just one step forward and all the worries would be over! She closed her eyes and took the plunge. But her legs would not obey her. She saw within herself how little Jennifer found her bloody and crushed body on the ground when she stepped outside. And also what would Fiona and Frank think when they read about it in the newspaper! She stepped down from the wall again and collapsed, weeping out of control.

What she really needed now was a true friend! One who didn't look at her as an alien. She rang Fiona and Frank despite that it was two o'clock in the night and asked if she could visit them this weekend. Of course, she was welcome. The rumor of her as an alien apparently had not reached them, because they said nothing about it. Añeďliká entered the train early next morning. There, she found a newspaper from the town where Fiona and Frank lived. Especially an article about the military wanted to build a new camp interested her. This did not sound good at all! While she was sitting on the train she made a few phone calls.

~ ~ ~

Frank and Fiona took the pickup and went to meet her at the station. Waiting there was also their good friend Richard who was going to meet his niece. The train came and they looked around all three eagerly to find their respective visitors. Suddenly Richard screamed and pointed behind Frank and Fiona's back with a trembling finger.

– Holy shit. There comes a fing alien! Check it out!

They turned and saw Añeďliká come beside the train. They brightened up and walked towards her. While Richard's jaw dropped further and further down, they

was both hugging the alien long and heartily. “What are they doing”, he thought. “Have they completely lost their mind?”.

– Richard, this is Angelica who stayed with us before, said Fiona. Angelica, this is a good friend of ours, Richard.

– I actually think that we have met at the library at some point, she smiled at him, and held out her hand.

Richard did not dare to take her hand, but just shook his head.

– Now surely the world has gone completely crazy when aliens come to town and want to shake your hand.

He went grumbling away with his niece. Añeďliká sighed deeply and wiped a tear from her eye.

– What’s the matter, dear, Fiona asked her on the way home. You look so sad.

– I feel like whatever I do this I will be unhappy. When I tried to live by nature, I almost died. Hiding at your farm made me feel trapped. To disguise myself every day in Jacksonville was just a pain, I was scared every day of living in a lie and of getting caught. And now when I show my true self everyone becomes afraid of me. Children are hiding under their mother’s skirt like I’m some sort of green monster, and you saw yourself how Richard reacted. It feels like life is not worth living anymore. Not for me. Not here on Earth.

Añeďliká could not control herself any longer and began to cry uncontrollably. Fiona hugged her all the way back to the farm while she wondered how she could help her. Back at the farm Añeďliká went into the bathroom to cleanse her reddened eyes and tried to collect herself. She had not come here to make Fiona sad too! Now she had to shape up! She went back into the kitchen and sat down at the table. Fiona encouraged her to tell what she had done in Jacksonville, and after a while everything loosen up and the conversation flowed quite effortlessly. This was exactly what she needed, someone that treated her as the person she was and that did not care about her origin. She felt better and better and started to think that life was pretty okay, really. She had experienced so much adventures that others could only dream of!

After supper Añeđliká took out a package and laid it on the table.

– I have something I must say to you two, she began. It is important, but I don't really know how I should say it. She hesitated and got quiet.

– You do not need to worry, you're among friends, said Fiona.

– I know that and that is exactly what I wanted to say. When I landed on this planet, then I was completely helpless. You helped me not only to survive, but to want to live again. There is nothing, absolutely nothing that I can give to you that can pay back what you both did, and still does for me. You are the only real friends I have, and I'm sure I'd jumped off a cliff in the Ocala National Forest or a rooftop in Jacksonville if I did not have you. I have you to thank for everything!

– No need to thank us. It has been a joy for us.

Añeđliká pushed the package across the table.

– This is not payment for what you have done, nor do I pay back what your salary when I lived here, because I don't think you would accept it. It is only the $10 000 that I got when I left you. I meant it when I said it was only a loan.

Frank took the package.

– You did not have to pay back, he said. But I accept it because I may really need this now.

– Well, I've actually read about your problems with the military. They want to confiscate a large part of your land, right?

– There is a risk that we have to sell the farm and move, Fiona sighed. But it's not your problem, you have enough of your own.

– I made it to be my problem. So I called to General Odierno and explained the problem to him.

– You called the chief of the army, just like that?!?

– Yeah, I met him in the White House when me and Obama had called for a meeting with him and a bunch of other high chickens.

– You've met the President, too?!?

– Well, I called him because I wanted to get some sort of guarantee that all authorities in this country would leave me alone. He called a meeting with the heads of major organizations like the FBI and CIA and so. The result was that all promised that I could live my life without interference from them. How do you otherwise think that I would dare to take off my disguise as you helped me with?

They looked at her as if they had never seen her before. The President! Chief of the Army! FBI and CIA! This was obviously not the helpless woman they have known before, but she had grown considerably in self confidence.

– Well, the General promised that you would have your land in peace. There are other places where they can build their military camp. The only thing I had to do was let them check out my rescue capsule, so I will fly it there tomorrow.

When Frank and Fiona finally went to bed, they had difficulty falling asleep as they had a hard time taking in everything that happened during the day. Añeďliká was back and now everyone knew that she was an alien. And she socialized herself with Presidents and Generals and all kinds of big shots! Money didn't seem to be a problem either. The only thing she lacked seemed to be a decent life and they hoped that she would be able to find that. But that she was so cocky that she called the President Himself! What a woman!

~ ~ ~

The next morning Frank dragged the rescue capsule out from the barn and Añeďliká took off with it and flew over to the military camp. She was not afraid of them anymore! What could they do? Her life was miserable enough already and it could hardly become any worse.

– Colonel Steiner! Colonel!

Sergeant George rushed into his office without knocking. He had never done that before.

– Yes, what is it? Has not the sergeant learned to knock?!

– A spaceship landed just outside the camp!

– What are you saying! A spaceship?!?

– And not only that. Just before that, a helicopter with General Odierno landed!

– What?!?

Colonel Steiner rushed out to investigate himself. And it was Añeďliká standing there on the field outside, and she was already showing off the rescue capsule to the general. The colonel widened his eyes.

– Welcome aboard, colonel, she smiled. Isn't this what you dreamed about since we first met?

Añeďliká showed everyone who was interested how the rescue capsule looked inside but without showing any technical details. Then she took the general aside and said:

– Now I've kept my word, time to pay.

– A military does not break his word.

So the general went with Colonel Steiner to his office and explained to him that he had to find another place to build the military camp than Franks land. The colonel was surprised, but could not argue with his superior. So at the general's request, he wrote an official paper that Añeďliká got to bring back to the farm where he guaranteed that Frank's land would remain Frank's. In any case, as long as he was in command of the military camp. The colonel also promised to protect their farm so that no one could get near the rescue capsule.

When Añeďliká got back to the farm, Frank and Fiona didn't know how they could thank her enough. They hugged her and now it was Fiona who had tears in her eyes, tears of happiness.

– Don't thank me, it's just a little repayment of a fraction of what you have done for me, she replied.

~ ~ ~

On the train home Añeďliká realized that although she was happier now still nothing had really changed in substance. People was still staring at her and seemed to fear her. She sighed and got back into her dark thoughts. Jumping from the

roof was not a good idea, but maybe she could take some pills that made her just fell asleep? When she arrived at her apartment door then her mood was down to the ground again. There was nothing at all worth living for anymore. Then she found Jennifer outside her door crying silently.

– What's wrong? Añeđliká asked.

– Mom is in the hospital and I do not know what I should do? I'm really hungry and I'm afraid my mother will die, Jennifer cried.

Añeđliká pulled herself together and let Jennifer come in and gave her food and did her best to comfort her. Suddenly there was someone who needed her instead of the other way around, and Añeđliká realized that she had to pull herself together for Jennifer's sake. It was quite obvious that Jennifer did not care that she was an alien. She just clung to Añeđliká for consolation. Añeđliká called the hospital to find out what happened to Maria. Apparently, she had suffered an appendicitis and needed surgery. Añeđliká explained to Jennifer that her mother was in the hospital, but that she would be home in a few days completely healthy.

That night Añeđliká slept with a little scared girl beside her. Of course she could not just leave Jennifer. She had been babysitting her before so this was certainly no problem. In the morning she called her job and explained the problem, and got the week off. When Jennifer woke up, she wanted to go out and play in the park. Añeđliká was not very eager to go there, everyone was going to stare at her and get scared at her again.

– I do not know if I want to go to the park right now, she said.

– Is it because you are E.T. you do not want to go out?

Children have the ability to just say straight out what they think.

– So you understand that I am an alien?

– I always know you was strange and last night I saw it for real. But you should not be ashamed of it, you're very kind, that's enough, right? If someone stares at you, then they are the ones who are stupid, and my mom always says that I should not care about those that do stupid things against one.

That how children are. It needed to be child to tell it like it is. So Añeđliká took her out to the playground in the park and soon Jennifer was sitting in a swing and Añeđliká was pushing her off. Another mother stood beside her and helped her own child swinging. She was so focused on her own child that she did not even looked at Añeđliká.

– What the name of your child? she asked.

– Well, I'm just watching my neighbor's child, her name is Jennifer, and myself, my name is Añeđliká.

The mother thought it was a strange name and looked at her. She startled a little bit, but then continued pushing her child.

– My name is Monica, and this is Sophia, my daughter.

After a while the girls ran away to the scaffold and Añeđliká and Monica sat down on a bench and started talking about kids, life and everything while they watched their children playing together. Monica did not bother that Añeđliká was an alien. So there were also adults who did not care that she was alien!

On the way home from the park Jennifer said after been quiet for a long time:

– You know what you should do?

– No, I have no idea, she sighed.

– You should overcompensate, Jennifer firmly said with a confident expression.

Añeđliká looked at her in surprise. Where had she found that word? She was just five years old! Añeđliká did not even know herself really what the word meant.

– I think people are afraid of you because they don't know you. You should use that you are alien and go out in TV programs, you know like Wipeout, Jeopardy, Conan O'Brian, and others. Then you should stand in the center of a square and shout "Here I am, an alien" so you end up in the news. Then people will say "Look, I saw her on TV yesterday" instead of "Look, there's an alien."

Añeđliká stared at her as if she had never seen her before. She was just a small child, how she figured all that out? And most of all, what she said was both deep

and made sense! Añeďliká walked silently beside her, thinking. She was a kind of new light over her and she smiled a little.

The next day she took Jennifer to the Jacksonville Zoo where they walked around and looked at all the animals. Many of the visitors looked more at Añeďliká than the animals, especially when they sat down at the restaurant to eat. All the tables around them were empty, even though it was otherwise quite full, and people were making detours around them. Then they all sat and stared at her secretly and whispered to each other. Finally Añeďliká got tired of the whole thing and climbed up on the table and whistled loudly. When everyone looked at her she said so all could heard it:

– Hello everyone! My name Añeďliká and I'm an alien! Does anyone have a problem with that? If so, why don't you come here and say it to my face instead of running around me!

Jennifer clapped and laughed out loud, which resulted in many red faces around them. A reporter came up and asked if he could take some pictures. So Añeďliká sat on the ground and attracted some lemurs running around freely and got a couple of them to sit on her lap to be petted. Guess if there were headlines in the newspaper the day after!

After a week, Maria came home, and thanked Añeďliká overwhelmingly that she had bee taking care of Jennifer. She tried not to stare at Añeďliká. My God, it was an alien to has watched her daughter all those times! But Jennifer did not seem to care, so Maria also let it pass.

That night Añeďliká was thinking about what Jennifer had said. Overcompensating. It was crazy, so she loved the idea. Be warned everyone out there in TV land, for you will be attacked by an alien now!



CHAPTER 11

Overcompensating



On Monday when Añeďliká was finally back at work, she was stopped by her manager, Charles.

– You will come to the business party on Thursday, I hope, he said.

– I don't think so. I'm not so fond of partying and so, I'm not very social.

– I would really, really like you to come. We will have a small stage with several performances before we eat, and then a music group later in the evening. I would

definitely like to be allowed to introduce you to everyone at the party. Actually they know you already, but not as alien. Then I also think that it would be very nice if you could come up with something to perform yourself. It don't have be anything sophisticated, just a small card trick or juggling or something or why not sing a song? Perhaps the band can help you?

Añeďliká protested but Charles was very persuasive, so against her better judgment, she went along with it, mostly because it might be what she needed to do if she should overcompensate.

The same evening, the phone rang. She wondered who it could be, it was not as many as know her phone number.

– Hello, it's Fiona. I'm calling just to hear how you feel? You were so depressed when you visited last weekend so I was really worried about you, and still am.

– Hello, it's nice to hear from you. I really appreciate that you care about me, it really warms me. But the fact is that I feel great right now!

– Are you really honest now? Although you seemed happier when you left us, nothing has changed too much, has it? I just want you to know that you are welcome here as often as you want, or you can call anytime of the day if you feel depressed.

– It's true that I got over that now. You and Frank was certainly very helpful, but it was Jennifer who solved the knot. She is a neighbor's daughter who I babysit once in a while. She is only five years old and was very sad when I came home because her mother was in the hospital. So I comforted her and you know what? It feels wonderful that someone really needs me! Me! I can not disappoint her now! Do you know what was the best of all? When she woke up in the middle of the night after a nightmare she cried for her mother. But when she opened her eyes she saw no mother beside her in bed, but instead it was a green monster there.

– Do not call yourself a green monster, Angelica!

– That was the way I felt when everyone was scared of me and avoided me. But little Jennifer just hugged me and went back to sleep. So this green monster can provide comfort for a small child! You can not imagine what feeling it gave

me! Then she forced me to go to the park so that everyone could stare at me. She said it was everyone else who was stupid because they stared. So now I do not care what people around me are doing or thinking. That's why I feel great now! I stood on a table in the zoo and shouted "I'm an alien, you have a problem with that?" Can you believe that? All were ashamed that they had stared. So from now on, I will not hide myself anymore, I'll to the opposite!

– You sound really energetic and happy! If you knew how happy that makes me. Good luck now, and do not forget that you are always welcome here!

~ ~ ~

The phone rang again. "It was terrible what I was popular today", she thought. This time it was the President who declared that the United Nations, UN, had become a little angry that they had not been informed that there was an alien here.

– They have asked me to come and explain myself before the General Assembly, but I'm busy and asks if you you go there instead.

She did want it but Obama was stubborn, he also was used to get what he wanted. So the next day she stood outside the General Assembly meeting room in the house of the United Nations and was waiting to be introduced. The representative of the United States took the floor:

– The President of the United States was unable to come here, but he has sent a representative who can answer any questions about the aliens.

The SecretaryGeneral became a bit annoyed and said they were not interested in listening to any officer who lied about alien creatures, but had to settle anyway and asked him to send in the person in question. Añeďliká stepped into the room and everyone gasped. It was so silent that all that was heard was the assembly's heavy breathing. "Jeez, what a lot of people", she thought, but still went to the pulpit and spoke out.

– Hello there, she said. As for the rumor that there's an alien in this country, I can deny that rumor here and now. There is no such rumor.

Everyone looked at her. The words she said were as expected, but she was an alien herself. Or was this just a big joke?

– But this is me, Añeđliká Croëlño. I'm not a rumor, I am real. My home planet is called Knimbo and I am like shipwrecked here. Everyone on the spaceship I worked on at have lost their lives, and I am the only survivor.

She told her story again, while the congregation slowly began to breathe again. When she was finished, the SecretaryGeneral asked:

– So how long have you been here on Earth, then?

– Approximately two years.

– Two years! And yet it is only recently that the United States has had the goodness to inform the UN about your existence, he exploded. This is unheard of!

– Well, I have been kind of hiding myself until a few days ago. Not that I want to defend anyone, but Obama did in fact not know about me either.

Añeđliká remained there a long time and had to explain everything about the meeting in the White House, the Immigration Agency, Intergalactic Law[1] and everything else. Many of the questions which they asked her got the answer §12 as usual, but finally the General Assembly had to settle with her explanation and she went home again.

~ ~ ~

On Thursday, she dressed up and went to the party. She sat down alone in a corner to avoid having to talk so much. After some rather funny performances on stage, Charles went up to the microphone.

– I would like to take this opportunity to introduce one of our employees, not because she is a new employee, but only because she is not so well known. At least not in her current form, so to speak. Can you please come up here, Angelica?

She dragged her feet behind her when she went up on stage. Obviously everyone started staring at her, and a couple screamed a bit to make it worse. Why did Charles introduce her like that?

– Hi there, I'm Añeđliká Croëlño, but Charles usually call me Angelica. I've been working on the web portal department for about nine months now. And if you think it's strange to meet an alien as me, then try to imagine how I feel about that I have to meet lots of aliens every day.

Confused faces.

– Don't you see it, you are all aliens to me!

Now all laughed redemptive.

– So I come from the planet Knimbo and like shipwrecked here on Earth. And now the boss told me that I should perform for you, so I guess I'll have to... He said I should try some card trick.

She took out a deck of cards and began to shuffle, but lost all the cards all over the stage.

– Shit, it doesn't work, then I juggle instead, like he told me.

One ball went well, two also. But when she tried with three balls it ended up that she got all the balls in her head and on her antennae.

– This is simply not working, she sobbed. Charles said that I would sing a song otherwise. Does not anyone have an instrument for me ...

Charles began to feel embarrassed. It had not been his intention that she would embarrass herself! A guy in the band came up to her with an electric guitar. Añeđliká struck a few chords on the guitar strings and it sounded terrible. The guitarist in the band came up to her and showed how she would put fingers for an fchord. She began to beat rhythmically on the strings. It sounded quite OK. The drummer of the band joined in, then the rest of the band. Then she began to sing.

It was pretty obvious that she wrote the song herself, as the lyrics was about an alien that was lost in space, landed on a planet and settled there. And as soon as she hit the last chord the drummer beat his drum sticks together four times in the air and Añeđliká kicked off in a really tough, intense song that she needed to find a new life. Charles realized that he had been fooled by Añeđliká, she obviously had planned his whole thing together with the band.

She tore down a thunderous applause and whistles when she left the stage and sat down again. Everyone wanted to talk to her suddenly, and she did her best to be as social as possible. Many felt she should record an album. "Why not", she thought. All the attention made her feel quite uneasy. After the food, the band went onto the stage again and started playing like it was planned. After just a few songs the leader of the band, Janne, said into the microphone:

– Añeđliká, I know you do not like to sit and talk. Come up here and sing with us instead!

Shit, can't they just leave her alone? But he told the truth anyway, Janne. She actually did not like sitting here having to answer a thousand questions. So she went up on stage and started to pour out some heavy rock 'n' roll all over her colleagues for the rest of the evening. She finished with a soft blues about lost love. If John had been present he would have understood, because it was about a man who could not accept that his girlfriend was different. She then left the party quickly while her colleges were astonished that their alien computer nerd was so hot on stage.

~ ~ ~

Now a crazy time began for Añeđliká. She called around to a bunch of TV companies and shows and asked if she could join them. There was almost no one who declined to have an alien on their show! So she competed in Wipeout and Jeopardy, guest starred in television series and a lot of other places. She was also featured in various talk shows. In short, she appeared everywhere on television. She also sent some song demos to a couple of record labels. Two of them responded by email, so she first called up the largest of them. She didn't like that they wanted her to sign a contract containing clauses that label itself could change the songs that was published.

– It is standard terms, they answered. Everyone have them and we do not make changes in the contracts.

– But, it would mean that you can for example add drums and electric guitar on a song that I want to be with just acoustic guitar, right?

– Yes, theoretically. But we do not do so without asking the artist.

– But why then don't you change the contract so it says that the artist has the final say on how it sounds?

– We will not change in the conditions, especially not for a rookie.

Añeďliká hung up the phone and called the second, smaller company. They also had a standard contract, but agreed to at least discuss the terms when they met her. So when Añeďliká visited them, and they found out what she was, it was suddenly no problem to change the conditions. The only thing they demanded was to utilize the fact that she was alien in all advertisements, album covers, title on the disc and everything else. It was exactly what she wanted, so therefore she wrote the contract and soon she recorded the album with just her own materials.

Meanwhile, the larger record company found out about who she was, because one of the producers saw her with Conan O'Brien. Imagine their despair when they realized that a smaller company snatched them on a million dollar contract because they did not even want to discuss the terms of the contract!

~ ~ ~

A few weeks before her album was released the director of her record company called her up.

– You need to plan for a tour in conjunction with the record launch to kickstart sales of your album.

– But I do not want to be on stage and sing. I've done it once, and I was so nervous I could barely remember the text.

– You really have no choice. You must present yourself and you music on stage if you want to get any discs sold. How about we start with a single concert at Madison Square Garden?

– Okay then, one single concert. It can't be that hard. What is Madison Square Garden?

– It is an arena in New York.

Añeďliká were satisfied with that. Surely it can not be such a big deal to play at some small place in New York, she thought. She'd only known! Añeďliká rang up the band that had played at the office party and asked them if they would be willing to play with her at Madison Square Garden. Imagine her surprise when they immediately responded that they very much wanted to. Were they so fond of her music style?

On the day of the concert Añeďliká had to come to the arena early to do a "sound check" as they said they would do. "Hell, what big it is", she thought as she stood on the stage. Only the stage was enormous, not to mention the entire room. "It can hardly be sold out, anyway." But that it was. The noise level became alarmingly high when the crowd began to gather. She asked how many people were actually there. She was told that it was full, 20 000 persons. Añeďliká became more and more nervous. How would this go? Suddenly the promoter from the record company entered the stage and proceeded to the microphone.

– Welcome all of you to this first concert with Angelica. Before we unleash her, I would like to give something to her. Can you come out here, Angelica?

The legs just barely carried her when she walked out on stage. "What is he doing? Can I not just start singing so this agony will come to an end soon", she thought. "First Charles did it and and now he. Never, never ever again will I allow anyone to introduce me before I go on stage!"

– I want to give this gold disc to you, Angelica. You have not only sold half a million records, you've done it in record time of two weeks. No other artist has received a Gold album in just two weeks. Here you are!

Añeďliká could not believe her ears. Half a million copies sold in two weeks? As in a trance, she took up her guitar and played the intro to the first song. She managed to fight her way through it without singing too much wrong and her eyes began to get used to the intense light of all stage lamps. Wow, what a sea of people! Have all come to listen to her?!? After the last accord subsided, it felt as if the roof would lift. She had seen in an old Elvis Presley movie how teenage girls just stood and screamed when he sang. Here it was both guys and girls who screamed! She delivered song after song in a staggering pace and the crowd became more

and more ecstatic. This was an incredible feeling, and her nervousness went to bed and she just pounded away with her guitar and her lyrics. After an hour, it was planned that she should calm the tempo down with a few ballads, but she improvised a heavy rock sound even on the ballads, and the musicians just replied back. She felt invincible!

After two hours of the scheduled one and a half she realized that she drain out all the songs she had, so she thanked the audience and went left the stage. Not one single one in the audience wanted to leave, and after 15 minutes of cheers and shouting, she gave up and realized that she had to enter again. So she waved off the band members and went back in alone. She delivered three more songs, which was not really finished yet, with just her acoustic guitar.

– Thank you so much for today, you are a wonderful audience! I have to go home and write more songs for the next time, because now I have nothing left to play. But we well se each other again!

The promoter was waiting backstage and congratulated her.

– You know you have to go out on a tour after this, right?

– I said no before, and if I say no I mean it ...

He began to protest when she continued.

– ... when I say it. But this was such an incredible feeling to be on stage with 20,000 people screaming and clapping hands. I don't think that a tour can top this, but even if it only comes a few thousand per performance, it certainly will be awesome too. So please help me to plan for a tour.



CHAPTER 12

The Tour



While the promoter of Añeđliká was planning for her tour, she thought that she needed a more personal style. The concert had given her a lot of money so she went to a salon that several celebrities used to go to. Guillermo received her and wondered what she was looking for without showing if he noticed that she was alien.

– I just want a new style. They say that you are the best in town. I'm going out on a concert tour.

– What do you say when you enter a room? Give me a word that you think describes who you are.

– Computer nerd, she tried.

– Is it a computer nerd who goes on tour? Who is it that enters the stage?

Añeďliká thought for a few seconds.

– A rebel! she said firmly. Definitely a rebel who does what she wants and don't care what others think or what position they have!

– There you go, then I know. Now you have to trust me!

Guillermo worked with her for over an hour. Añeďliká noticed that there were no mirrors in the room. Could this have been a mistake? When he was finished he pulled out a mirror so she could see the result.

– Why did you make my hair pink?!? Are you crazy!

– When you walked through the door I thought "here comes an alien." But when you go out, I think "there goes a rebel." Everyone else will think the same when they see you for the first time.

– It's crazy! You are crazy! I love crazy! This is *me* for the first time. Now the people will get something worth staring at for a change!

She was right about that. People stared as much as before, but now they were not scared anymore, just curious and maybe ignominious. She contacted the promoter and said that she have to take new pictures and commercials now that she changed her style. When he saw her he was startled! What a difference! She explained how she wanted the commercials for her to be, and she accepted no protests. Her selfconfidence was raised again, and beware anyone who tried to get her to do something other that what she wanted!

Charles had some second thought about her new style, but still felt that it could not be more extreme than before. But customer meetings with technician with

pink hair? A few days later, he got to see her new commercial on TV for the first time, and it was pretty dense. A spaceship came rushing towards the Earth accompanied by Angelica's heavy rock music and an announcer's voice.

"She comes from a galaxy far away! Now she is here! She has landed! She invades the Earth! She will invade your town! She will penetrate straight into your brain! You can not miss her! Angelica! Buy your tickets to the show today, tomorrow it may be too late! "

Charles went online and bought a ticket. This he must see! And he certainly was not alone. It did not take many days until all fifteen concerts were sold out. Angelica had taken off from her work all summer for this. She would start in her new hometown at Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Arena with a capacity of 15,000 and end at Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena with seating for 18,000 fans. The adventure could begin!

~ ~ ~

Exactly at 8 PM the light was dimmed in the stadium in Jacksonville and the giant monitors showed a spaceship that came flying with a piercing roar. Smoke began to fill the whole scene until it finally was completely hidden. The roar went slowly into a guitar intro and then Añeďliká stepped out of the smoke with her electric guitar hanging low on her hip while she pumped out the chords to the audience. No presentation or soft start here! Full speed from the start not giving her audience a respite between songs either, but the songs ran into each other at a pace that took the breath out of the crowd. They did not know where to go! 15,000 enthusiastic fans jumped up and down in pace with the music. It felt like the whole stadium would collapse! She was rocking much heavier than on her records, and with much longer musical parts. Her guitar solos were nothing to mess with either! After two intense hours she finally slowed down a little and got the audience to sing along to a number of ballads and blues inspired rock. Three hours after she went up on stage she just said "thank you" and left the stage with the band. She had not yet announced neither the band nor herself.

Of course she had expected what followed. The audience wanted more and did not stop screaming. So after a while Añeďliká came back onto stage with the

band. Not to run one or two more songs like everyone expected, but she kept on for an entire hour. She had kept her promise at Madison Square Garden and has written much more material. The promoter looked at the clock and wondered how long she actually was going to perform. The clock passed midnight when she scooped out a song that although of all problems it was good to be alive. In an interlude before the last verse, she finally spoke up.

– Good bye everyone! It's the middle of the night, we have to move on! We have Janne "Panther" Doveson on guitar... Mark "Thunder" Baker on drums... Jeff "The Key" Wilson on keyboards... David "Dave" Anderson on bass... Elisabeth "Lisa" Green and Sandra "Sandy" Perez comp and chorus...

Añeďliká finished the song, and right after the last tone, the sound tech put on a violin version of one of her ballads while she gathered the whole band at the front of the stage where they bowed to the audience. Añeďliká turned her back to the audience and stretched her armed towards all the musicians who received even more applause. Then they left all the scene. This time there was no doubt that it was really over, as the arena slowly emptied itself under intense chattering.

Charles was one of those who were on their way out. This was perhaps not his favorite music, but he could not ignore the fact that it had affected also him very much. He had not imagined that he hired a rock star! He also realized that he would probably see less and less of Añeďliká at work, the music would take more and more of her time. Añeďliká herself was still full of energy backstage. It felt like she was high on some sort of drug, but it was just the adrenaline still rushing. "This is life", she said to Lisa.

~ ~ ~

The tour continued in the same staggering pace. It was almost never less than 10,000 at each concert, and she gave the same show every time with the same enthusiastic audience. The newspapers really began to open their eyes to her and they wrote many column meters about Angelica, the new rock star. It was as if Añeďliká, the alien, was forgotten already. All this suited her just fine.

In one city they took time to lay low for a couple of days, and Añeďliká took the opportunity to go to a shopping mall because she started to run out of clean

clothes. It was a little difficult to wash when one were on the road all the time. Inside the center, it turned out that it was quite recently opened, and it had a scene with some sort of open invitation to perform. It was several interested amateurs who got up and sang, so Añeďliká got the idea that she would do it too. Maybe it was not too smart, but she was the rebel so she didn't think of possible consequences. She borrowed a guitar that was lying there and started. Some young people recognized her and took out their phones and started texting. Imagine the surprise of the guards at the doors when it suddenly started to pour in a lot of young people. After just fifteen minutes the entire area around the stage and all the aisles that led to it completely packed with people. Añeďliká realized that this probably was not the right time or place, as it was getting pretty messy, and the guards showed pretty desperate out. So not to disappointed everyone if she stopped she asked:

– Is there a record store here that sells my record? Maybe I can go there and sign it if anyone is interested?

Sure, there was a store there, and before she knew it, the shopkeeper fixed a chair and a table and she started signing CDs. The line outside the shop was continuously growing, so the shopkeeper realized that the 100 copies he had of the disc would not be enough. Business minded as he was, he sent an employee to speed down to the wholesaler. He managed to get hold of almost 1000 copies that he could bring back to the store. Añeďliká began to get tired in her hand, so the shopkeeper leaned over her and whispered:

– You don't have to continue if you don't want. I can find an excuse for you.

But Añeďliká, stubborn as she was, sat there until everyone who wanted to have a signed album got it. It took over three hours. She was exhausted, but very satisfied. Nobody seemed to care about her origin anymore. Jennifer's idea had worked!

~ ~ ~

Añeďliká finished the tour with the flag flying high. The music then took more and more time from her. She really loved to perform in both large and small contexts. Just as Charles had suspected she went down into parttime job. She also acquired a new, bigger apartment down at the avenue. It had a concierge who wat-

ched who went in and out. The elevator went straight into her duplex apartment which consisted of two floors at the top of the house. There were large glass windows with a astonishing view over large parts of Jacksonville, but it was high enough so the paparazzi had no chance to shoot into the apartment.

The day she moved, she visited Maria and Jeanette to tell them that she was moving. She also handed over a check to Maria.

– I would like you to accept this small check, and hope that it can help you get a better life for you and your daughter.

Maria read the amount of the check and gasped.

– That's $100 000! I can not accept it, it's you who has helped me every time I needed a babysitter. You really don't need to...

– You do not know what Jeanette have done for me. When you went to the hospital, I was so depressed that I had decided to kill myself. Yes, it's true! I could not bear to be so different and everyone stared at me and was afraid of me. When I entered a bus, most of the people left it immediately. But Jeanette did the opposite. She treated me like everyone else and she forced me to go out in the park with her. There were several women who treated me like a mother, and did not care that I was alien. Same thing when Jeanette pulled me down to McDonald's and Zoo. If it was not for her, I would not be alive today, I can guarantee. I have ten million in the bank, and I would give everything to you and Jeanette if I thought that you would accept it. But I beg you to accept this small amount and make something good of your life!

Maria looked at Añeďliká and pocketed the check.

– I had no idea that you have had it so hard.

– All that is history now. I'm moving to an apartment downtown at the Avenue, and I want you to know that you are always welcome there. And if you need babysitting, I'm always available.

She knelt in front of Jeanette and hugged her for a long time.

– We will meet again, I promise!

– Yeah, do not think that I will let you forget me, Jeanette said cheeky.

Both Añeďliká and Maria laughed. Añeďliká hugged Maria too, and wished her good luck. Maria thanked her and said that if there was anything Añeďliká needed, maybe just someone to talk to, then she could just get in touch.

In the evening Añeďliká sat down on the sofa in the new apartment. She thought back to everything that had happened since that fateful day when she left her father's home after that awful quarrel. My world, how she regretted the harsh words she had said. Now she had everything she dreamed of, it was as if she finally landed after every adventure. Life had really been like a roller coaster ride since that day, with more deep valleys than happy moments. But now all that was behind her. The only thing she lacked now was an opportunity to reconcile with her father, and apologize for all the terrible things she said to him.

She fell asleep at peace in her new bed, little knowing what chaos was about to unleash at her home planet Knimbo.

☆ ☆ ☆

ANGELICA

AN ALIEN GETS SHIPWRECKED

Part II

The old life catches up



CHAPTER 13

The visitors



Treïstán Croëlño charged into the office of Draëk V. Frenscos with a furious face. Draëk became pretty nervous. He had lost count of how many times Treïstán had come into his office in the recent months, but this time he seemed really furious. Even though Draëk was the Director of the Space Board, he had to show respect to Treïstán as he was a pretty important person. He owned several businesses, was active in the financial sector and was certainly good for at least 50 million. He also

had many friends in high places, so Draëk realized that he really had to be very careful his words.

– Have you still not heard anything from the spaceship that my daughter Añeđliká is on?

– No, I'm sorry, we have not heard anything from it.

– It has gone over two years since it should have returned to Knimbo, right? You must surely accept that something has happened to it!

– Unfortunately, it is a possibility. We have never lost a spacecraft before, but space is a place with many dangers.

– But then you for Gods sake have so send out some sort of rescue expedition to look for them! What if my daughter is stranded on a deserted planet, and is struggling to survive, have you thought about that? If you do not try to rescue her, I will contact my friends in the government and demand that your funds will be throttled. Then you can try to play explorer in space without any money!

It was not the first time someone had requested a rescue expedition, but none so influential before. He was not sure that Treïstán had influence enough to cut off their funding, but he could for sure make life difficult for the Space Board if he tried.

– It is an expedition that is making itself ready for takeoff. They are scheduled to leave in less then a month. Perhaps I can suggest that they will take a different direction and try to find the missing spaceship as a part of their mission.

– It's the least you can do, said Treïstán abrupt and left the room with angry steps, slamming the door behind him, breaking the glass in it.

Draëk sighed with relief, and reached for the communicator device to gather a meeting with the management. The next expedition needed a little bit new directives.

~ ~ ~

Life is now really good for Añeđliká. The music was still important to her, and she was also writing a book of poems that she wanted to publish. But she was ne-

vertheless still mostly a computer geek, so she really enjoyed working at Computer Nerds. Although she worked only parttime now, and Charles had seen to it that she got projects where she could work independently. The only thing that mattered was that she produced results according to schedules. Sometimes she worked at home, sometimes in the office. She was still a bit of a loner, although she actually had some friends that she sometimes was hanging out with on the weekends, especially with Lisa, one of her background singers.

This day she was working in the office when Charles came running, looking for her with an excited facial expression and waving his mobile phone.

– Angelica, Angelica, I have the President on the phone! The President! He asks for you!

– Oh, no. What does he want me now, she moaned and took the phone.

– Hello, Añeďliká. This is Barack Obama, he said, and pretended that he had not heard her remark.

– Hello yourself, Barack. What's up?

Charles looked stunned at her. Did she call the President by his first name!

– NASA has detected a gigantic spaceship that seems to have gone into orbit around the Earth. I'm on my way to Huston now, and I want you to also get there ASAP. I have ordered a car that probably already are waiting outside your workplace that will take you directly to the airport where a plane is waiting to take you to Huston. I really need you, especially if the spaceship is from your planet. I've already got your manager's approval.

– Do I have to do it, Añeďliká protested.

All around her watched with growing amazement at each other. The President called her, asked for something, and she dares to object to it! But Obama is also someone who is used to get what he wants so he persuaded her. She went to her office and took her bag.

– Apparently it's a car waiting for me down on the street, she said to Charles. I do not know when I comes back to work. It is obviously something thing that I have to do for him.

– What's it all about, anyway? he asked.

– It is a...

She stopped, picked up her phone out of her bag and dialed a number from the phone book.

– Hi, it's me again. I just wonder what privacy level this thing have? Ah, OK. And for my boss too? Sure, sure, I understand.

She hung up. Charles was amazed again. Did she have the President on speed dial on her phone? What kind of woman was she really?

– It was classified as top secret, so I can't tell you. But I'm guessing, however, that you will read about it in the newspapers in a couple of days. See you!

She jumped into the car that was waiting for her downstairs. She demanded that it passed her apartment so she could pick up some things.

– The president will have to wait half an hour extra, she said to the driver when he tried to argue back.

A few hours later she landed in Houston and met with the president in the control room. Several of the monitors showed pictures of the spacecraft that was orbiting the Earth. There was no doubt that the ship came from Knimbo. Añeďliká was not sure if it was a good or a bad thing for her. Obama asked her curiously.

– Do you recognize the spaceship?

– I do, it comes from my planet.

– Then we definitely need your help to talk to them. Do you know why they are not trying to land?

– It's standard procedure. They will circle the planet for at least a week to gather information before they dare to land. I'll see if I can speed up the process.

She went up to a technician and explained what kind coding that would be needed to get radio contact with the spacecraft. After some adjustments the technician said that it should work. They gave Añeđliká a headset so she could communicate with them.

– *Earth calling the spaceship from Knimbo*, she said in their own language.

The communications technician on the spaceship was startled. That call was on knimbonian! The call was repeated, so he used the intercom to call the ship's commander, who's name was Stikkato.

– *We have been called from the planet, he said excitedly.*

– *It is not so strange*, he said. *The inhabitants of the planet probably have already seen us and are curious about us.*

– *But, the call was made in our own language!*

Stikkato was also startled and ran to the control room and heard himself the call and turned red in his face by the rude tone.

– *Hello, this is Earth calling. Are there any of you deadpans on the spaceship that dares to answer me,* the speaker sounded.

Stikkato tried to control his voice and said, as calmly as he could.

– *This is the commander Stikkato Gronk from Space Expedition 385 originating from Knimbo. Who am I talking to?*

– *Hey there, Stikkan. I'm Añeđliká Croëlño from the same planet. Welcome to Earth. Don't you want to land soon? We will not bite you here on Earth!*

Stikkato had to control himself to not snap back at her. Añeđliká! It could be the daughter of Treïstán Croëlño's, the reason they got another sector of space to explore. Out of respect for Treïstán he had to keep on good terms with her.

– *We have our routines...* he began.

– *Blah, blah, blah. I know the drill. But they don't cover the situation where someone from Knimbo already are living on the planet, do they? I'm standing here with Barack Obama, the President of one of the most influential countries on this planet. I don't think you should let him wait too long, unless you want to end up in an interplanetary diplomatic crisis.*

Obama tapped her shoulder when he heard his name.

– Are they going to land here? Do you think you can persuade them to land at Washington Dulles International Airport instead? It would be much better if they were in Washington DC and not out here in the wilderness. You and I can take Air Force One over to DC in an hour and receive them there instead.

– I'm still working on getting them to land at all, but of course I can suggest Dulles. But then someone have to show me on the map where it is.

She walked over to a large map on the wall and got a description on where the airport was located. Stikkato heard everything she said as she did not take her headset off. It was the same voice, but a completely foreign language! She apparently understood and spoke the local language. He realized the opportunities that opened up here and decided on the spot that existing procedures did not cover a situation like this, so he had to improvise.

– *I have decided that we will land right now,* he said to the other crew members surprise. *Can you give us the coordinates where to land?*

Añeďliká studied the map and gave them a description of where the airport in Washington DC was.

– *You may go down to about 60 000 feet above the landing spot and then hover there for an hour or two, while me and the president relocate us to your intended landing site. I'll call you again when I got there.*

She turned to the technician again.

– Is it possible to talk to them also from the airport in DC? she asked.

– We can create a link from the control tower through us to them, so it's no problem.

Said and done. Añeđliká and Obama went to the airplane which apparently was called Air Force One and flew to Washington. When they came into the control tower the air traffic controllers had already been informed of the situation and the link via Huston was arranged. They also confirmed that the spacecraft was visible on the radar high above them. She called Stikkato again and announced that the airport staff was preparing a landing by putting out lights in a semicircle. The head of the air traffic controllers sat down next to Añeđliká. This was a big day for him, as he was directing down a spaceship!

– How long runway will they need? he asked.

– Most likely they will land completely vertical, so like zero meters, she said.

The air traffic controller raised his eyebrows in surprise.

– Tell them to wait where they are until they get landing permission. I must stop all takeoffs and landings during their landing for safety reasons.

Añeđliká translated and Stikkato confirmed. The air traffic controller gave the command to close down the airport for a total of one hour "because of foreign flight". The pilots in the air were forbidden to fly over the airport. Imagine their surprise and dismay! They had never experienced that the airport was closed during normal weather conditions.

– *You have landing permission now, with a vertical approach*, Añeđliká informed Stikkato. *Air traffic control would be grateful if you land as quickly as possible because all air traffic is currently at a standstill because of you. You can see where you should land, I guess?*

– *Roger that, we start the landing procedure. We have seen the half arc of light where we should land. Over and out from the space expedition 385.*

The air traffic controller flinched in surprise. A gigantic shadow swooped down and landed in front of the control tower. It only took a few seconds to go from 60,000 feet to zero! He opened the airport again and the surprised pilots in the air

had barely noticed what happened. Añeďliká and Obama and his men went down, out to the plate and went up to the spaceship. Stikkato looked out through the cameras and saw a bunch of men in black clothes with white faces that looked like guards, a more distinguished man with a black face and then a woman with pink hair. What was this for some sort of reception committee? And where was Treïstán's daughter? He looked a little closer at the woman with the pink hair and suddenly realized that it must be her. No one else had antennas, and she had actually natural, green color in her face. He gathered himself and his nearest two men and opened the door and walked down the ramp towards them.

– *Welcome to planet Earth and to the United States*, Añeďliká said.

She held out both hands, palms upward in knimbonic respectful greeting. Stikkato and the other two laid their hands on top of hers and moved them left and right.

– *This is Barack Obama, the supreme commander in this country, she presented*.

Añeďliká had instructed him how to greet knimbonic during the flight to DC, so he held out both hands, palms down, to indicate that he had a higher position than they. Stikkato took his hands from underneath and saluted back.

– This is Stikkato Gronk, the commander said Añeďliká to Obama. And ...

– *Pier, head of research*.

– *Dreiko, diplomat*.

Añeďliká translated their presentation and then they all went into the airport building. After some explanations they were all taken to the White House where they met in the Blue Room. Now long and for Añeďliká boring meetings followed where she acted as an interpreter between the President, his men and the Committee of Knimbo. After what she thought infinite time Obama finally thanked for the conversation and asked for a car that could take them back to the spaceship, as they kindly declined to stay at a hotel.

Añeďliká followed them onto the spaceship and answered all questions about how she got there, what happened to her spaceship and more. She was tired, but

briefly explained everything that happened. Then she said that she wanted to go home.

– *We will not go home for a long time yet*, Stikkato replied. *First we need to gather information about this planet.*

– *Silly you, I mean back to my apartment in Jacksonville, not to Knimbo.*

Stikkato got a surprised expression in his face. Not just because she showed very little respect for him, but because she apparently had something she called "home" on this planet. Añeđliká said a short goodbye and walked out of the spaceship and took the train home. Stikkato found it hard to understand how she could prefer to live with these aliens instead of staying in a familiar environment with her own people.

The next few weeks Añeđliká had to act as an interpreter during many long sessions. Often they could be done over the phone or computer sessions so she didn't have to go to Washington all the time. She began to think about what she would do when they went back home again. She had longed so it really hurt for that day when she got the opportunity to return to her home planet! But now when she had the chance to do it as she was not so sure anymore. She had a lot to think about now.

One day she got a call from Ban KiMoon, SecretaryGeneral of the UN.

– I wonder if you have time to talk, Miss Angelica?

– Yes, of course, she said a little hesitantly.

– We met at the General Assembly for a little more than a year ago. I have been informed by President Obama that a spaceship from your planet has landed. We would also like do discuss with them, so therefore I wonder if you could help interpret for us.

– I'm tired of this interpretation work, all the time. Do I have to?

– It's very important for us and for the entire planet. We actually discussed this and any future visits from other planets in the General Assembly. We have decided

that, if you accept it, you will be the United Nation's Official Spokesperson of Interplanetary Affairs.

– You're kidding me!

– This is no joke. You must of course be trained a bit at first, but a good start is if you interpret for us, and maybe try to teach your countrymen English.

And so it became. She had to stay at a hotel in New York and every day she went to the UN building to interpret, train and educate her countrymen in English. She let them take over the language course that Frank had given her too. In the evenings, she did her job at Computer Nerds from the hotel room.

~ ~ ~

One day in New York, she was sitting in a restaurant to get some food in between all the meetings. At the counter a young man was standing. He seemed to be about in her age. He was quite handsome, she thought, so she looked a little sly at him under her pink bangs. He must have noticed it, as he came over to her table and asked if he could sit down with his plate. She had nothing against that of course.

– Thank you. My name is Christopher Donson, but you can call me Chris.

– My name Añeđliká Croëlño but many call me Angelica.

– Yes, I know that. Well, that part that you are called Angelica. I have one of your CD:s, actually.

Alright, she thought, a little disappointed. Just a fan who wants an autograph. She decided to be very straight in order to shorten the agony.

– When you see me, look at me, what are you thinking about anyway? Be honest now, because what I hate the most are people who lie for one reason or another.

– I've been watching you since you came into the restaurant. The only thing I can see is a beautiful woman that I want to get to know a little better.

– Come on, you can not say you have not seen that I'm not normal.

– Sure, I realize that you are Angelica, the rock star. And certainly your green face reveal that you are an alien, but the only thing I care about is how beautiful you are. You really are a very pretty women, I think.

– Come on now, do you really want me to believe that?

Angelica could not help but be a little flattered and embarrassed. It tingled a little in her, a feeling she had not had in many long years.

– You can believe me. You see, my ex a few years ago was from Africa, and she was absolutely pitch black. You can imagine that people stared at us, and not always with kind eyes, when we was walking down the street! I did not care about it, but in the end she was the one that could not cope with all the attention and broke up with me.

– How about that! Exactly the same thing has happened to me.

– Have you dumped someone because he was too different?

– Well, it was me who got dumped. My boyfriend could not cope with that I got everyones attention all the time.

– That would be something that would never bother me, I can promise you that. My friends call me a little crazy because I often do crazy things. If people have a problem with my relations, it's their concern, not mine.

They sat and chatted as if they have known each other for years. Chris could not take his eyes off her. For the first time, she felt appreciated as a woman and not something else. She did not want this moment to end, but suddenly she remembered where she was and why and looked at her watch. She got up quickly.

– Now I am afraid I have to return to my meeting, she said, pointing.

– The UN building? Are you some kind of big shot, too?

– No, I'm just the United Nation's Official Spokesperson of Interplanetary Affairs, she smiled.

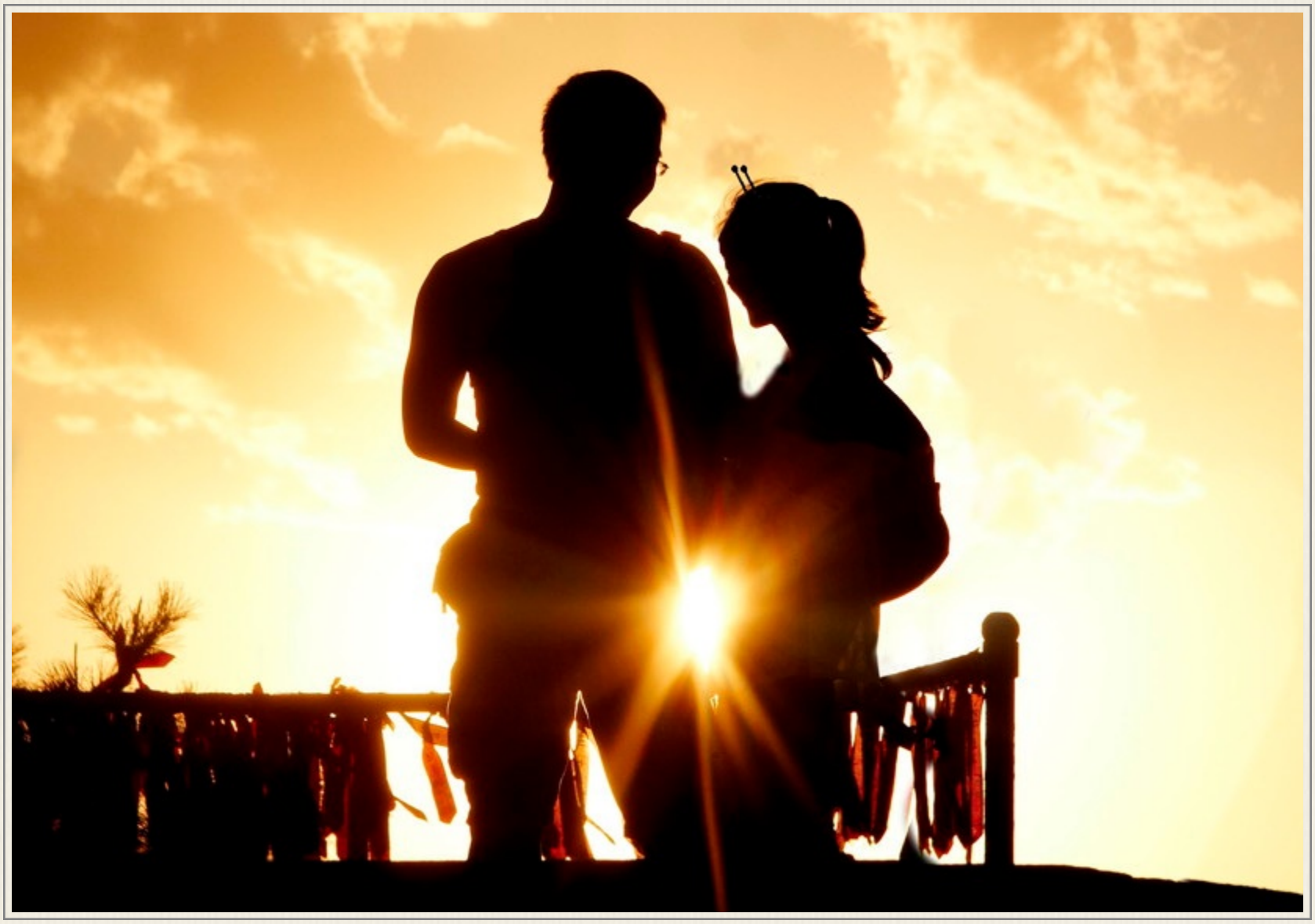
– I be damned! Will I see you again some day?

Añeďliká grabbed his arm and wrote down her phone number on his arm before she ran away. She wondered if he would call or if this was the last she saw of him? Hopefully this was just a beginning!



CHAPTER 14

In love



As the days passed by, Añeďliká got more and more to do. During the days she sat in endless meetings where she had to interpret between the group from Knimbo and various officials at the United Nations. In the evenings, she was trained in both diplomacy and simultaneous translation techniques. When she finally came to the hotel room she had to link up to her job in order to meet her deadlines in the project she was working on. Normally she was not done until long after mid-night. Then she got a few hours sleep before the meetings the next day.

This evening was no exception. She was sitting in the hotel room in front of her computer and tried to get the inspiration to start working. Her brain did not want to get started, so she gave up, closed the lid of the computer and lied down on top of the bed to rest for a few hours. When the phone rang she was most of all just annoyed at it. She took the phone and said with a sour voice.

– Hey, what's the matter now?

– Hello, it's Chris. Do you remember me?

The heart started beating a little faster. He called!

– Hi Chris. How could I forget you? she chirped.

– Well, I have a pair of tickets to a musical show tomorrow night. I was just wondering if you would like to join me? Maybe we can have a bite too eat afterwards, too?

– Are you asking me out on a date, or what?

– Only if you want to...

Chris became a little unsure. She did not sound happy. In fact, she was so surprised that she really did not know how she would react.

– Of course I want it. I stay at the Doubletree Hotel close to the UN Building.

– I'll pick you up at seven tomorrow night.

– Then I will wait for you in the lobby.

Añeďliká took the whole next afternoon off, and did not care that she got sour comments from everyone she was supposed to meet. She walked around in many shops to find nice clothes, got her nails fixed and her hair done. She bought makeup and perfume. She had never had a real date before, so this just have to be perfect! When Chris picked her up at seven o'clock he hardly could recognize her. He stood a full minute and just gasped.

– You look amazing! he panted.

– Thank you, she said, a little shyly.

Añeďliká did not recognize herself either. Shy? And why did it feel as if her legs could not carry her? She took Chris arm and squeezed it so she would not fall down. It was nice to go to the musical, although it was not really her type of music. And the restaurant that Chris had chosen afterwards was really romantic. It was so easy to talk to and be with Chris. After the restaurant, he asked if she wanted to go with him to his home instead of returning to the hotel. To his surprise Añeďliká had nothing against it, and soon they sat on his couch cuddling.

Chris told her that he worked with process development in a rather large consulting firm. They began to exchange experiences, and before she knew what really happened, she began to tell him everything about herself. And she that considered herself to be a loner who hated talking about herself! But with Chris it was all so natural, and once she started she could not stop. Chris was amazed at what an amazing story she told. What an adventure her life had been! His own life suddenly began to feel like quite boring.

– I was growing up with a silver, no with a golden spoon in my mouth. My father, Treïstán, is unbelievably rich. He is a little like Donald Trump is here. We lived in a huge house a bit outside of town, you know with a giant garden, a high wall around and guards at the gates. The problem was that I wanted to feel that I could take care of myself too. My father wanted me to start studying business and then work in one of his companies. But I would rather learn about computers. He let me do it, because he thought that I would be computer executive or something.

– But you did not want that, I guess?

– No, and me and my father had terrible quarrels about it. I wanted to go into town and get a job on my own, you know to try my wings. But he refused because he already decided what kind of future I would have. So we said a lot of things, called each other bad names and so. One day I said I leave whether he wants to or not. Then he yelled that if I left the house maybe I would never be allowed back into the house again. I called him something ugly that I do not even want to repeat and he said that he would for sure cut me out of his will if I did not do as he said. And he was certainly worth more than 50 million, he said!

Añeďliká went quite and became sad thinking about what had went down.

– It was not very kind to give an ultimatum like that. But effectively I guess. You just could not leave at that time then. But what did you do to get him to change his mind and to let you try your wings?

– I did not even try. When he woke up the next morning, I had already packed a backpack with the most important stuff and left by climbing over the wall. I have never seen or spoken to him since.

Añeďliká sighed deeply. Chris looked at her with both surprise and a little fear. She just threw away 50 millions just like that just to get her freedom!

– Wow, you are really the rebel you claim to be! What happened next?

– I went from town to town, job to job and country to country. It was like I was looking for something but could not find it. I slept on park benches and under bridges. But I managed it by myself, so I was pretty happy. Sure, I went hungry sometimes, but most of the time I had both a place to live and food on the table, and without any help from my father. Sometimes I sent a postcard or letter to him, but I never got any answers. I am convinced that he do not want to have anything to do with me anymore.

– It still must hurt, doesn't it?

– Well, I don't care so much about him because he obviously does not care about m ... e.

She paused and wiped a tear. Chris realized that she was not entirely sincere. But she got back her control and continued.

– I had a kind of anxiety in the body that I could not get off. It was like I was still kind of looking for something but I did not know what. It felt like Knimbo was not big enough for me, that's why I applied to the Space Academy. And with my computer skills it took only six months to get on a spaceship. It was pretty intense.

– It had to the highlight of your life to travel in deep space, right?

– It was the most boring thing I've done ever. Just a little space to move around on the ship and nothing but black space outside day after day.

– So you didn't find what you was looking for in space either. Have you never found it yet? But now here on Earth you have become a super rockstar. That must be awesome. It's that the highlight of your life? Maybe when you played at Madison Square Garden for 20 000 fans here on Earth or what?

– It was great, but not even close to Planet 765. You see, we found a planet that was habitable. Not with intelligent life forms, but a lot of different animal species.

– It must have been incredibly interesting!

– Surely, if I just would have been allowed to go out onto the planet myself. But only a few people in the crew are allowed to go down on foreign planets, and I was not one of them. But one day, I snuck out on the planet secretly. I went into a forest and found a small, furry creature. I sat down on the ground and lured it to me. It was the most incredible thing I have ever done! Can you imaging the feeling of sitting alone in a forest on an alien planet petting an alien animal that no other have seen! It was definitely the highlight of my life! Nothing, absolutely nothing, can top that feeling. Well, until the commander came on to me of course. I have never been so verbally abused before, and got room arrested for the rest of the trip. But it was worth it!

Añeđliká smiled at the memories but also had become so tired of all the talking that she could hardly keep her eyes open.

– Shall we go to bed now? she said.

– It sounds like a good idea, said Chris with something excitedly in his voice.

Añeđliká realized what Chris thought of with "go to bed".

– Chris, I really like you, and I will spend the night here – in your bed. But you'll have to wait a bit with sex, because I do not feel ready yet. But don't think that I am a virgin, far from it. I have had several nightly adventures even here on Earth.

– That's no problem, I can wait. I want to build a long lasting relationship with you, so there's plenty of time for both the one and the other.

Añeďliká slept well that night on his arm. Chris had passed the test, and she felt that she might have finally found the final part of the puzzle in her life.

~ ~ ~

The next few days Añeďliká went back to the UN building with unusual bounce in her steps and a big smile on her face. And finally came the day she longed for. She would meet with the crew for a closing meeting. After the meeting, the commander asked if she was ready to go back with them, as they would return to Knimbo in just a few days. She did not hesitate when she said:

– *No, I will not go back. I will stay here on Earth.*

All of the crew looked at her like she was crazy. Stay here?!?

– *But you must surely yearn to come back home to your father? Your father is the reason we are here. The idea is that we should save you.*

Añeďliká got a dark expression in her face.

– *What do my father have to do with this?* she said with an angry voice. *He has not bothered if I'm alive or dead since I left home for nearly seven years ago! For him, I'm already dead, for he has repudiated me, and that suits me just fine!*

Stikkato looked at her angry face with disbelief all over his face.

– *How do you think you was allowed onto the spaceship in the first place? It was he who used his influence and put his reputation at stake to make it possible for you to get onto that space ship. And it is he who forced the Space Board to let us go in this direction to look for you. You do not know how much he has been chasing Draëk and threatened and screamed at him to get this rescue expedition launched! He will be furious if we come home without you, so go home and pack now! He longs for you and is scared to death that you are deceased! That you'll stay here, is just not an option.*

Añeďliká was totally shocked. She obviously have been mistaken about her father nevertheless. She began to feel guilty for what she had done to him. Perhaps the best thing was to go home anyway. She went home to Chris in the evening to have someone to talk it out with. It suddenly felt as if her whole world was rocking.

– I do not know what I should do. The crew want me to go home. My father also apparently. I just did not understand it. He longs for me, and has torn up heaven and earth for me to be found and to be able to come home again. But I do not know what I want. I do not even know what is my home anymore.

– I can tell you that, Chris replied. Your home is where your heart is, and I am convinced that it is right here, in New York.

– No, you're wrong, Chris. New York is not my home, and never will be either. Although you're here, and although I do not want to leave you.

Chris got shocked. Should he already be dumped? He tried to resist, but some tears still came into his eyes. He quickly tried to hide them with his hand, but she had already seen them. Just at that moment she lost all her doubts on what she should do.

– Are you seriously saying that you will do what they and your father want and go back to Knimbo? I thought you were a rebel and did not care what others are saying! And I also thought we had something deeper, you and me.

Chris could not help but sob a little.

– Wipe your tears, stupid! I'm talking about Jacksonville. It's there I live, not here in NY. I will certainly break my father's heart. Again. But you are right that I just can not go with them back.

Chris sighed with relief.

– So you will stay here on Earth!

– Of course! she said and hugged Chris tightly.

Añeďliká's doubts had vanished now. Knimbo was no alternative but Earth was her new home. The next day she said goodbye to Chris, but promised that they would meet again, and went home to Jacksonville. She started recording a video to her father that the crew could take back with them. It eventually became several videos that she cut together and transferred to a memory card which she had found in the rescue capsule.

When it was time for the spaceship to return she was back at Washington's airport along with Obama and Ban KiMoon. The crew was convinced that she was there to follow them home, so they had already prepared a cabin for her. But Añeđliká just handed over a small envelope to Stikkato.

– *Can you see to that my father Treïstán get this as soon as you return to Knimbo?*

– *You can not be serious that you are not coming with us? What will your father think? You certainly have to explain why, so that he can understand.*

– *You just leave the envelope unopened. It explains everything. I do not want to say anymore to you, it's too personal.*

– *This is completely unacceptable! How do you think I will be able to meet your father and say that I did not manage to take you home? He's going to pulverize me and feed me to the birds! Now, go on board the ship, and that at once!*

– *You probably don't believe me, but I really don't want to subject you to this. But my decision stands. I'm staying here. I am truly sorry. Please give him the letter, and send him my regards.*

Stikkato Dreiko and the others tried to get her to change her mind. The discussion was both loud and intense. Obama and Ban KiMoon stood as a living question marks and did not understand what happened, just that they seemed to quarrel with each other. Finally Stikkato had to realize that Añeđliká would not change her mind, she was still a Rebel with a capital R. He held out his hands, palms down, to show his respect for her, and did the same with the rest of the committee. Then Dreiko turned to them and spoke in broken English.

– On my crew and my planet's behalf I would like to thank you for letting us visit you. We feel we have been very welcome here and hope that our planets in the future can have an exchange of each other.

Yes, he had been helped by Añeđliká with the translation. They went into the spaceship, and closed the door. Obama looked at her in surprise.

– I thought you'd go with them?

– Same as they thought. That was what the discussion was about before. But this is my home now.

With the help from the flight control the spaceship quickly flew away. Obama and Ban KiMoon looked after it for a long time until it disappeared out of sight. Ban KiMoon turned around to ask Añeďliká what she would do now. But she was already gone. She was heading into town to meet Chris. Somehow she must solve this. Maybe she had to move to New York anyway. She came to his apartment and fell into his arms as soon as he opened the door.

– Now they have gone, and I'm still here, she chirped.

She looked around and saw a bunch of boxes and suitcases.

– Do not say you are moving away now? You can't... You may not... I can move here if I have to... I do not wanna lose you... I...

– I do not want to lose you either, Chris said and wiped a tear from her eye. That's why I'm moving to Jacksonville this weekend. I have found a small apartment where I can hang out until you and I decides if we should move in together or not. My company has a branch in Jacksonville, and I will start there on Monday.

– Do you do it just for me??

– I would move to Knimbo for you if I had to! But I'm really grateful that it is not necessary.

He kissed her extensively and she could not release him either. Now everything would be fine. She just hoped that her father would understand.



CHAPTER 15

The letter home



The communicator device in the home of Treïstán Croëlño rang. He jumped up and rushed to answer.

– *This is Juno Fring from the Space Board. Is it Mr Croëlño?* she asked.

– *Yes that's right*, he said eagerly. *Do you have any news relating to my daughter?*

– *I have been asked to invite you to a meeting with Director Draëk Frensco and commander Stikkato Gronk tomorrow morning at nine o'clock, where you will receive information about Miss Añeđliká. So I wonder if you could come?*

– *How is it with my daughter, then? Is she alive? Has she come back? Is she hurt? Why is she not the one calling?*

– *Sorry, but I'm Director Draëks secretary. I have no information about your daughter's wellbeing. But, apparently, you will get that information at the meeting tomorrow.*

Treïstán argued and fought but got nowhere with her. He simply had to wait until tomorrow. Exactly at nine o'clock he bursted into Draëks office without knocking. He was too upset to be polite.

– *Welcome, Mr. Croëlño. Go ahead and sit down.*

But Treïstán was too impatient to sit down.

– *What about my daughter, is she dead or what?*

– *She's alive. Settle down and have a seat you will get all the details.*

Treïstán let out a deep sigh and sat down and looked intently at the Director, who tried to collect himself before he spoke. This was not easy, he had been thinking all night about how he would approach this, but the intense gaze from Treïstán made him hesitate.

– *Your daughter's spaceship has been involved in a terrible accident*, he began at last. *It was for unknown reasons caught in a meteor swarm and annihilated.*

Treïstán gasped.

– *The entire crew has apparently been lost in the accident except for your daughter. She apparently was coolheaded enough to get to an rescue capsule on time. Then she managed by modifying the software onboard the capsule to find a planet that was inhabited. There, she was able to land and actually still lives on the planet witch is called Earth. The inhabitants are intelligent, not too different from us and have a fairly high le-*

vel of technology. They even have sufficient knowledge of space travel, but they have still too weak rockets to leave their solar system. Your daughter lives with them.

– *How do you know all this? Have you been on this planet, and is my daughter here already? Where is my daughter right now? Why is she not at this meeting?*

Treïstán sounded very upset and Draëk started to sweat a little.

– *Commander Stikkato have met her. He can tell you everything.*

Treïstán fixed his intense green eyes into Stikkato's eyes.

– *Where is my daughter now?*

Stikkato had feared for this moment. Would he even survive this meeting? He started to explain with a trembling voice.

– *Well... I have actually met your daughter on planet Earth. She lives there and seems to manage herself great. We have spoken for the many long hours. We assumed that she would come home with us, but ...*

He hesitated a bit.

– *... she announced the last day that she wanted to stay on Earth.*

– *But why?*

– *She did not want to tell us that, it was too personal, she said.*

– *But you just said that you talked to her for hours. Something she must have said!*

– *Well, you see, she worked as an interpreter between us and the authorities on Earth. She did not associate at all with us. She did not even want to stay with us on the spacecraft. All the time she stayed somewhere else, I do not know where. However, she gave this to me, and asked me to hand it over to you.*

Stikkato pushed the sealed envelope across the table.

– *This is not acceptable at all! The idea was that you should save her! You should take her home again! Are you completely incompetent idiots or what?*

Treïstán was purple in its otherwise green face and yelled and screamed but did not get any more answers, but finally had to leave the office with heavy steps. “I can’e believe that she hates me so much that she did not even want to return home to Knimbo”, he thought. The driver who drove him home did not dare say anything, as his face was pale and blank. Back home, he sat down in the lounge and stared straight into the wall. “What did I do wrong? I just wanted her the best, and now she does not even want to know me anymore.” His eyes were getting wet so he put his hand into his pocket to retrieve a handkerchief and felt the envelope. With trembling fingers, he opened it. It contained no letter, just a memory chip. He put the card into the TV and opened the first file called “Look at this first.” Añeďliká appeared upon the screen. Besides for the pink hair, she looked the same. “Why is her hair pink”, he thought. “It looks terribly”. Añeďliká spoke on the video:

– *Hello Father. When you look at this, I guess you already know that I am alive and well here on Earth. You’ve probably also heard that I chose to stay here. I do not know if you want to hear from me at all, but please watch all of this first video anyway. It is not so long, and I just want to try to make you understand why I did not come home.*

Treïstán sat straight up and gasped. This was the first time he heard her voice since that fateful day seven years ago. He listened intently to what she said.

– *First of all, I want you to know that I have ever since I came here to Earth felt very bad when I remember what we said to each other last time we met for six and a half years ago. I’m very sorry for what I said, and for what I called you. If I could take back my words, I would do it. But I can only ask you to forgive me. Now I don’t want you to misunderstand me. You were always firm that I should tell the truth, so I’m not going to lie to you now. I do not regret that I left the house to try my wings, and I still think you are wrong when you want to decide over my future. But I should not have said those words that I said to you, and I would not have just left you without saying goodbye. I hope you can find the ability deep inside you to forgive me for that.*

Treïstán finally got out his handkerchief and wiped a few tears. He had never heard her talk like that before. She sounded so mature!

– Now I want to try to get you to understand why I stay here on Earth. I left the house to try my wings and I actually did pretty well on my own. It was seldom that I had to go hungry. But even though my wings flew me from place to place, I couldn't find what I was looking for. You've probably realized that I had a restlessness in my body and was looking for something else. But now I have finally landed on solid ground. I live nicely in a large, stylish duplex apartment, I go to work every day and are doing what is expected of me and my boss is very satisfied with me. I know many important people and perform official duties for them. Moreover, I am a public figure and a wellknown name here. Look here!

The film switched to show a web browser.

– This is Google, a sort of global search engine here on Earth where you can find information, much like we have on Knimbo. I type in my name here and look here. Well, you probably do not understand what is written here, but all of the top ten hits is just about me. If I click here, I get photos connected to my search. Look, everywhere there are pictures of me. I would say that I am a global celebrity here in most countries but most here in the U.S. as the country is called where I live.

Añeđliká appeared in the video again.

– Even if you do not believe it, I actually listened to what you where trying to teach me. You have said many times that in order to succeed, one should find the property in oneself that makes you unique. Then, whether it is a positive or negative attribute, you should exploit that to the maximum to achieve success. Right? So, here on Earth, I am unique because I am the only one from another planet. I have used that as much as I could. For example, it has given me a residence permit, I've talked to the President of this country and he sees me as a good friend today. There are also many other important people that I know and have talked to. I've been on TV and newspapers so many times I can not count them, and I've got my work and my music career through it.

"Music career" Treïstán thought. "What is she talking about?"

– If I were to go back to Knimbo I would only be a rich man's daughter, who inherited everything she has but not accomplished anything by herself. Here on Earth, it has been

column kilometers written in the news papers about the girl that got stranded on Earth with nothing but her clothes on her body and her personal abilities and which is now a superstar with more money in the bank then most others. That's why I stay here on Earth. I really AM someone here, and I enjoy it and do not want to drift around anymore. If you're still listening, then I ask you to look at the rest of the videos I've done for you, too. There, I try to describe how my life here on Earth looks like. I guess we will never meet again, but not because I would not like it, but only because of the distance. Thank you for all you have done for me, Father. I hope you understand!

Treïstán sat silent for a long time in front of the screen. It was not because she hated him that she'd stayed! He really had misunderstood everything. After a long time, he clicked to see the rest of the videos and watched them intensively. He got to see her luxury apartment, her job, and one of the films was a potpourri of various TV appearances she had made. He also saw several official appearances she's made with what seemed to be Very Important People.

The last film was several hours long. It was a concert with "Angelica", where she played in front of a sea of people! He could not with his best will say that he liked the music, but still watched the whole concert. The audience was completely hysterical and seemed to idolize her! Not in his wildest imagination he could imagined that she had become that popular. The heart started pounding like a hammer in his chest, but this time of pure and unmasked pride over his daughter.

Somehow he just have to travel to the Earth himself to meet her, hug her and explain how proud he was of her. But how would he get there?



CHAPTER 16

Reunion



Director Draëk really didn't have it easy. Treïstán Croëlño pressured him to equip a new expedition to Earth where he could follow. The Space Board was not satisfied with the information that previous expedition had got on Earth, and wanted to send a new expedition who understood and spoke the language. In addition, the phones rang constantly from all the news reporters who wanted to know everything about the new planet, not to mention all the governments and business leaders who want to know if it was possible to trade with this new planet.

He realized that he had to send a new expedition there much faster than planned. There was really no crew that was ready to leave yet, but one team at least had proven themselves to be skilled in linguistics. So against better judgement, he decided to send them to Earth to gather more information. He saw it also as a way to avoid having Treïstán breathing down his neck all the time, as he accompanied them to Earth. It was the first time a space mission had a passenger who was not educated and who also did not belong to the crew.

Treïstán was full aware of that the journey would not be easy. It was four months' trip to get there and equally long trip home. He would be gone for almost a year, but was so eager to see his daughter, so he was willing to sacrifice it. His closest companion got to take care of his business while he was away. It was many long days where he did not have so much to do on the way to Earth. He had no duties on the spaceship so he read a lot, and started to learn English to have something to do. He worried a lot about what he would say to his daughter and was scared of how the meeting would be. It was so many years and so much bad blood between them. Would they just be able to put all this behind them and start over? Would she be able to forgive him for being so stubborn? Every night he tossed and turned in agony and fear for the reunion.

Commander Gimbo Ajenko was not so fond of that Treïstán was on board. He himself was supposed to be the most important person on this space expedition, he felt. He planned how he would take the initiative when he came to Earth. They would see that he indeed was the most important person!

~ ~ ~

On Earth, Añeđliká knew nothing about what was to come. She hung out a lot with Chris now that he moved to Jacksonville. It also turned out that he became one of her biggest fans at the concerts she held. He was always backstage and supported her and pushed her into even better performances. It had now been almost a year since they met, and they spent almost all time together. Chris suggested that she would perform at this year's New Year's concert, that was held every year with various artists and which was broadcasted live across almost the entire country. As usual, she had hard to say no to him, so she did it.

She had never played on live broadcast before, so it felt a little nervous as she stood backstage and waited for her turn. Chris looked quite secretive, and didn't want to say why. She wondered why he did not want to say what it was and was a little worried when he refused to talk. Was he planning to dump her? But once Añeďliká got on the stage and started to rock the place she became calm again from the familiar environment and forgot his secretiveness and all cameras.

Between two songs suddenly Chris went on stage. He had never done that before, and he had a microphone in his hand, too. What was this all about?

– Dear Añeďliká. I'm sorry to interrupt your concert like this, but it's something I would like to say to you.

Her eyes flickered between Chris and the cameras. What was he doing?? She started to say something but was interrupted.

– No, please do not say anything yet. I need to say this now, otherwise I will never dare to do it. As of now I have known you for nine months, five days and 10 hours, but it feels like a lifetime. You are truly an unique person. And I'm not saying that because you're a rock star. Nor that you are from another planet. Nor that you happen to be green with pink hair. I love all that stuff while my whole heart. But myself, I just think of you as a human being who is so warm and generous and even though you are a rebel, you never really have done any harm. When you came here, you had nothing, and now you have everything. In spite of that you are never bragging, even though you have plenty to brag about. You are truly a wonderful person, and I've never felt like this for anyone else before. So Añeďliká ...

He knelt down in front of her and took out a box from his pocket. She gasped.

– Añeďliká, I do not want to live without you. Will you make me the happiest man on both our planets and marry me?

He held out a ring towards her. There was a murmur from the audience, and millions of eyes was watching her. For a few seconds she was completely speechless. It certainly didn't happened often! The she said with tears in her eyes:

– Stand up your fool! Of course I want to marry you!

She hugged and kissed him and did not care if the whole world was watching. This was the happiest moment in her life! The audience whistled and cheered and she thought the roof would fly off like a champagne cork. That made she realize that she was standing on a stage in a live broadcast and that the show must go on.

– My God, what a shock, she said with a weak voice. Where am I really, what song is next on the list? Never mind, by the way, I want to sing this instead.

She played the intro to the song "I'm so in love today" and kept watching Chris while she sang it. He smiled and walked discreetly off the stage. After the song Añeďliká managed to collect herself enough to finish the concert. Afterward, she disappeared immediately with her new fiancé as Chris had booked a table at a night open restaurant. So at two o'clock at night they sat and ate dinner and had eyes only for each other.

– I can not believe that you did that. You are crazy, Chris! I love crazy!

– I know, Añeďliká. It's just another reason why I love you.

~ ~ ~

Now several months followed where they was planning the wedding. The same was the case this evening in her apartment. Christopher read out who he wanted to invite to the wedding, and asked who she wanted to ask, just to check that no one was forgotten. He saw that she got a sad look in her face.

– What is it honey? You look so sad?

– No, it's nothing. The only thing I really want for my wedding is that my father will walk me down the aisle. Otherwise, the rest does not actually matter too much for me. I do not have many real friends, neither here nor on Knimbo. The sad thing is that he's not here, and that I probably never even get to see him again ever so I can't even introduce you to each other.

She sighed deeply, but then shook it off. There was nothing neither she nor Chris could do about it, so why even bother? It just made them both sad. She jumped high when it suddenly rang on the intercom. It was the house concierge who informed her that a visitor was coming up in the elevator. "Who could it be at

this hour, and why did he allow the visitor to just come in?" she thought and walked out towards the elevator. She almost fainted when she saw who came out of it and screamed in surprise. She threw herself into the visitor's arms and hugged him while the tears made her eyes murky. Chris came to the hall and saw his fiancee in a strange man's arms, crying. First, he felt a sting of jealousy, especially as the man had antennas and the same skin color as she. Who was this?

– Chris, Chris, come here! This is Treïstán Croëlño, my father! I do not know how he got here, but it's him. It really him! We need to change the date of our wedding now!

– *Father, this is Christopher Donson*, she presented in knimbonian. *He is my fiancé and we are getting married to each other.*

Chris held out his hand, but changed his mind and gave the visitor both hands with palms up knimbonian style. Treïstán took his hands and greeted him back.

– It's very nice to meet you, Mr Donson. I did not know my daughter would ... well ... establish herself.

Chris and Añeďliká looked at each other. He was speaking English!

– Get married, father. It's called marriage.

– I'm impressed that you speak English, sir, said Chris.

– You can learn a lot during four months in empty space, he smiled.

They went in and sat down on the couch. Treïstán looked around the apartment and was really impressed by what he saw. It looked even bigger and more luxurious than in the video. Chris got a little bit tense and had something he wanted to say, but hesitated how he would do it. He didn't want anyone to get offended.

– Añeďliká, can you help me to translate if needed?

She nodded, and he turned to Treïstán and looked him straight in his eyes.

– Sir, I have one thing I would like to ask from you. I would be very happy if I could get your permission to marry your daughter. I have not been able to ask you before, and she has already said yes, but your answer is also important to me.

Treïstán looked a little surprised. But at the same time, it felt great to receive the request. He looked back at Chris with a new respect.

– I do not know you, so I can not answer if you are a good... party for my daughter. But just the fact that you ask the question shows that you are worthy of her, and I have full confidence that my daughter can make the right decision. So you have my permission without reservation.

Añeđliká hugged first her father, then Chris and then they all three hugged. Treïstán felt relieved. This went better than he could have imagined. Añeđliká even asked him to be the one to hand her over at the wedding, and of course he said yes, but said he would only stay about a month. Chris felt a bit redundant, and said he would go home because the two of them had so much catching up to do. Treïstán was a bit surprised again, because he had believed that they already lived together. Chris grew further in his eyes.

– I'll call around to the minister, the restaurant and my friends to try to schedule a new time for our wedding that is within a month, Chris said. Talk to you both tomorrow!

They kissed goodnight, and Chris said goodbye to Treïstán and went home. Añeđliká and Treïstán sat and talked well into the late night. The cleaned the air really between each other. He explained how he had got there, and how happy he was for the letters and the videos she sent. He explained that he regretted what he said, although he still felt he was the one that was right. But above all, he regretted that he never replied to her letters.

– *I was stubborn and bullheaded because I wanted you to come crawling back on your knees and admit that I was right. It's the worst thing I've done in my life, and that was why I felt that I had to come here myself. To just send a reply letter to you would not have been enough by a long shot. I just hope you can forgive me for every stupid thing that I've done and said.*

– I've already forgiven you long time ago. You thought you were right, I thought I was right and none of us will ever accept that the other was right. But that is history now, and I make my decisions on where I stand right now, not on what I've done in the past, whether it was right or wrong.

– It's just that I always believe too! So you has been listening to what I tried to teach you! And I want you know that even though I still do not think it was right of you to leave the house that time, then I think that your decision to stay on Earth was entirely correct based on the situation when you made the decision. I would have made the same decision if had been caught in the exact same situation.

– Thank you for understanding. I hope you realize that it was not an easy decision to make.

She hugged him again and then she talked more about her life on Earth, about her first time with Fiona and Frank and the first time in Jacksonville. She noticed that he could barely keep his eyes open, so she made up for him on the couch. Treïstán explained that he was not planning to stay with her and he did not want to stay in the spaceship with the others either, because he did not like the crew so much.

– When did you land anyway? Today? Wonder why they have not announced their arrival to the United Nations.

– Are you sure they did not do it?

– Completely sure. But it doesn't matter, I don't care. By the way, you can sleep on the couch here tonight, then I can help you find a hotel tomorrow. I can pay for it, as you probably don't have any U.S. dollars with you.

– I brought some gold here, so I can pay for hotel myself, he said. *You just need to help me sell my gold.*

Said and done, the next day Añeďliká followed him to one of the finer hotels in Jacksonville and got him installed. Then she took him out in the city and helped him to sell his gold, and among other things, buy a mobile phone so they could

keep in touch. She also showed him clothing stores so that he could acquire clothes that was more fit on Earth.

~ ~ ~

So the days went by and Añeđliká showed her father around the city while she and Chris kept on planning for the wedding. Meanwhile Commander Gimbo was working on the Presidential Secretary to set up a meeting with the president. It went pretty slowly, as Obama felt that they should instead seek contact with the UN. But finally Obama gave in and booked an appointment. Treïstán was at the MOSH museum with Añeđliká when his phone rang. It was Gimbo who wanted Treïstán to accomplish him to the meeting with the President in the White House. He was not so amused by it, but accepted nonetheless. Shortly thereafter Añeđliká's phone rang.

– Hello. Now what do you want? Oh no, do I have to? I don't want to do it, do have really have to? All right then, I will come along! You always are so tedious!

– *Who was that?*

– *Asch it was Barack who wanted me to come to a meeting in Washington. I do not really want that, but he's pretty stubborn himself.*

– *Who?*

– *Barack Obama, the president.*

– *Huh! The president is calling you? And you respond disrespectful like that?*

Treïstán looked at her with disbelief in his face. Didn't she have any respect for authorities! In some strange way it made him proud at the same time. He asked her if she could help him find the White House and of course she said yes. The day before the meeting they took the train up to Washington and Añeđliká got a room at a luxury hotel. To Treïstán's surprise she seemed to be well known at the hotel, as they addressed her by name and asked if she wanted to have her usual room even before she presented itself.

The next day they went to the White House. At the front desk Gimbo and his diplomat Frenso Krumbo already waited. Gimbo was not happy when he saw Añeđliká and showed it clearly when he looked at her pink hair and informal attire. Gimbo said to her with a harsh voice:

– *I hope you do not think you are also invited to this meeting!*

Añeđliká became dark in her face and Treïstán rushed to respond so the situation would not become too embarrassing.

– *My daughter has just helped me to get here, because I do not find my way around especially not here in Washington.*

– *I just wanted to clarify that my invitation was only meant for you, Mr Croëlño.*

– *It suits me well, I still had not accepted any invitation from you,* Añeđliká said with a sharp voice.

To Treïstán's great relief a guard came out from a door with metal detectors and other security equipment and went up to them and addressed them. He would show them the way to the conference room where they were to meet the president. Gimbo thanked him and started walking toward the door when the guard stopped him.

– I apologize, but that is a limited area with the highest security. The president will receive you in the conference center. This way please.

Añeđliká said goodbye to her father and took up an identity badge that she latched onto her blouse. Then she went straight up to the door, pulled a card, put her hand on the fingerprint machine and went inside while she happily cheered to the guard. Gimbo froze to the floor. He could not believe his eyes! How could the bitch just go in there where he was not allowed to go? It was not until Frenso patted him on the shoulder he woke up and went with the guard and the others to the conference center.

The guard instructed them how to greet a President. Gimbo found it difficult to meet Treïstán's eyes. He he almost forgotten that it was his daughter he just had disrespected. Then another security guard entered the room and spoke.

– Gentlemen, the President of the United States!

Barack Obama came through the door, and at his right side Añeđliká was walking. Gimbo got trouble breathing. What was she doing here? This was his meeting, his triumph! Who was she to challenge it? Obama walked up to them and greeted them.

– I welcome you to this meeting. My name is Barack Obama and I am the President of the United States. This is Miss Añeđliká Croëlño, my personal friend and my advisor in all interplanetary affairs. Please sit down!

Gimbo found it increasingly difficult to breathe. "Personal Friend"? And "advisor"? All his intentions of the meeting was on the verge of collapsing. This meeting was supposed to surely be the highlight of his life, and now she was sitting there. He had to make a genuine effort to collect himself and present their case, namely to find out which natural resources on Earth was possible to trade with. Obama explained that he was not the right person to discuss that with, and referred to the Chamber of Commerce.

– What do you think, Añeđliká? Obama asked.

– I partly agree. But according to the Intergalactic Law[1] then the United Nations should be the ones to be handling the request, it may very well be other countries on the planet who wants to trade with Knimbo too.

– You're right, Añeđliká, Obama said. The UN should be correct channel.

Gimbo glared at her intensively but didn't move her one inch. She just sat there with a gentle smile towards him. After that the meeting ended pretty quickly and the delegation from Knimbo left the White House directly except for Treïstán who said he would wait for his daughter. Gimbo was boiling with anger over the failed meeting. He returned to the spaceship and started thinking on a return trip, to avoid further humiliation. He realized, however, that unless Treïstán agreed to a premature return journey it was impossible. And to come home without him, he dared not even think about.

Treïstán had now got an even greater respect for his daughter, but Añeđliká could only think of her wedding. But anyhow she still called the SecretaryGeneral

of the UN on the way home and informed him about what Gimbo had done. The SecretaryGeneral called for a meeting of the General Assembly. Today's meeting would prove to be a spring breeze for Gimbo in comparison to what was to come.



CHAPTER 17

The wedding



While the diplomatic temperature rose in the UN building, Chris kept on getting all the wedding preparations done, but it was not easy to find a suitable time so soon. Then he came up with an idea and told it to Ańeďliká.

– Honey, regarding our wedding. You are supposed to play a few songs at the charity gala on Saturday in two weeks, right? I was thinking that we could get married as part of it. What do you think of that idea?

– You must have totally lost you mind! Are you saying that we should get married, while the entire United States are looking on? The very thought of it is completely crazy! You are crazy to even suggest it! But when I think about it, I love crazy, after all. But do you really think they will go along with it?

– I made a few calls yesterday just to check, and they did not seem completely foreign to the idea. Anything that can attract more people to watch generates more money for the charity, the organizer said.

Said and done, Chris arranged everything practical and Añeďliká called Fiona, Frank and Laura to ensure that they could come along with Maria and Jennifer. She also told her father about the plans, and he got something thoughtfully over his face when she told him that the gala was all about charity. He began making his own plans ...

At the day of the gala, Añeďliká got up early. She was getting nervous and wondered if this idea to get married in front of TV cameras was really such a good idea. When the evening came, and she stood in her white wedding dress, it felt, if possible, even more nervous. Treïstán had bought a new suit for the occasion and looked like a distinguished businessman from planet Earth. Fiona, Frank and Maria sat in the front row and Laura was Añeďliká's bridesmaid while Jennifer was a flower girl. The conférencier went on stage to open the gala.

– Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this gala that we hold to raise money for the world's poor children. We are just about to begin the gala, but before that, we have all been invited to a wedding here and now. It's Angelica that is going to get married here, today. Her fiancé, Chris, proposed to her on stage, so it is more than fitting that they get married on stage.

The wedding music started playing, and Chris came on stage along with his best man and the minister. Añeďliká's knees felt like jelly. "Sharpen up now, girl", she thought, "you've been on stage many times before." She looked at Treïstán who smiled at her. Then they walked down the aisle that the organizer created along the scene. Laura was right behind her and then came Jennifer who was the only flower girl. Treïstán was prouder than ever when he walked the aisle with his daughter. The ceremony was just as solemn as Añeďliká wanted. She and Chris

was shining with joy and love when they finally left the stage to a knimbonian wedding march as a married couple.

Then the gala really took off while Añeđliká changed clothes and got ready for her appearance. She still would sing at this gala. So when it was her turn she went up on stage as the final performer of the evening. The audience became ecstatic when she came onto the scene as a newlywed and started rocking the building with her guitar. But she did not run the most heavy songs of her, but held back a little and sang a song about child poverty and another that everyone should be treated equally. Then she started to talk.

– It feels incredible to be married now! Imagine that I have everything I ever wished for, and all that I have found here on Earth. Meanwhile, there are children here on Earth that goes to bed with aching stomachs, and the only thing they dream is that "maybe I will not be hungry tomorrow" or "is it tomorrow I will starve to death". There are certainly those of you that think I have no right to talk about this thins because I have so much money myself. But I actually know exactly how these poor children feel. When I first came to Earth, I was hungry every day, not knowing if I would live or die. But I got help when it was the darkest.

Añeđliká pointed to Fiona and Frank.

– My saving angels are sitting right there. Without you I would not be alive today. But where are the angels to save the children who are starving today? Well, I'm looking at you here in this room! I'm looking at you right through the TV screen! It is you who can save the lives of these children by donating some money to the gala! I know that the children who receive your gift will be happy, but it's nothing against how happy you will be yourself to know that one less child will starve to death because of you!

She pointed straight into the TV camera and the audience was completely silent, moved to tears by her words.

– I was offered payment to stand here and sing tonight. But I refuse to accept any money for appearing here today, the same with most of the others that preformed here today. Instead, I promised to contribute 10 percent of the money collected until now. It becomes ...

She turned and looked at the monitor that counted the total donations received. The figures had begun to grow significantly faster since she started her speech.

– Nine million six hundred thousand so far. Oh, that's twice a much then for just fifteen minutes ago!

She took out a checkbook from her pocket and waved to one of them who was collecting charity. Then she wrote something on the check and handed it over. The collector looked at the check and gasped.

– The check is on one million! he shouted into the microphone!

There was a murmur from the audience followed by a roaring applause.

– I urge anyone who, like me, have more money than you need to give of your abundance, too. What will you do with all your money if...

She stopped when she saw that her father had taken the stage.

– What are you doing here, Father, she asked?

Treïstán turned to the crowd, took a microphone in his hand and spoke.

– I guess that virtually none of you know who I am, more than that I am a proud father of Añeđliká here. But on my home planet, I am one of the businessmen who she just talked about. I earn more money than I need. Therefore, on the planet Knimbo I have started the 10percent club. It is a club with rich men who promised to annually provide at least 10% of their surplus to charity, and I'm one of them myself.

The audience burst into spontaneous applause.

– I would urge all rich businessmen here on Earth to do the same! Do you have a surplus, then give at least 10% of it to charity every year! Of course I brought some of my fortune here to Earth in the form of gold, and I've exchanged it to your dollars. I will not need all of it during my remaining time here, so let me give a small sum to you.

He pointed to the man with charity box and handed over a stack of bills when he arrived. The man made a quick count and exclaimed:

– It's over $ 10 000 here!

– If I had $ 100 000 left I would have given it, but this will have to do.

Añeđliká hugged her father and the audience applauded warmly. She had not had a clue about this and was genuinely surprised. She picked up her guitar again and started with the next song. It was a call to support the children of the world and for each verse, more and more of the artists entered the scene. In the end it was over fifty people on stage that sang the song together. It really was a worthy ending to this magical evening, which had raised more money to charity than any of the previous galas had done. The organizer was convinced that Añeđliká and her father was the main reason for this. Treïstán was also quite surprised because he only now realized how popular his daughter actually was as an artist. She had kept the audience completely in her hands both when she played, and when she spoke. What ovations she had pulled down! It was not even close to the other artists who performed during the evening, artists certainly also very popular.

Afterwards there was a wedding dinner with the very closest friends, even though it had become quite late. Añeđliká got the chance to hug Fiona and Frank and they felt almost as proud as if it were their own daughter that had become married. Añeđliká pushed Laura in her side and said:

– Now it's your turn to get married!

Whether she nor Treïstán gave any thought to Gimbo. The same could not be said of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which was about to shake Gimbo's world it it's foundation.



CHAPTER 18

Diplomatic crisis



The next few days Añeďliká were strangely busy. She shut herself in her room and talked on the phone for hours and kept working on her computer. Her father assumed she was forced to make up all the lost time on her job.

Commander Gimbo had no idea about the charity gala, he did not care either. A little less than a week after the ceremony, he got a letter that looked official. When he opened it and saw that it was an official invitation to a meeting in New

York with the General Assembly of the United Nations he was really happy. At last they began to realize how important he was and invited him rather than that he had to beg for meetings. He did not reflect the wording in the letter that his presence was "requested" so it was not a voluntary invitation. The same day, Treïstán got a similar letter asking him to come to the meeting in New York with the words "desirable presence". Again he asked his daughter for help to get there, so as usual they went by train the night before and Añeđliká fixed a hotel.

Gimbo and Frenso was early for the meeting, but not early enough as Treïstán and Añeđliká was already there, waiting. This time Gimbo lost his temper completely, and Treïstán chose not to intervene this time.

– *Now what are you doing here? Do not think you are something just because your father is a big shot.*

– *I don't THINK I'm not something here, I KNOW it. But you think that you are someone just because you invited my father to a meeting with the president, but in fact you're just pathetic.*

– *The only one that is pathetic here is you with your pink hair.*

– *So that's what it's all about, you're jealous because I have prettier hair?*

Now Treïstán could not help smiling. His daughter apparently did know how to answer for herself, and without losing her temper. "Jealous" – ha ha. He studied Gimbos face that went from green to red.

– *You surely do not think I want to look as cheap as you!* he hissed back.

– *Cheap? This haircut cost me $ 1000 on Guillermo's down in Jacksonville. I can give you his phone number. You would look soo cute with light blue hair!*

Gimbo's face was truly a sight for the gods now, it had been transferred to a more bluish color. But before Gimbo could think of anything to respond, the SecretaryGeneral came up to them.

– Welcome here, he said. I am the SecretaryGeneral and the one that asked you to come here. I hope you are able to wait out here a little longer while we prepare the meeting. It will probably be no more than fifteen minutes.

Gimbo collected himself and smiled up.

– That's no problem, sir.

– Thank you very much. Are you coming, Añeđliká?

Gimbo looked long after them when Añeđliká went with the SecretaryGeneral, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. She did it again, put her nose into his meetings! Even Treïstán was surprised that his daughter seemed to know the highest person on this planet. After twenty minutes an officer came out and asked them to enter the conference room. Sitting at a number of tables was a dozen men in suits plus Añeđliká, who sat at the SecretaryGeneral's right side. The three from Knimbo sat down on the three vacant seats and got help to put on the headset that laid in front of them on the table. The SecretaryGeneral started to speak first of all.

– I want to thank all of you for coming here. First, I propose we introduce ourselves. My name is Ban KiMoon, SecretaryGeneral of the United Nations. Perhaps you can present your group?

– Thank you for receiving us, Gimbo said. My name is thus Gimbo Ajenko and I'm commendar for this space expadition.

He felt proud that he thought he sorted out the difficult words.

– This is Frenso Krumbo, commonication reposable and this is Treïstán Croëlño, an ooh, an important person on Knimbo.

Then Ban KiMoon went around the table and introduced those present. There were representatives from various key member countries who had wanted to be at this meeting. He finished with the only woman in the room.

– Finally, this is Miss Añeđliká Croëlño, which is the United Nation's Official Spokesperson of Interplanetary Affairs. So, go ahead Miss Añeđliká.

– Thank you, mr SecretaryGeneral, she replied.

None of the three from Knimbo believed their ears, including Treïstán. Was she "official spokesperson"?!? It must just be some kind of sick joke! But nobody looked amused, but all looked seriously at her, waiting.

– First I want to correct a small personal detail. My name is Mrs. Donson since a few days. Very well. This is the General Assembly's joint statement.

She looked down at the paper in front of her and began to read. To the knimbonian's amazement she spoke their language.

– *According to our information, the current space mission from the planet Knimbo has been on this planet for almost one month. No one is known to have made any attempt to contact the United Nations or its spokesperson during this time. Of course this is a direct violation Intergalactic Law[1], §4. Nor have local laws been followed regarding movements in the airspace, this in violation of §5 and §10 when air safety was sidelined during landing. Even §7 and §8 has been broken when it comes to the discussions concerning trading. And since discussions on trading has been commenced with individual countries then even §9 were not acknowledged.*

Treïstán's amazement at her daughter's ability to speak pompous and formally was equally high as how impressed he was with her skill on simultaneous translation. For when he glanced at the paper she was reading from he noticed that it was written in English. All UN representatives closely followed her on their own copy of the paper as she made pauses after each paragraph. He looked at Gimbo and got another shock. His face was neither green, red nor blue anymore but white as a ghost. Treïstán seriously began to fear that he would get a heart attack and fall off his chair. Añeďliká kept firing of accusations against Gimbo for several minutes while UN representatives nodded and murmured in agreement. It was obvious that she had an active part in the drafting of the document, given all the references to the Intergalactic Law[1].

When Añeďliká finally ended her speech it was so quiet in the room that the ventilation noise sounded like a hurricane. Gimbo had obvious difficulties getting air into his lungs. He felt as if he got a fist in his stomach for every spoken word. For a full minute that seemed like an hour he sat and tried to get a few words out but all he could get out was some croaking sounds. Finally, it was Treïstán who rai-

sed his voice. Mostly because he felt that the whole planet Knimbo was under attack and he wanted to defend his home planet, but also because he almost felt a fear of his own daughter. She had become really scary sincere in her image and criticism!

– First and foremost I want to express that I have no formal diplomatic role here on Earth, but I still consider myself as a representative of the planet Knimbo as being one of its inhabitants.

The assembly was amazed of the flawless english from him. He obviously was better in the language then the ones that should speak for Knimbo.

– I just want to express that it is my belief that what have been presented by your official spokesperson is not in accordance with Knimbo's intentions. I have on several occasions met with Draëk, the director of the Space Board, and I can promise you, gentlemen, that this is not something he would agree to. Perhaps the blame for this serious incident is partly mine, because I pressed Director Draëk to send this space mission before it was ready or had a fully trained crew.

Gimbo saw red again and regained his composure. Now also Treïstán had the nerve to criticize him! He was about to say something derogatory about him and his daughter, but stopped himself at the last split second. If he did not resolve this crisis he risked imprisonment when he returned, for he could probably expect that Treïstán would express this criticism to Draëk. He had better to bend down and creep for him to survive.

– I want to be the first to apologize for my actions. The only explanation I can ... give is to ... my ... *diplomatic training* ...

He did not find the words in English and it said on knimbonian. Imagine his surprise when the words immediately was translated into English by Añeđliká. He continued to talk with a mixture of English and knimbonian and Añeđliká continued to simultaneous interpret when he could not find the words. Several of the members responded to his excuses and he was forced to become more and more humble to face the criticism. One of the members asked something he did not understand. It was in a very pompous language and also with an accent that made it

extremely difficult to understand. His uncertain face clearly showed that he did not understand, but suddenly he got a direct translation to knimbonian in his headset. The next question was in Chinese, and he heard it almost simultaneously in his language in the headset. How could Añeđliká understand every language on this planet? Of course, she also had a headset and it was first translated into English, which she then further translated.

After what seemed an eternity, and many vows of repentance then he finally was allowed to leave the meeting. He and Frenso quickly disappeared to lick their wounds, while Treïstán was asked to stay a few minutes. Ban first asked him if he considered himself neutral in relation to the commander and the rest of the crew of the spaceship.

– During the travel here, I was not so well seen by the crew as they did not like to have a passenger who was not working on the spaceship, so I avoided contact with any of them during our trip here. Here on Earth, I have stayed at a hotel in my daughter's town, Jacksonville, and had no contact at all with them for exception of the meeting with President Obama. So I'll would say that I consider myself as completely neutral towards them.

– Do you have a daughter on this planet? a representative interjected.

– Maybe, Añeđliká smiled. It has not occurred to you that our last names and our antennas are quite similar?

– Oh, I did not realize it. You can be proud of your daughter, Mr. Croëlño!

– Well, thank you, Ban Kimoon said. Our question is whether you are willing to help us to deliver a letter from us to your interplanetary representative, I think it was Draëk you called him?

He name is Draëk V. Frensco and is Director of the Space Board. I would consider it an honor if you gave me the confidence to deliver a letter.

– You don't see any problem with that, Mrs. Donson? another representative interjected. As you are the person responsible for the communication between us and other planets, you have to be the one to accept this courier.

– I am convinced that Mr. Croëlño can safely be entrusted with this task, she replied without changing her face. And I say this not as his daughter, but as your spokesperson.

So it was decided. Ban Kimoon said that Treïstán would get a letter through their spokesperson, his daughter, to submit it to Knimbo. On the way home to Jacksonville, Treïstán was studying his daughter with a respect that he does not even give to Director Draëk.

– *This was actually the most fun boring meeting I've ever been on*, Añeđliká said.

– *Incredible, absolutely incredible*, Treïstán was mumbling. *You do not cease to amaze me. And I wanted you to come home and become something important there. You're in every way bigger here on Earth I could ever dream of that you would become on Knimbo!*

– *Not in length*, she chirped. *I'm still far below the average height here on Earth. By the way, I really hope that you didn't take what I said personally. It was meant for Gimbo, that's why I wrote "requested" in his letters and "desirable" in your letter.*

– *Huh! Was it you who wrote those letters as well?*

– *Of course, as their spokesperson I'm supposed to be their face to you guys. Taking about face, did you see when Gimbo's face trying to catch up in color with my hair?*

– *I thought for a while that you would give him a heart attack. I almost feel sorry for him. But only almost.*

Añeđliká laughed and agreed. Now Treïstán could not hold it inside him anymore, but asked the question he wanted to ask her for almost a year but had not dared before.

– *Why do you have pink hair, actually?*

– *It was actually a celebrity stylist who came up with it in the first place. When I had green hair, then it's like I screamed out "This is an alien" and people treated me accordingly. With pink hair, I am treated like a rock star instead.*

Treïstán nodded that he understood. He had himself noticed how people looked at him when he was walking around in the city.

– *Maybe I should also color my hair pink!*

– *That would really be something!*

– *You know another that I'm been thinking about for a while now? I told you before that I thought you made the right decision when you stayed here on Earth. Actually for myself I most of all would like you to come back with me to Knimbo, because I want to have you near to me. Especially now that we are reconciled. But if you follow me home, you are an idiot. You have everything here, not just a husband who loves you and a job to go to. You really are important here, and you've actually become everything I wanted. Back at Knimbo I saw you as a manager and business woman mostly because I did not want to see you as an anonymous subclass of human being. Here you are not a manager, but a person who is wellknown and that people look up to. And most importantly, you are happy here. Probably I will cry like a baby when we separate, and I go home, but you should know that there is as much tears of pride than of sorrow.*

Añeďliká hugged her father and thanked him for his understanding. She also promised that if it only became possible, she would visit him on Knimbo sometime in the future.

~ ~ ~

Some trading did not happen with this space mission. Gimbo's pride was crushed to smithereens. He realized that the only way to solve their mission here on Earth what to discuss it with the United Nations. Then he would of course have to go through their official spokesperson. But given what he had said to Añeďliká he felt that he simply could not handle the task. It would be total humiliation of being forced to crawl for this pink hair top. Instead he returned with his tail between his legs as soon as he dared for Treïstán. He avoided him throughout the whole return journey. He feared for what Treïstán would tell Draëk when they returned and discussed for many hours with Frenso how the two would team up against Treïstán to lower his credibility.

Gimbo was still blissfully unaware of the letter Treïstán brought, addressed to Draëk. But soon he wold find it out.



CHAPTER 19

Interplanetary trading



Director Draëk was reading the report from Gimbo Ajenko. He was not very happy with it. It felt like Gimbo had left something out, although it was backed up by Frenso. In addition, he's mission had been to negotiate trading with Earth, but he couldn't find any real findings in that area in the report. What results had he really achieved? The secretary knocked on the door and announced that Treïstán Croëlño asked to meet him. Draëk still remembered those awkward meetings he had with him before his departure and became even more worried. But he felt that

he had no choice other than to meet him. This time he knocked anyway, and went through the secretary. Treïstán looked especially serious and almost sad when he sat down in front of him. Draëk got a hunch that there was something unpleasant going on and tried desperately to think if he had said or done something inappropriate. Treïstán submitted a letter to him and said that he had been asked to deliver that letter by the Supreme Commander of the Earth. Treïstán was not entirely clear about what role the UN had on Earth. Draëk read the letter and felt more and more sick. It certainly was not a pleasant reading.

– *Have you read the letter yourself, Mr Croëlño?* he asked.

– *I know what it contains, and know that it is not very good for our diplomatic relations with Earth. I understand that Gimbo had his own agenda for his visit, and ignored all their obligations stipulated by the Law. I am of course sorry for the incident.*

– *In what ways where you involved in this?*

– *I want to state that I kept myself completely neutral and did not cause any of this, on the contrary, I did my best to mitigate the impact, and I think I partially succeeded.*

– *Have you discussed this situation with their official representative, perhaps?*

– *I have talked with her every day, and think that she, as well as the organization she represents, consider this as a personal issue, and not interplanetary.*

– *Have you talked to her every day? Why, is the crisis is so severe?*

– *No,* Treïstán smiled. *It is my daughter who represent Earth against us.*

– *Wow. That's amazing! But I thought you went there to take her home.*

– *There are many who believe that, but it's completely wrong. I went there to reconcile with her, and to understand her situation on Earth.*

– *So she's not coming home?*

– *She's at home where she is on Earth. Her name is better known there than you and I are here together and she is bigger than you can ever understand. I am proud of her and*

want her to stay on Earth for that's where she have a full and complete life. She is respected by everyone, some powerful leaders as her personal friends and she is a world celebrity. In addition, a superbly skilled diplomat.

– What do you think about the possibilities of trading with Earth? It seems as if Gimbo forgotten that it was his main mission.

– I have discussed that with my daughter, who raised the issue in a global forum on the planet. It seems like they have a lot of lumber that we have such a lack of here and that we could buy almost any amount of wood from them. We may then pay them with gold, as that metal is very important on the planet. It is used both in jewelry and in computers and has a high value there.

*– I apparently should have sent just you to the planet, and let the rest stay at home,*Draëk laughed.

He immediately started work to prepare new space missions to Earth, but this time with a cargo ship instead. Though this time he would make sure to send some fullfledged diplomats, and especially not rush until departure. He also submitted a copy of the letter to a prosecutor, and Gimbo's worst fears came true.

~ ~ ~

Añeđliká was living happy together with Chris. But despite all, she still felt that something was missing. Though this time, she knew exactly what it was. She missed the sound of small steps in the apartment, babbling and someone calling for her. She simply wanted to become a mother. But that was impossible, as she came from another planet than Chris. However "impossible" was a word that she refused to use. She had plenty of money, so she contacted various institutions that were involved in genetics to see if they, after all, could do something. A professor got excited over the challenge, especially as Añeđliká funded his work. He had succeeded in cloning various small animals and thus knew how genetics work. After many examinations and studies of her DNA the professor concluded that it indeed should be possible, using a technique that she did not understand. So with his technique she managed to get pregnant with Chris. Her happiness was com-

plete when Nina was born. She was a wellshaped baby girl that looked almost like an earth child.

One day when Nina just had become few months old Añeďliká's mobile phone rang. To her great surprise, someone in broken English asked for the United Nation's Official Spokesperson of Interplanetary Affairs.

– Yes, it's me, I guess.

– This is space mission 418 from Knimbo. We just want to notify in accordance with the procedures that we landed on your planet. We apply also in all kindness a request to meet you.

– *Why on earth are you speaking English*, she answered in knimbonian.

– *We did not think you understood knimbonian*, she replied. *I am Commander Vanya Grvano, just arrived.*

– *Oh, a female commander for a change, how nice. I will arrange a meeting between you and the SecretaryGeneral of the United Nations. I guess you are available at any time.*

There was of course no problem, so the day after they met in New York outside the UN building. Añeďliká had arranged transportation for them and was the one who greeted them welcome and went with them to the SecretaryGeneral's office. Vanya started the conversation on her broken English.

– It is a greet honor to meet you, Mr. Secrotary. My name is Vanya Grvano and this is my diplomat Blekka We.

– First of all, we want to explain Knimbo's official position, Blekka continued on a nearperfect English. It is apparent that our previous delegation has behaved badly on this planet, completely against our protocol, rules and laws. We would like to hand over a document as an official response to your letter to Director Draëk Frensco along with our sincere apology for the incident. We also want to assure you that it will certainly never happen again.

– Well, the SecretaryGeneral said. I think we can distinguish between the person and the country, or in this case, the planet. I accept your apology, and will pre-

sent your letter to the General Assembly. It will probably be no problems there either.

– Does this mean that the diplomatic issue between our planets has already been solved?

– Exactly. We have come to the understanding that it was just the commander of the last space expedition that did not act according to your planet's routines.

Both Vanya and Blekka looked at each other with surprise. How is it possible that the diplomatic crisis was so easy to solve? They looked curious at Añeđliká who smiled and blinked at them. They realized that it was she who actually solved the crisis, even though it was not her mission to represent Knimbo. Both sighed with relief. The SecretaryGeneral continued.

– May I ask what your mission is here on Earth is this time?

– We are here because we want to trade lumber with you, Blekka explained. We understand that it is a natural resource that there is plenty of here, while we Knimbo has almost no trees left.

They began to discuss the details while Añeđliká let her thoughts wander off. It was obvious that she was not needed here as an interpreter as a result of Blekka's skills in English. If her planet would start trading with Earth, it suddenly opened a possibility for her to go home to Knimbo on a short visit. Interesting...

~ ~ ~

The space expedition went on to various parts of the United States and to other countries to load timber. The spacecraft this time was much larger and had a gigantic cargo department instead of research lab and data center, so it could contain a lot.

A couple of years went by and the trading continued. Once a year, a ship from Knimbo arrived and the diplomatic crisis was forgotten long ago. Forgotten was also Gimbo where he sat in a prison cell wondering how it could go so wrong. Meanwhile Añeđliká planned for a little surprise visit to her father. She was no longer practically involved the relations between the planets, which she was grateful of.

But her father did not even know she had got a baby. Of course, he would like to meet his grandchild. But she planned for much more than just visit her father and introduce her daughter to him. She also wanted him to become proud of her also on their home planet.

She planned to hit like a bomb on Knimbo and leave an impression that late would be forgotten.



CHAPTER 20

Knimbo gets visitors



Añeďliká contacted her record company and asked to buy the digital masters to her recordings. The record company was not keen on it, but given that she was a real cash cow for them plus she promised not to use the masters on the planet Earth she got them. She had created a small studio in her apartment so with Chris as a sound engineer, she recorded new vocal tracks on many of her songs, in knimbonian.

Then she packed a whole container full of instruments, PA equipment, lights, monitors, pyrotechnics and anything else she was using on her concerts. Then she contacted the commander of the space expedition that just then was on Earth to load the timber they had bought. It happened to be Vanya that was back, and she agreed to let Añeđliká, Chris and Nina accompany them back to Knimbo with their luggage and container. The journey back was initially very exciting especially for Nina, who had become three years. But after a few weeks, it was just boring, but they found ways to entertain themselves. Chris took the opportunity to try to learn knimbonian and Añeđliká played for the crew as a small test of what was to come. She felt that Vanya and the other was much easier to socialize with than the other crews. They were not so stiff and Vanya was not so strict in her manager's role, but it is was possible to joke about everything with her. So generally was an enjoyable trip.

Finally the spacecraft landed on Knimbo and Añeđliká felt relieved. She did not want to admit it, but she actually had almost constantly been scared. It was just her husband who understood that she has not yet got over the trauma of the last time she was in space. After briefly reported her and her family's arrival to Director Draëk they jumped into a taxi. She had exchanged some knimbonian money from the crew and she told the driver to drive them to Treïstán's residence. Outside the gate they were stopped by the guard who had no plans to let some bitch with pink hair go inside the walls. Añeđliká put her hand on the lock panel and confirmed her guess that her father had not erased her from the security system when the gate opened. She smiled a bit mockingly towards the guard and asked the driver to drive on to the house.

Treïstán hurried towards the door when the guard warned him that a tramp managed to enter through the gate. Imagine his surprise when he saw his own daughter on the doorstep!

– *Hello father*, she said. *Can I come in, or did you mean it when you said last time I was here that I could never set foot here again?*

– *You fool, of course you are always welcome here. Who is this you have with you?*

– *That's a taxi driver*, she said and pointed to the man who unloaded their bags. *Chris, you have met before, and this shy girl here is your granddaughter, Nina.*

– *Granddaughter*, he exclaimed! *But how ...*

– *Science, everything is possible with science. It is your own blood, they have managed to cross our two races.*

Treïstán hugged Nina and she shyly and reluctantly hugged back.

– *Good day, my grandfather*, she said in knimbonian to his great joy.

– *I'm really happy to see you again*, Chris said in the same language.

– *It was the worst what you seems to be good at knimbonian everyone.*

– *Well, if you can learn English then we can learn knimbonian* Chris replied.

After exchanging various updates on what had happened since last time then Treïstán wondered what plans they had here. Añeďliká explained that in addition to spending time with him and let him know his granddaughter, she was planning to try to break into Knimbo's music world both on records and on stage. Treïstán was a little hesitant that it would go so well, she had not the advantage of being unique here, but he said nothing. He had learned the hard way what happened if he was trying to decide about his daughter's future.

Future, by the way. Now that his family would not die with Añeďliká, but would live on through Nina, then he wanted to discuss his inheritance. He wanted Añeďliká or maybe Nina to inherit his fortune when he died. But Añeďliká was of a different opinion.

– *Father, you said the last time I was here you would cut me out of your will if I left you. That time I made my choice, and although it was perhaps not the best choice, then I have to stand by what I've done. You've taught me that one must keep ones promises and not make empty threats. Now you made me disinherited, so then so be it.*

– *But can't I change my mind? I want Nina to get the best.*

– Of course you can. But seriously, how much are you worth? Could it be 50 million?

– Around the sum I guess, or perhaps closer to 60 or 70.

– I have over 100 million in a bank account on the Earth, and the exchange rate is approximately 1:1. And it's growing every day. Do you think I need more money for Nina to get a good life? It's not that I think I'm too good for your money or so, but the money can certainly do more good here on Knimbo.

– Well, I've already donated it to charity when I die. Maybe I can let it remain so.

Añeďliká and her family were planning to go to a hotel, but Treïstán would not hear of it. Even if he had stayed at a hotel on Earth, it did not mean that they would do the same. They could get a whole wing in the mansion for themselves. Añeďliká was not so fond of the arrangement, but thought she was probably owe her father that. It would actually give Nina more opportunities to get to know her grandfather, and Añeďliká knew from her own experience that the park around the house was great fun to play in for a child.

~ ~ ~

Director Zeno felt somehow in the air that something extreme was going to happen. He could not put his thumb on why, the only meeting that had booked for the day was with a rookie who wanted to record an album at his record company. Nothing special at all.

Añeďliká swept into the room and took over the entire room with her very existence and her energy. She explained that Zeno would publish her records within a month, and he should be grateful for being selected! When he tried to protest, she promised to finance the entire production as a kind of advance on her income from record sales. Zeno was completely feeble by her energy and tried to say that it could be difficult to find musicians and studio time so quickly. She explained that she already had everything, and took out a memory card. You just have to produce covers and mass produce discs, she chirped. I've even got all promotional clips for newspapers, TV and radio here, ready to broadcast as is.

Zeno asked in a weak voice a recording technician and a promoter to come in to his office and together they went through the material. The Director must admit that the music was very catchy with the same time very exotic. It sounded like they played on acoustic instruments! The recording technician explained that amateur recordings are not good enough for distribution, but was soon convinced that the technical quality was of high studio level, and images and promotional videos were the same. Everything already seemed to be ready, the just had to press the button.

The director sank down in his chair and looked for a long time at the technician and the promoter when Añeďliká finally swept out of the door with her pink hair waving in the wind.

– *What just happened there, really*, he said with trembling voice. *Did I just sign a contract with a rookie who wants to decide everything?!?*

– *I don't think that*, the promoter replied. *It's impossible that she is a rookie. Didn't you notice her address? She lives at the same address as Treïstán Croëlño. It must be his daughter, right*?

– *Oh yes, it's her*, the technician remembered. *She's supposed to be a superstar on the planet Earth. No wonder we got completely run over.*

As usual, Añeďliká had no respect for people's position, so she called around to a lot of famous arena owners to book days for a concert on her tour. She got mostly what she wanted with them too. Finally she found four of the most talented musicians and booked an appointment with them. They got an offer to play on her concerts if they guaranteed that they would play just like she wanted. The salary would be 100,000 per person and there were 12 concerts booked. They had never played rock music, they only played classical music, so they all thought she was crazy and asked why she didn't asked rock musicians instead. But she said she thought they was much more skilled as musicians, especially as they were used to acoustic instruments. She called rock musician a little devaluating for "computer programmers" as they just programmed their instruments, not really played them. They listen to her music, and tested her instruments, and thought it felt pretty

good anyway. The musicians were totally overwhelmed by her energy and felt like winners after the meeting. Añeđliká had that effect on people.

The next few weeks were very intense for her. Everything had to be organized, trucks and buses had to be hired, hotels should be booked, the musicians should be tuned to sound the way she sounded on Earth, ads should be published and a lot of other things. Treïstán was getting really worried and thought that she would burn out before the first concert, but she loved when it was full speed ahead. Since Añeđliká was away so much, and Chris often went with her, Treïstán instead got a lot of chances to spend time with Nina, which suited him fine. Her shyness disappeared after a while and Treïstán just enjoyed being Grandpa. He knew that it was only for a short time, for both Nina and Chris would follow on the tour, and eventually they would all return to the Earth. So he took time off from most of his commitments and took the opportunity as long as the good things lasted.

One evening Nina sat and was drawing in front of the TV while Treïstán read a report he had to comment on when Nina suddenly pointed and shouted:

– *Look Grandpa, it's mom!*

She had become really good at talking knimbonian by now. Treïstán raised his head and looked at the screen. He had never seen the advertisement before. It showed a woman who was floating in the air and a voice saying:

"She's back. The conqueror of the planet Earth. Ruler of the arenas. She has landed. She is here in your city. In an arena near you. If you miss her, you will regret it! You have to see her! Angelica! Buy your ticket today! Now! Before someone else does it for you! "

The screen showed the woman with pink hair that landed in a cloud of smoke. Añeđliká's heavy, acoustic rock music boomed from the speakers. Even Treïstán was impressed though he had seen her before. She was not a little cocky in her advertising! If this didn't attract crowds then nothing would do it. Perhaps he had been wrong about her ability to break into Knimbos music world ...

~ ~ ~

Everyone left the tour bus and walked into the arena. It was with Añeđliká's standards quite small, could hold nearly five thousand. It was not totally sold out.

But Añeďliká was not worried, she had been expecting this. The concert was in itself a great success, even though it was not as well attended as she promised the musicians it would be. After the concert, it was a whole week to the next gig, and they also got to drive back with the buses a long distance. Why had Añeďliká booked the opening concert like this?

They got the answer while they were standing still for a few days in the larger city where they would have their second concert. All the newspapers were full of news about this new artist. The radio suddenly played her music and all the reviews gave her good reviews. There was even a broadcast in the television news in one of the planet's largest TV channels which showed a short film recorded at the concert. Mionk, who played drums, asked how TV could have been filming at the concert.

– *I gave them permission*, Añeďliká responded. *Free advertising, you know.*

– *Strange also that almost all the newspapers write about you.*

– *They were all specially invited, actually.*

– *Don't lie to us now! Not a chance that a newspaper will send a reporter to a concert just because the artist invites them! They are not that stupid.*

– *It was not me who invited them. I have lived in this town for almost a year, ten years ago, and contacted all my friends and acquaintances here. They were given free tickets if they tipped off newspapers and television about the concert. Since the tips were so many and came from such different places, then the press dared not to ignore it, but sent a reporter to overview the concert.*

– *You cunning woman, you had planned it from the beginning, right? That's why we played the first concert at that city.*

– *It was definitely my plan to attract visitors to the rest of the tour. I expect it to be full in this city.*

– *You're kidding, this stadium can hold over 12 000.*

– *I know. And?*

She was right. It was packed to the last place. The concert was absolutely magical and Añeđliká raged on in her usual, intense style where the audience did not get a chance to catch their breath between the songs. Normally at concerts on Knimbo they started very quiet and slow and then increase the pace gradually. But she went full steam ahead from the first chord and it took two hours before she calmed down a bit. Then she got the whole arena to sing with her and rock back and forth and then ended with even more heavy Earthly rock. The audience would not let her leave but shouting into her back on stage twice. The musicians were completely exhausted by the great response.

– *That's what it should look like*, Añeđliká chirped backstage afterwards.

– *Do you seriously mean that this is normal?*

– *Definitely. I normally lift the roof of the stadiums.*

The following day Añeđliká called from the bus to the areas ahead of them about how it looked with ticket sales. Most of them had been sold out by now, and she had not chosen the small places, so it was at least 10,000 per concert. At lunch break, she told the others about the ticket sale. Everyone was really excited to be allowed to be part of something this big.

– *Anyhow, I have been thinking about one thing about your salary. We all have binding contract that says how much you will get paid, some get more and some get less dependent on your job. But now that I know how talented you all are, and what success we do together I have decided to double the payment for each one of you from what is in the contracts. I have also you to thank for this success and is just appropriate that also will benefit from it.*

They all looked surprised. They felt that they already had a lot higher salary than they were used to, and now they would get twice as much! Añeđliká did this not just out of kindness, even if it was the main reason, but she had also become a very shrewd business woman on Earth. She knew how to motivate people to do an even better job. It was not the money itself that it was important for that. Instead,

it was the recognition they got from her on how valuable they were that made them all to put in even more effort in making the concerts. It worked, for everything flowed better, sounded better and looked better for every concert they held, and the crowd was even more enthusiastic and the press became even more lyrical.

After the tour Añeđliká returned to her father's residence to finally get some well deserved rest.

She didn't suspect that she would shortly write world history in Knimbo's rock world. This tour would would seem like a summer breeze in comparison.



CHAPTER 21

Grimja



After the tour, Añeđliká was exhausted and was planning to rest in her father's home. But she had barely gotten there until the communicator device called and Director Riëvan Crijano asked for her. It was Treïstán that took the call and he got real zealous, as Riëvan was Knimbo's biggest entertainment name and owned record companies, broadcasting companies, newspapers and had launched many international artists on Knimbo. In addition, he owned the planet's biggest music arena with room for 36 000 people, located in the country Grimja which was a big

island empire pretty far out at sea. “What can he want with my daughter”, he thought and left the handset to her.

– *Hello Riëvan, my friend. What can I do for you?*

Riëvan startled, as did Treïstán. Didn’t she have any respect? But Riëvan continued anyway.

– *I’ve read about your success on the mainland and want you to perform at my arena at Grimja. Sure, you want to do that?*

– *Maybe. I have to think a little bit and come back.*

– *Is there anything to consider? I can guarantee you 30,000 in the audience, probably more. Can you imagine how much money it will make?*

– *I do not sing for money. And there is so many thinks to fix if I should perform there. The musicians must have time, and sound and light and stage equipment not to speak about transporting all the equipment to an island in the middle of the ocean.*

– *Don’t be ridiculous! There are already both sound and light facilities here and people who can handle it. Probably also most of the instruments too, so you just have to come!*

– *OK, so you have light that can pulsate in different colors in sync with the music, strobic lighting, smoke machines and pyrotechnics? And analog drums and sound system that can handle analog amplifying? You don’t? Just digitally? So I’ll ask around and come back.*

It was just the rebel inside her that made her talk back to him. Naturally, she wanted to perform at Grimja, it was a dream of every knimbonian. The same applied to the musicians and stage workers. So she booked a luxury hotel at Grimja, flights for everyone including containers for the equipment.

~ ~ ~

They all arrived at the arena by lunchtime to prepare the stage and their equipment. Riëvan came in about one hour before the concert should start. He

wanted to discuss the details with Añeďliká. Chris and Mionk was standing nearby when Riëvan began to discuss with her.

– *I thought we could take care of some practical details, while there still is time. I need a list of all the musicians' names so I can introduce you all before you step on stage. So if you could...*

– *I will not have a presentation. I never have. Ever. I just enter the stage and starts rocking.*

– *Yes, but my rule is that I always presents the group that will perform.*

– *And my rule is that no one ever gets to present me.*

Riëvan became quite irritated.

– *Now this arena belongs to me, so I'm the one in charge! There's nothing you can do about it. If I want to introduce you, I will!*

– *Sure, sure, it's your choice whether to do it or not. But then it's my choice if I go on stage or not, and there's nothing you can do about that! And if you or anyone else introduces me, then I'll leave this area straight away. Then you can stand on the stage and introduce me all night if you want.*

Añeďliká turned her back to him and walked away. Riëvan stood and boiled with anger! Who was she to decide over him? The drummer said conciliatory:

– *Forget it, that's just the way she is.*

– *Are you taking her in defense?* Riëvan boiled.

– *No, absolutely not. But even if she's totally wrong, she's a rebel and does what she wants, and it doesn't help to yell or threaten her. Believe me, we tried!*

– *But I still can not imagine that she will just walk away! There are millions at stake. I cannot believe that she will just turn her back to all that money.*

Chris replied.

– *Well, her father, Treïstán Croëlño, said he would cut her out of his will if she walked away. And he meant it! She walked away anyway, saying goodbye to more than 50 millions of inheritance. So if I were you, I would not take a chance with anything. Just a little advice in all kindness.*

Riëvan mumbled and walked away. Then he met Bedjuta, one of the girls in the warming up band that asked when they would start playing. She also gave him a list with the names of everyone in the band for the presentation. Riëvan faded considerably. Damn! He had not told Añeđliká it was a band that would play first. Now he must locate her and get her to accept it. He found her busy unpacking some instruments.

– *Eeh, excuse me. I wanted to discuss how long the warming up band should play.*

– *Warming up band? You have not said anything about any other band! Are we here again and you think you can decide over me?*

– *We always have a band*, he began but realized it was the wrong approach. *It's more that they are already here and it would be a pity for them if they are not allowed to perform on stage.*

– *Yes, but then it's they who should speak to me directly, instead of sending a servant like you,* she replied, and walked away with the instruments.

Riëvan was trembling with anger, but realized it did not help. Instead he explained the problem to Bedjuta who with shaking knees looked up Añeđliká.

– *Well, ok, that is, excuse me, miss Añeđliká, sir. I'm from the warming up band...*

– *Well, I'm neither miss nor sir*, she smiled kindly. *Call me Añeđliká. You want to discuss your performance, I guess?*

– *Yes, Mr Riëvan said we might not get to play, because you do not allow...*

– *I just think it's fun to fuck a little bit with him, because he is so pompous. Don't worry, I'm not really dangerous. Just tell me how you want it.*

– *Well, we really want to be presented by him, but you do not want to be presented so maybe not. Maybe you want us to play for half an hour. Then we would love to finish with our latest song, "Vanja's Summer". But it is quite rocky so probably you would not like that we...*

– *Stop there,* Añeđliká interrupted*. Now, you said "you want" three times and are talking about me. I did not ask you what you think that I want you to do. I asked what YOU want. Be a rebel! Say what YOU want and ignore what I or the big shot wants!*

Bedjuta pulled some air into her chest and then slowly let it out. Maybe Añeđliká was not so dangerous after all!

– *Well then, I wish that Mr. Riëvan presents us, then I want us to start with a few slow songs to then escalate the pace and end up with our remixed, rocky version of "Vanjas Summer" and then finish after a half hour with maximum pace and leave the stage listening to the roar of the audience.*

– *It was a long sentence, did you breathe at all, there? So you are afraid that I do not like you to do that?*

Bedjuta nodded.

– *Then you're wrong. You do exactly what you want, it's only two rules. Firstly, we keep time. You go on exactly half past seven and goes off at eight o'clock sharp. Out of pure respect for our audience, we artists should keep time. Secondly no one presents me! You present yourselves the way you like, and when you're done, you just thank the audience, and leaves the stage. Is that OK?*

– *It will be great, thanks so much!*

Meanwhile Riëvan had been called to the entrance, where it was a total chaos! There appeared to be tens of thousands of young people there who were struggling to reach the counter. The cashier told him that it was already sold out, but plenty more wanted tickets and they began to get angry. Isn't it possible to plan for an extra concert? Riëvan felt as if the floor would swallow him whole. Did he have to confront Añeđliká a third time? He seriously began to be scared of her! She

had no respect, and one wrong word from him and she went home and left him with a sold out arena of people who would be furious and perhaps 10 000 more outside. They would crush his arena, his life's work. He saw inside his eyes how the nearly 50,000 furious fans took apart his area bit by bit, and burned the remains. With trembling knees, he looked up Añeďliká again.

– *I'm so sorry to bother you again, but we have a big problem. It is absolutely packed outside the arena of irritated youths...*

– *And you want me to chase them off?!?*

– *Not at all, not at all. It's just, if it would be possible, if it is not too difficult with your travel plans, that you might have an extra show tomorrow? I can put my secretary to rebook your tickets home a day later ...*

– *Extra Show? Tomorrow?*

She drilled her intense green eyes into his. He began to sweat and she relented a little. Maybe she started to go too far.

– *Let me see if it's that serious.*

Añeďliká went out to the entrance to see how bad it really was. She had never seen such much people before in a ticketing line! It said "Sold Out" on the sign over the cash register, but no one seemed to want to accept it. She climbed to everyone's surprise to the top of a container and wolf whistled so those who were closest thought their ears would burst.

– *Hello, pfft, shut up everyone. I have something to say!*

Some kind of silence was established.

– *I told golden boy Riëvan here that he must put up an extra show tomorrow. So all of you who want to check me out and have not got tickets yet, can come tomorrow instead. But don't stand here and scare the cashiers, but go home and buy tickets over the net instead. I personally guarantee that there will be tickets to anyone who wants, even if I have to run two extra shows!*

Riëvan sighed deeply with relief when everyone slowly started to walk away. He told his staff to open the sale to tomorrow's show.

~ ~ ~

The time was half past seven and Añeďliká poked Riëvan in his side to remind him that it was time to go out and present Bedjuta's band. He jumped two feet in the air and ran onto the stage. This evening he would never forget!

– *Ladies and gentlemen, I'm Riëvan Crijano and I own this arena. I have the pleasure to introduce the warming up band to ... today's show.*

He bit his tongue. He had almost said HER name. Instead, he presented the members of the band one by one as they walked onto the stage as they wanted and he ended with the band's name. They began very softly and quietly, clearly moved by the crowd in front of them. There were 36 000 people, totally insane! As they became warmed up they drove up the pace more and more. They played alldigital instruments with electronic music. Añeďliká thought it sounded quite good with rhythmic pounding from the electric drums. They finished as they wanted with their most famous song "Vanjas Summer" in a completely remade version with much more rhythm and heavy bass. They had never sounded so good, nor so heavy before. The 36,000 cheering fans created the best from everyone in the group. Exactly at eight o'clock Bedjuta thanked the audience and left the stage under thunderous cheers.

The same second they disappeared it started booming from the speakers. It was a sort of low frequency whining sound and the monitors started showing up psychedelic patterns that was almost hypnotizing. The light was dimmed and smoke began to fill the stage.

– *Nice act, really good*, Añeďliká said to Bedjuta and the rest of the band when they came off the stage. *I think you will probably go a long way. I hope you will also come to the extra show tomorrow, same time?*

Bedjuta thanked her but looked a little stressed out.

– *Sure we will be here tomorrow, but should not you go out on stage now?*

– *I do not go out on stages, I make an entrance*, she said with a smile.

And she was telling the truth. The whining went slowly into guitars, synthesizer and drums, all analog. No one had heard any similar music before, because all the rock groups on the planet played purely electronic music. The smoke was so dense now that the audience did not see any part of the stage, and Añeđliká went out behind the smoke. Suddenly, a bunch of pyrotechnic devices exploded in gigantic fountains and between these she appeared as if by magic with her guitar hanging low on her hips while she poured out her hard rock music. Unlike the music on Knimbo, her music was like a constant, thick rug of sound without pause. The light pulsed in phase with the music and the audience almost fell backwards in shock before it lifted in ecstasy. Riëvan who was standing on his balcony over the arena, almost fell down from the shock and Bedjuta jumped one feet in the air. That one, you could call an "entrance"! She understood why Añeđliká didn't want to be introduced, for this was a really memorable entrance.

As usual when she played she gave the audience no chance to catch their breath, but the songs floated into each other in a murderous pace. Bedjuta thought the band should run out of energy and collapse, but Añeđliká had planned the order of songs in such a way that the musicians sort of took turns to play, so they got a chance to rest during the performance. She herself trained daily so she was strong as a marathon runner and got sufficient rest when the musicians had solos. After an hour and a half everyone thought it would be the finished because it was written that on their tickets. But they had barely become warm in their clothes. The rock 'n' roll floated out from the stage continuously for two and a half hours straight. Then Añeđliká suddenly just said thank you and everyone left the stage. Riëvan thought it must be over now, but no one turned on the lights in the auditorium or opened any doors. Añeđliká had instructed them carefully not to do it, so no one wanted to leave yet.

After the fans had screamed, whistled and shouted for over five minutes Añeđliká went back on the stage again, alone. At the same time the giant monitor behind her changed and showed the flag of Child Aid. It was a global organization

for helping poor children, a bit like Save the Children on Earth. She turned and looked at the flag a few seconds and then turned to the audience again.

– *Maybe you wonder why we raise the Child Aid's flag. It's of course because it's so beautiful! But also because I've seen so many horrible things since I came back. This flag has meant great things like love, kindness, generosity, consideration – all those outdated stuff! I have seen so many empty, broken and looted collection boxes so today I do not know what it means, that flag behind me. Maybe it's greed, the desire of the rich to get richer or perhaps child slavery or even child prostitution... What do you think it means? It's probably up to us to decide what it will mean when we just are passing it while we spend all our money to buy stuff and go to concerts.*

The audience was first silenced from her emotional outburst, but then screamed in delight at the final touch. Añeđliká then played and sang a song about child poverty and the importance of helping, the same song she played at the charity gala on Earth but translated. The audience lit candles in the darkness, moved by the unaccustomed to hear a calm, soft voice with just her guitar as accompaniment. The stage was completely dark, only a single spotlight shone on her.

During the song, the group returned to the stage quietly. So when she continued with a soft and tender song of love for Chris and Nina they almost unnoticeable cut in after the first verse, and soon the stage was rocking again. Now, however, she alternated with several songs where she got the audience to sing along. She even went out in the audience herself in a sort of singalong to the guards despair. She hugged a few, gave "high five" to others. She had the audience completely in her hand! They clapped in pace when she clapped in the air, singing when she put her hand behind her ear and whistled when she wolf whistled. Riëvan had seen many artists come and go, but none that had 36,000 people so in their hands!

It was close to midnight and Riëvan started to wonder how long they would actually going to perform. The audience didn't seem to become tired and Añeđliká herself seemed completely inexhaustible. But as usual, she stopped exactly at midnight, presented all the musicians and choir, thanked everyone and finished the concert. Scene worker lit up the light and the guards at the doors opened them. But no one wanted to leave the arena, but the crowd continued shouting:

– *More, More, More! Angie, Angie, Angie!*

After ten minutes Añeďliká finally went in alone and kicked of three more songs unplugged, with just her guitar.

– *I could go on all night, but the guys in the band is behind the scene gasping for air... And my friend Riëvan begins to look as if he's going to pull me off the stage himself to avoid paying more overtime to the guards ... So thank you everyone, I love you! Bye!*

Finally the crowd started to go out in loud murmur. This concert would live on in their memory for life. It would actually be entered in Knimbo's music history for all time to come.

The next day everyone went sightseeing, went to spa, shops and other things to charge for the evening. Añeďliká and her family went to an amusement park that was very well known so that Nina also would have some fun. In the evening they repeated the success of the first evening in front of a nearly full house, even if this night was actually a few thousand unsold tickets. When they went home from Grimja the next day they were all completely exhausted by the whole experience of having played for over 69,000 people. This must be some kind of record!

"Time to end this journey and return home", she thought. Now I have done everything possible to make the Knimbo know who I really am. Now I really are going to rest!

She thought.



CHAPTER 22

No place like Home



After the mega concerts Añeďliká decided that it finally was time to get some well earned rest with her father. But again she deceived herself. A very famous host of a talk show had heard about her performance on Grimja and wanted to have her as a guest on his show. Then before she knew it, she was sitting in a TV sofa with one of the most famous persons on Knimbo. He asked lots of questions to her about her life on Earth, why she decided to stay there and why she had finally come back. She talked and talked until her throat was totally dry about everything

that had happen to her. She also explained that she was soon would going to go "home to Earth" as she put it.

– *But why did you really come to Knimbo?*

– *Firstly, I wanted to see my father again, and let him meet his granddaughter, my daughter Nina. Since I also wanted to make him proud, that's why I wanted to spread my music here as well, and hopefully make a name for myself here too. It seems as I managed to do that. I did not come here earlier, because I was not sure I could come home to Earth back then.*

– *You managed to make a awesome lot of money here too, there must also be a part of why you came here?*

– *No, not really. I did not play for money, but just because I think it is fantastic fun to perform on stage. There is nothing cooler than to be on stage in front of a cheering crowd of people. Of course I have earned a lot of money at the same time. Much of the money I have of course given to those who helped me, musicians and others and it actually costs a lot to put on shows like that.*

– *But what do you do with the rest of the money then. Bring it all back to Earth?*

– *No, I'm thinking about creating a fund here that works with charity. I have some thoughts on who could manage it too. But I will say no more now.*

~ ~ ~

As she walked through the door of her father's house Añeđliká decided that now nothing would prevent her from resting. Treïstán greeted her with the words:

– *My dear daughter, you know that I love you!*

Añeđliká immediately became worried. Normally he didn't speak like that to her!

– *I'm an important guest at a charity event tonight, and you would make me the proudest father on both Knimbo and Earth if you wanted to perform too. You have not forgotten that I showed up when you were at a gala on Earth. Isn't it your turn?*

– *I will probably not get to rest until I am on the spaceship back to Earth*, she replied, a little sour.

But that evening as she anyhow stood backstage and watched her father describing his 10percent club. He wanted all the rich persons who had more money than they needed should donate at least 10% of their surplus each year to charity. He had until now got almost 100 people to join, and asked through the television screen that more could join. He was getting very enthusiastic while talking for his cause, when he suddenly was startled by a flash of fire from the side. Añeđliká made as usual an entrance, instead of like Treïstán had believed just come onto the stage when he asked her. Rock music roared through the speakers and she pumped out one of her popular songs, but with prerecorded music. The crowd screamed in delight and Treïstán had to accept to end up in the background of his daughter. But he looked quite pleased. After the song, Añeđliká started to speak.

– *Hello! Are you all in the 10% club? Not? Wait a second, I have to make a call.*

Añeđliká lifted her phone and dialed a number. All stared at her without believing their eyes. This was not the right time to call someone! She held the phone to the microphone so everyone could hear who responded.

– *Hello, this is director Riëvan Crijano.*

– *Alright, hello Riëvan. This is Añeđliká, we met recently. Do you remember me? I'm standing here at a charity event that goes live across the planet.*

Riëvan got a shock. It was HER. He began to tremble again, but he was also looking at the gala on his TV and realized that the whole world could hear what he said.

– *Good afternoon, Miss Añeđliká*, he replied with a slightly trembling voice.

– *I was just wondering if you are a member of the 10% club, and if not, why not? You ought to be pretty tight?*

Riëvan froze. He was not involved in any charity! But my goodness, this went directly on the TV all over the planet! The entire production of the gala had also

frozen in shock. Who was this woman that had the nerve to call Knimbo's richest and most influential man in the live broadcast?

– *Uh, that is, I have not heard about this until tonight. Of course, I will also join it,*Riëvan managed to say at last.

– *Nice boy,* Añeđliká replied. *Then I will give your phone number to my father Treïstán so he can explain the details to you. Thanks for your contribution! Kisses and goodbye!*

The audience was enthusiastic and applauded warmly.

– *This should boost your little club*, Añeđliká said to her father. *For myself, I will not join your club, because I will go home to Earth very soon. But I have a pretty fat bank account here on Knimbo that I won't take home. So I've decided that I should start a fund here that I call Añeđliká's Children's Fund. The idea is that the fund will invest all the money I earned here, including what I will gain from my records. Then, the entire profit should go to the Child's Aid or similar organizations. I would guess that a good investor should be able to get to 10% profit every year, and with the money that I have today, it should be around 4 million per year.*

A murmur went through the crowd, followed by a round of applause that Añeđliká interrupted by turning to Treïstán.

– *Father, you are the most talented business man I know. Would you be willing to manage my fund?*

– *Nothing would make me prouder*, he replied.

The audience broke into an applause that was about to lift the roof when Treïstán and Añeđliká then left the scene.

– *You are crazy, Añeđliká* Treïstán said when they were on their way home. *To even get the idea to call Riëvan Crijano live and force him to join the 10percent club! I can't believe that you did that!*

– *I have no respect for authorities, you should have learned that by now. I don't think anyone is worth more just because he accumulated a lot of money or power. If Riëvan had treated me with respect from the beginning, I would have treated him with respect in return. But he behaved like a bully, so when I treat him accordingly.*

– *It is very wise words, indeed. One can obviously learn new things from their children as well. Where you serious about what you said back there about your fund that you want me to manage?*

– *I meant every word. What should I do with all my money here at Knimbo?*

Treïstán just became more and more proud of his daughter. He must have done something right, anyway, when he raised her. She had been everything he wanted, both clever, successful and caring.

~ ~ ~

Now Añeďliká decided that nothing, absolutely nothing at all would stop her from having her rest, even if Director Draëk himself would ask for a favor. Just imagine here feelings when the the phone rang on the way home from the gala. And it actually was Director Draëk! Luckily for him, he didn't want something from her, he just informed her that a spaceship was about to travel to Earth a few days later and he asked if she wanted to come along. "Shit" she thought. "I thought I was joking that I would said that I could not rest until in the space." Now she had to rush again! She started her fund, gave Treïstán full rights over it and her other accounts. Then she run around to a lot of shops to buy all things she wanted to take home and finally made sure the container with her equipment was loaded into the spacecraft.

The farewell from Treïstán was really emotional. This time there were no harsh words that were said, only words of love.

– *Thanks for all the hospitality*, Chris said. *Unfortunately, I can guarantee that we will never come here again. My wife does not want to admit it, but I felt her anxiety every night during the trip here.*

– Chris is unfortunately right. I have not gotten over the accident yet. Every sound makes me flinch and believe that it is the alarm that goes off. Again. But you are welcome to Earth at any time, father. My home is open to you for life!

– I understand that, it's OK. I'm so proud of you so I can live with that.

They all hugged each other again. Treïstán also said that it was not impossible that he showed up again. Who knows, when he retired, maybe he moved permanently to Earth? They all said goodbye to each other, and Treïstán got a real bear hug from Nina.

But also this time the trip went well, and the spaceship landed as routine at John F. Kennedy International Airport. Commander Laranjo Brix went along with Añeďliká and her family on the way to the door out of the spaceship. He remembered that the protocol demanded him to announce their arrival. So he picked up the phone that earlier expeditions had purchased on Earth and called the phone number of the official spokesperson.

– Hello, this is the United Nation's Official Spokesperson of Interplanetary Affairs, Añeďliká responded beside him.

– Yes, hello, sir. I am the commander of Space Expedition 457 from the planet Knimbo, and want to officially announce our arrival.

He had not noticed that it was Añeďliká that answered the phone.

– But who is that horrible woman with pink hair that goes next to you then? Does she have the right to come to Earth? We will not allow everyone to enter onto here! I have certainly not accepted it!

The captain looked around. Could the Spokesperson see him although he was speaking to her on this phone? Did they have cameras here? Where? How? He saw Chris and Nina who squirmed with laughter on the ground and Añeďliká with phone in her hand laughing at him.

– It is me who is the spokesperson, silly! Didn't you know? I'm calling to the Secretary and notifies that you landed.

The rest of the crew joined in the laughter and eventually the commander began to laugh as well.

~ ~ ~

Añeđliká certainly was not forgotten on Earth. She had been resting throughout the fourmonth trip, so now she wanted to get some action again. It was not long until she put up a concert again with her old group. She had invited the crew, and this time they all came and watched for a change. They had all heard about the concert on Grimja, so they did not want to miss this one. After the concert, she invited the whole group and the crew for a snack at a small intimate restaurant. Lisa from the choir only had eyes for the youngest crew member, Liënam.

Añeđliká looked for Lisa when she left the restaurant. Janne from the band told her that Lisa and Liënam had left early together. The had said something about "making the city". Añeđliká know that Lisa could take care of herself, so she was not worried. But she had to admit that she was quite surprised.

The next day Lisa called her and said she was going to follow the spaceship back to Knimbo, and that Liënam and she would marry each other. Añeđliká said that Lisa was crazy. How could she think that she could be happy on another planet, with a person from the alien planet. Interplanetary love, what did Lisa fantasize about? Then she looked at Chris and smiled inside. "I have been living so long time here on Earth that I have forgotten that I'm not born here". Instead, she wished Lisa good luck and went home to the apartment with Chris and Nina.

When she went to bed that night, she was still thinking about that Lisa, her very best friend in the Universe, would emigrate to Knimbo and try to create a new life. She wondered what adventures that Lisa would experience. Añeđliká thought back to everything that happened to her self the last ten years. First the terrible accident in the space, the rescue capsule and the horrific first days on Earth when she struggled to survive. She thought about Fiona and Frank and also Jennifer who all had a huge part in her survival and wishes to live. And now she was a famous rock star living in this luxury duplex apartment with an alien man and a halfbreed daughter.

Well, well Lisa's new life would become a completely different story. She crawled into bed and felt that life had really been good for her in the end. She looked happily at Nina who slept in the crib next to them and fell asleep on Chris arm with a smile.

Home is best, and this was home now and forever!



Intergalactic Law

§1 This law is valid for all beings of such intelligence that can understand the meaning of it.

§2 All beings mentioned under §1 is bound to follow this law in all interaction with beings from another planet than their's own.

§3 Violation of this law is a criminal offense and punishable in the first place on the home planet of the beings who violate it.

§4 At each arrival to and departure from a planet, the crew member are responsible for notifying the arrival to the planet's global authority's responsible for interplanetary affairs.

§5 Throughout the stay on a planet, then all the beings from a space expedition are bound by the local planet and/or local regional laws.

§6 Each space expedition should make their best possible effort to have the ability to understand and be able to communicate with beings on the planet in their own language.

§7 Trade with another planet is permitted provided that it is done bilaterally and not with only one region, race or tribe on the planet.

§8 Trade must be twoway so that both import and export is done with the planet.

§9 Deviation from §7 and / or §8 is allowed only if the planet's global authority responsible for interplanetary affairs approve it.

§10 It is not permissible to deliberately kill, injure or endanger any beings on the alien planet.

§11 No technology can be forwarded or submitted to the alien planet.

§12 No information may be disclosed to any single beings on the alien planet, if not all beings s can simultaneously access the same information.

§13 No single region, race, tribe or other group may be unilaterally supported.

§14 Exemption from §11, §12 and §13 is allowed only if it is clear that the exchange is of insignificant character.

Important persons

Añeđliká Croëlño Donson	The main character of the book, also called Angelica on Earth, which is also her stage name.
Christoffer (Chris) Donson	Husband and biggest fan of Añeđliká.
Treïstán Croëlño	Father of Añeđliká and huge business man on the planet Knimbo.
Fiona, Frank och Laura	The peasants that helps Añeđliká on her first arrival and their daughter.
Maria och Jennifer	Neighbor and her daughter that Añeđliká was babysitting.
Draëk V. Frensco	Director of the Space Board on planet Knimbo.
Juno Fring	Secretary of Draëk.
Stikkato Gronk	Commander on the first space expedition that lands on Earth.
Gimbo Ajenko	Commander on the second space expedition.
Vanja Grvano	Commander on the third space expedition.
Riëvan Crijano	Media mogul in Grimja on Knimbo.