



*CHRYS ROMEO*

*THE RAINBOW BRIDGE*

# THE RAINBOW BRIDGE

By Chrys Romeo

Copyright: Chrys Romeo 2013

Have you ever witnessed something that absolutely changed your view on the boundaries of reality? You know, something that would just short circuit your thoughts and beliefs, making you reconsider everything - like „WOW”, you know. And then you see it differently and just know better.

Well, it happened to me too. I was so sure there was not much ahead of me on one of those rainy days when you just stay inside and play online games or something. I'm the average teenager, you know, I spend time on the internet, I don't have patience to read books, I get enthusiastic really fast and I have idealistic beliefs about the people I like. I'm willing to find out about the miracles of life, often acting before I think twice and sometimes restlessly addicted to a virtual mirage of technology. Truth is, I'm not supposed to be a teenager anymore, but I still feel like one. I don't use „lol” and „xD” and „idk” and „xoxo” and „omg” or any of the other abbreviations, but I'm still online a lot. The problem is I don't run as much as I used to. Really run. I was such a good runner, but I gave it up. I used to enjoy the rush of the race, the cool flow of speed and the power that felt like flying above the ground. I still dream about it, on many nights. I don't know why I don't go running anymore. It was such a great way to spend my time. It was like going beyond time, to an eternal moment of being alive and powerful. Feeling strong and in shape, owning the paths like a king, going round and round through the parks in any weather, any day, anytime, with the hood on and no worry about anything. I think I don't believe in it as much as I did. So on one of those rainy days, when you only hear the drops of water on your window, it added to the fact that the storm had cut the power off for hours, so I couldn't even get online to play. A wire must have been loose somewhere, a branch of a tree falling – so the entire neighbourhood was left without electricity. The laptop battery went off too. I just stood there, watching the computer screen, as it stared at me in grey silence. And then it happened.

The screen lit up by itself. The power was off, but the light behind the translucent screen blinked alive. I checked the power, in bewilderment. It was still off. The room was half dark and silent. But the laptop screen was on. I touched the keyboards. No effect. But the light was on.

„What’s up with you?” I asked the laptop screen that seemed to stubbornly stay on and light my face in the darkness of that rainy day.

I didn’t expect it to answer. I knew it was just an object that malfunctioned in an unexplained way. You know how sometimes you talk to objects just to reason with your own thoughts. The screen didn’t reply. The only voice that went ahead with its permanent reminder was the soft water on the window, sometimes pleading sweetly, sometimes pouring and raging as if it wanted to get through the glass, throwing angry drops against it.

And then, the light of the screen blinked and fluttered, and I saw letters appearing on it.

„Hi. Hello.”

The words were waiting, before my eyes. I stared at them, not even beginning to believe they were for real. But they were real. And they were waiting for a reply. I couldn’t think of any explanation, so the only thing I could do was try to find out by going along with it, whatever it was that was happening. I touched the keyboards.

„Hi. Are you there?” I typed.

My reply aligned under the question. I didn’t know if anything more would happen.

Then another answer wrote itself on the screen, letter after letter appearing under my question, playfully making sense of the words:

“Yes, I’m here. And you’re there, aren’t you. “

I could almost see the words grin at me.

“Who’s this?” I typed again, expecting it to say something like “the spirit of the laptop”, or a program that had been installed on it and I knew nothing about.

“It’s just me. You can call me A.”

I tried to understand what it meant. I continued the dialogue. It still looked like a program with clever answers, though the fact that it worked without electricity, while the laptop battery had been empty for hours, was a big question mark in my mind.

“What do you mean A.? A. from what? “

“It’s just the first letter of the alphabet.”

“Yes, and there are many others. Why A.?”

“It’s my name, actually.”

“You have a name?”

“Of course. You have a name too, don’t you? What’s your name?”

I hesitated. My own laptop was asking my name. Or was it really someone beyond it? How could it be? Had the storm caused some unexplained phenomenon where I could talk to people on disconnected computers offline and without electricity? Or was it an alien? My mind lit up suddenly.

“Are you an alien? Is A. from Alien? You’re an alien, right?”

I had always wanted to see an alien – possibly meet one. I felt so enthusiastic at the probability ahead of me. There it was, before my eyes: an alien, talking to me...

Letters appeared again on the screen.

“I’m not an alien, I’m a girl.”

I waited. Could it have been just a girl talking to me?

The row of letters continued to expand.

“My name is Ariel. What’s yours?”

I thought for a while. If that was really a girl who had found a connection to my computer offline, it was still an unusual phenomenon. I decided to go on with it. Her question was waiting, in tense silence. I typed slowly.

“My name is Ben.”

And then I waited. She seemed to think. Then, the subtle grin seemed to glow from beyond the screen once again.

“Ben 10 like the cartoon series?”

“No, just Ben.”

I continued:

“I’m not a cartoon. I’m really writing on a laptop now. What about you? The little mermaid? Ariel and other stories?”

“Ha ha, very funny. I’m not a fairy tale either.”

“How old are you, anyway?” it occurred to me to ask, considering the cartoon reference.

“I’m twelve.”

“Oh, great. It figures.”

I smiled. So, a twelve year old had found me on that rainy day, when computers were offline...

“What about you?” she asked me. “How old are you? You’re a teenager, right?”

“I wish I were still a teenager, but I’m more than that now.”

Other letters quickly aligned on the screen:

“And you wish you were still running around the park, right?”

I stared at the words and their mysterious meaning.

“How do you know about that?” I asked her in disbelief.

Something odd and surreal had taken over the conversation again: something unexplained, like the rain and the offline computer that was functioning by itself. Maybe it was still a program that was answering me – but how could it read my mind?

“I know because... I know more than you think.”

“About me?”

“Yes.”

“Are you reading my mind?”

“Not exactly. But the things you wish for are reflected over here so obviously, like a 3 D projection. I can’t explain it to you. You’d have to see it to understand. It’s because we are connected.”

“Are you a program on my computer?”

“I told you I’m a girl. Don’t insult me. My name is Ariel.”

“Ok, fine. You’re Ariel. What about my computer? Why is it working while it’s offline and disconnected from power too?”

“Don’t ask me about that, it’s not my fault. Maybe we got connected by the storm because we have something in common. Maybe it’s because you still feel like a teenager. Or maybe it’s possible to talk just because I’m from another world than you and what you know doesn’t apply here anymore. I don’t know.”

I stared at what she had said, wondering whether to believe it or not. She was twelve anyway; she could have been inventing scenarios.

“What do you mean you’re from another world? What world is that? Where do you live?”

“I’m from another side of the universe, a parallel world that can look into yours. But you can’t see us, unless...”

“Unless what?”

I still didn’t believe her entirely. Another side of the universe? Yeah, right. I had heard the idea with a parallel universe so many times, I had seen science fiction movies about it and I was not excluding the possibility it could be real, but for it to appear on my offline screen, on that rainy day... it was a bit too much at that moment.

“You could see us if you look at the end of the rainbow. It has to be a double rainbow, though. Maybe that’s why we’re meeting now: it’s a rainy day. If you go outside and see a rainbow...”

“It’s too dark for a rainbow now - it’s evening”, I told her. “Besides, what’s this story with the rainbow?”

“We are children of the rainbow. Haven’t you heard of us?”

“Yeah, and there’s a pot of gold and a green elf right there too.”

I smiled.

“Ha ha, no”, she replied. “It’s not like that. But I like you.”

“You like me.”

“Yes, I kind of like you already.”

“What’s that got to do with anything?” I said.

She was silent. I thought for a while. Then I typed again.

“Listen, you’re twelve and I like to play, but this is not a fairy tale and I’m not a kid anymore, so – “

“Nah, you’re still a Peter Pan to me.”

Her reply was just as unexpected as the rest of it. And it had some truth to it.

I decided to just keep talking to her for a while. What was the harm in that anyway? The possibility of something unusual and interesting being there, beyond reality, was taking over my thoughts. I ran my hands on the keyboard again.

“Fine. Tell me more about this world you live in. I might be crazy enough to believe it.”

She didn’t hesitate to reply.

“It’s good to be crazy sometimes, if you get to see so much that others don’t.”

She was direct and fast, but her answers were too elaborate for a computer program – and she had already surprised me with what she knew.

“So how do you see what I wish for anyway?” I asked her.

“I just do, I told you. It appears like a vision in the sky. What about you? Do you see what I wish for?”

I looked out the dark window. I could only see the rain sliding on glass and a shadow of my own reflection.

“No. I only see the rain.”

“Well, you’re right. Guess what I wish for?”

“What?”

“I want to be kissed in the rain.”

I stared at her words. She was bold, for sure. I realized twelve year olds might be like that: ignore consequences, take chances, say what they want and have romantic fantasies about older boys. I figured I shouldn’t say anything to her about that wish. She was twelve. I wasn’t.



“Did you read my message?” she asked me.

“Yes, I did.”

“And?”

“And what? “

“Do you think it’s a mistake? To wish for something like that?”

“It’s your wish, you have a right to it.”

“Well, thank you for understanding...”

I thought about it. A twelve year old confessing her fantasy to me on that rainy summer afternoon was certainly better than nothing. But a question remained on my mind: was she really from another world?

“So how do I get to see this world you live in?” I typed.

She started to write a longer paragraph, glowing in the dark.

“There’s another possibility, besides the rainbow, to see the bridge to my parallel world. But you must be in motion, because your world is too rigid and you can only get beyond its boundaries when you go from one place to another, when you are in transition, passing from a reference point to the next, when you are nowhere exactly and above everything – that’s when you can see the bridge to us - the real picture of what is beyond the surface of what is real.”

“It sounds complicated.”

“It’s not, actually. It’s not as simple as it seems, but it’s not difficult either. It’s not impossible. You just have to be in motion, to keep going. And to keep believing while you do it. That’s the energy of life. Like, for instance, when you’re running.”

“But I don’t run anymore.”

“Try it.”

“No. I can’t.”

“Why not? Is there a problem with your speed? Your breathing? Your bones? What?”

“No, it’s just in my mind. I don’t do that anymore. I don’t see the point.”

The screen went silent for a while. I kept thinking. The room was getting darker. It was already night outside. I stared at the light of the laptop, running through my thoughts. The dialogue was melting away softly, subtly disappearing and leaving the screen empty.

“Are you still there?” I typed when I saw the square light washed out of letters.

“Yes.”

“Are you still Ariel?”

“Yes. And you are still Ben 10. The boy who forgot to run.”

I could see the grinning light again, blinking beyond the disconnected laptop. She was there, for sure...

“Hey, Ariel. How are we going to keep this dialogue going? I’m off on vacation in a few days.”

“How will you travel?”

“By train.”

“The train is in motion, right?”

My eyes lit up suddenly. I typed quickly:

“Is it possible to see you on the train?”

“Yup. That’s one way, it could happen. Look out the window, when you get there. And take your laptop with you.”

“See you there.”

“See you on the other side!”

The light suddenly went off. There was lightning outside, filling the room with electric blue trembling shadows. Then, darkness took over the screen.

\*

While I was on the train, I stared at the mature and reasonably limited people around me. None of them would have understood I was there looking for a bridge

to a parallel world, while a twelve year old had recently become my virtual best friend, from a disconnected computer. I just stared out the window, with my headphones on and the laptop on my knees. I was waiting for something unusual to happen, but as the train was gaining speed, the view outside just flashed by without any sign that reality was about to change. I was looking at the sky, waiting for a bridge to show up – yet, nothing hurried to appear. Clouds and sunset rays wandered uncertainly above hills and trees. Soon, it was evening again.

The people on the train started falling asleep. The seat in front of me was empty. I kept expecting Ariel to show up there. I opened the laptop and stared at the screen. Still no sign of her.

Closer to midnight, the door of the compartment flipped open and I saw a girl coming in. She was not very tall, she looked like a teenager, but she was certainly more than twelve. She looked at least sixteen or could have been twenty. As she had Asian eyes, her appearance was just ageless. She had a red hood on her head and she sat right in front of me, on the empty seat. She smiled subtly and her chocolate eyes reached me like a mysterious affirmation. I had the feeling she was reading my thoughts, as I was wondering what she was up to. She looked at me as if she had seen me before. She took something out of her bag, delicately unfolding a white metal object.

“Good evening”, she told me in a friendly voice, pleasantly lowering to a whisper, not to awaken the other passengers. “Could I present something to you, maybe you are interested to see our latest gadget.”

She held up the white metal object. Unfolded, it looked like a robot with a round head.

“Is that a robot?” I asked her.

“Yes, it is. But it’s more than that. It has so many functions. It can play music, for instance.”

I placed the laptop aside of me, leaning forward to get a better glimpse at the robot.

“But you see, I told her, I already have an mp3 - I can play my music just fine.”

I showed her my headphones. She smiled and her eyes flickered charmingly with hidden sparks, beyond the red hood.

“Yeah, but this robot is better. It’s automatic.”

She continued, content to see my surprised look:

“And if you want, it can do more than play music. It can guess what you like to hear and choose the songs for you.”

“This sounds like very advanced technology”.

“It is. It’s a Tokyo brand. It’s top secret right now.”

“And you’re presenting it to me on the train...”

She glanced at me sideways, as if she was my accomplice to something secret.

“If you want to buy it, you can. This robot will make you coffee in the morning, a special kind with hazel flavor. It will record your dreams and show them to you when you wake up and forget. It will wash the dishes for you and play your favorite music while making you a cup of hot chocolate. It will talk to you and guess your wishes.”

I stared at her. She seemed serious about it, but her smile made me wonder if there was more meaning behind her words.

“What’s your name?” I asked her. “Are you Ariel?”

“Do I look like an Ariel?” she seemed amused. “No, I’m Heidi”

“That’s not a Japanese name.”

“I’m multilingual and multicultural...”

She seemed to have an answer to everything, calmly observing me with an amused expression. She didn’t seem much like a twelve year old. She had more deliberate thoughts and she was too mysterious for that. She was leaning on the plushy train seat, relaxed and warmly holding the robot in her arms as if it was a puppy or a teddy bear.

“Is the name of the robot Ariel?” I tried again.

“No, but you can name it whichever way you want.”

“And it’s from Tokyo?”

“Exactly.”

She was waiting for my decision: to buy or not to buy a multifunctional robot.

“I don’t know”, I said. “I’d rather share it with you tomorrow morning for that special coffee...”

“You can think about it. I’ll be on the train for a longer while.”

She folded back the robot and hid it in her bag. She stood up and, before closing the door, her eyelashes winked at me while her chocolate eyes were glimmering intensely:

“Coffee would be good tomorrow morning. In the meantime, if you want to see a bridge beyond the window, turn on the light in here”, she told me.

Her head disappeared beyond the door.

“Hey!” I said calling her back, suddenly hit by an idea.

Her head appeared again from beyond the door. She kept smiling subtly, as if she was planning a childish trick. Her polished colorful nails were tapping on the plastic frame of the door.

“What?”

“You said there’s a bridge beyond the window. So I turn on the lights. And then what?”

“Wait and see.”

“Do you know about the rainbow children?”

“Possibly.”

“Are you one of them?”

She took a pair of sunglasses from her bag and hid her eyes behind the shades.

She looked even more mysterious now. She grinned slightly, with the corner of her delicate mouth.

“I might be”, she said.

“Do you have superpowers or something? Like read thoughts or fly or turn into a bunch of rays of light?”

“Do you think people should do that?”

“It would be great, wouldn’t it? Can you do that?”

“My robot could.”

She laughed to herself.

“And people will be able to do that, in like five thousand years or something...”

She stood there in the doorway, in the dim lights of the train compartment. She seemed real enough to me, even though what she was saying went beyond reality. I wondered if the sleeping people had heard anything from our conversation – and would they believe it? Not for a second.

“Okay Heidi”, I said eventually. “I’ll look out for that bridge you mentioned.”

“See you next station”, she said and I saw a flicker of her red hood disappear beyond the door.

And then, silence. I was alone with the sleeping people in the compartment. It was as if they were under a spell, they were sleeping so deeply. I got up and looked for a light switch. I found it by the window and turned on the light. It was a small light bulb near the small coffee table that was pinned to the train floor. As soon as the light went on, I could see a reflection of the train outside the window. You know, when it’s night and there’s light inside a room, you can see a parallel vision beyond the glass. Right then, I could see the train running parallel with me, it was as if another train was going the same way – only it was dimmer and ghostly, flickering through the shadows of the trees by the railway tracks. I expected to see something different, but I only saw the train.

And then, suddenly, there it was: the image of two shadows on the train, running along, holding hands, with their faces against the current and their hair fluttering in the night chill. I stared at them, trying to see if they were a reflection or just an illusion. I knew if I opened the window, the image would disappear,

since it was there only because of the glass. Yet, I suddenly heard steps running on the roof of the train that was turning towards a tunnel in full speed. I thought it would be dangerous for them to be up there running on the train, if they actually were. They looked like two girls, one with black spiked hair and one with reddish long curly locks. They had only t-shirts, shorts and sneakers on, they must have been cold up on the train, but they didn't care. I realized their steps on the roof made them as real as they could possibly be, so I opened the window and I stuck my head outside, climbing on the ledge of the coffee table, to get a glimpse at the train roof.

I saw their silhouettes above and their sneakers, near the edge. They had paused to tie the laces of their shoes. The train was approaching a dark tunnel, rushing through the night.

“Hey!” I yelled at them.

They turned their heads to look at me attentively.

“What are you doing up there?” I asked them.

“Running”, the black haired answered me boldly and without hesitation. “What you forgot to do”, she added and I just remained there, staring at them in bewilderment, while the cold air of the night was freezing my hands.

They were teenagers, fourteen or sixteen at most.

“You could fall, it's dangerous to run like that on the train”, I told them. “The guardians will call your parents about it”.

“They're not gonna get us”, they answered.

My arms were slipping off the ledge of the window, but I kept hanging on.

“Who are you? Are you rainbow children?” I asked them, shouting against the rumbling noise of the metal wheels.

“We are Night and Day. And we are here to remind you about the bridge. “

“What bridge?”

“At the beginning.”

“What beginning?”

“The beginning of the rainbow. That's where you are too.”

“What do you mean that’s where I am? I am right here!” I shouted but they started to run again and jumped from one roof top to another and disappeared in the dark.

“Can’t you just talk to me for a while?” I yelled after them and I heard their voices like echoes from the distance:

“No, we can’t! Things are never the same from one second to another, and we must keep going ahead.”

The train went into the tunnel.

I had to get back in the compartment and I closed the window. I was sure, somehow, that the two teenagers would be just fine, on their own.

I sat down and opened the laptop. Still no sign of Ariel. And then, my mobile phone rang its message tone. I switched it on and saw a text on its small screen: “Are you on the train yet? A.”

I smiled. Finally, she had discovered another way to get connected. I wondered how she knew my number, though. But I remembered anything was possible as long as things were moving...

“I’m on the train, waiting to see the bridge. Where are you A.?” I replied.

I waited for another message. It came fast:

“By the bridge, of course.”

“How do I get there?”

I hit send. A few more seconds and she replied again:

“You are there now. You just don’t see it.”

“How do I get to see it?”

“I don’t know. You have to figure it out yourself.”

“I met some rainbow children. They said I’m at the beginning of the rainbow. What did they mean?”

“They meant your true self is halfway in our world, because you are already projecting your wishes in our sky over here. That’s the beginning of the rainbow in our world. And once you start to see it, you will be able to get back to your true self that knew how to run. And you will run again - and you will be forever



able to see us. But you must find the bridge. Then, our worlds won't be separated anymore."

The phone went silent after that. I waited for another message, but it didn't come. And I couldn't contact her in any way. She had to be the one to find me.

I rested my head on the plushy seat. I checked my watch: 2 a.m. People were still sleeping. I turned off the light above the coffee table. I closed my eyes, and just as I was about to fall into a dreamy state, while the headphones were purring their music, the door screeched open again.

Tokyo Heidi reappeared, with her subtle smile and deep mysteriously gleaming eyes that gave me a fuzzy feeling whenever they were turned towards me. This time, she didn't have a bag. She had a camera and she sat in front of me again.

"Hey", she said softly, not willing to awaken the others, but distinct enough for me to hear her voice.

She looked straight to my eyes.

"Hey", I answered and I smiled at her and her red fluffy hood.

"Have you seen the bridge?" she asked me.

"Not yet. But I've seen some rainbow children instead..."

I felt as if there was no need for speaking in riddles anymore: we could be honest with each other – and I was sure she had plenty of her own secrets that were from another world. We stared at each other, relaxed and contemplating, in the dim light of the room.

"So... have you come to present something else? Where's the robot?" I asked her casually.

"You can have the robot if you like. It's not about the money, it's a promotional sample. I'll give it to you if you wish... tomorrow morning. However, there's something else indeed that I have come to show you – but it's actually your turn to tell me about it."

"I don't understand."

She handed me the camera.

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

