

ELIZA WITTE

**STAR**

## I.

A new star was born. A star like no other. A star that was to change the entire meaning of life as we know it, but for now was just about to be punished. I felt sorry for her, imagining her freckled face, as if the entire Milky Way was painted upon it; her fire-gold curly hair which she had the habit of wrapping around her finger when she felt annoyed, sad or when she just didn't have the things her way and those big puppy eyes that no matter what she did would always let her play with fire without getting burnt. I knew that it was going to be a hard talk. Yet, it was something I would simply have to do. For her mere one hundred years of existence, she would always readily indulge in using The World Information Center to observe the humans. Now, she was in the library again while I was rushing through the corridors wondering how to save her ass this time.

'I knew I would find you here,' I said when I finally came in, breathless. She was staring at the informational space, as usual and was rather indifferent to anything else.

'Hello, Electra<sup>1</sup>! What's the matter?'

'What's the matter?' I was really beside myself, 'You missed the choir again. That's the matter. Senior Sargas 212 said that it was for the third time this week that you had missed it. They are going to kick you out. If they don't make you a shooting star, they'll demote you to an asteroid for sure.'

The choir had been supporting the balance of the universe for eons. It was in the prescription of the Purpose of Meaning that stars were to sing. The universe needed music just like any other living soul. Yes, but my little friend had a very serious counter-argument.

'Music? You call this music? This ain't no music. It's entertainment for pensioners.'

By now I should have seen clearly that in the case of Ankaa's<sup>3</sup>, chatting, behaving and imitating humans, and this included also their speech patterns, exceeded the level of the usual fun and had entered into the level of a slight obsession. However, Ankaa, herself, had so much more in store for me, 'Why can't our music be like the humans' music? Look, Aerosmith got a new album and it's brilliant. I can let you listen a bit if you want.'

---

<sup>1</sup> Electra: **Astronomical Name:** 17 Tauri; **Derivation:** *Greek:* a Pleiade, a daughter of Atlas and Pleione; **Constellation:** Taurus

<sup>2</sup> Sargas (Girtab) **Astronomical Name:** Theta Scorpii **Derivation:** *Sumerian:* 'the great smasher' **Constellation:** Scorpius

<sup>3</sup> Ankaa (Nair al Zaurak') - **Astronomical Name:** Alpha Phoenicis **Derivation:** *Arabic:* 'Phoenix' (*Arabic:* 'the bright one of the boat') **Constellation:** Phoenix

And before I managed to object, Ankaa forwarded all the power of her mind to me and I was about to explode by the sounds that thundered in my head. She was ecstatic. I was shocked. It was time for a serious talk.

'Turn that down and listen up! Look, you can't consider only what humans do down there. You are a star and have to care about your own stuff. If you are a good star, they'll make you a guiding star to a human one day and you will take care of them as long as they live.'

'Oh, yeah? And this will happen exactly in three or four hundred years when I'll be an annoying old piece of junk - useless and fat!' She yelled at me.

'Nonsense!' I yelled back, 'You know that stars don't get old so easily. Look, you are spending too much time thinking about the humans. They are there, we are here. They have their work and studies, and so do we!'

'But they learn many more interesting things! They work and study, it's true but they also have the power to choose, they entertain themselves. They enjoy so many different kinds of food. Do you know what the BigMac tastes like?'

'No.' I had to admit defeat.

'So I thought. And us? We have to sing! This and this only! Why? Why do I have to sing? What... if I have no talent for singing?'

What was interesting about Ankaa was that she always had her own truth. Truth is a universal term to define a well-known or established fact. However, she always seemed to pick the part of the truth that suited her best, which was quite incredible because by doing so she never changed the truth itself or its nature. So, if by now we had been having this conversation for the sake of the argument itself, I knew I was to tread into dangerous waters from that moment on. What was worse – I didn't know how to avoid it.

'You are a STAR! You are endowed by nature,' I said quietly.

Ankaa erupted, 'Endowed!? No, I'll show you who really is gifted!' And she visualized a well known face. A face we talked so often about. I guess that the reason we actually became friends was that I was willing to listen about... Stuart Reynolds - a charismatic, dark-haired human; the slightly mad genius for whom, according to Ankaa, the most special place in the Universe should have been reserved. If I was to estimate his age in human years I'd say he was in his late-20s now but naturally this is ridiculous since the only souls who take time for the reality are the humans. For every intelligent being this is only relative but only try to explain this to Ankaa, who by the way, had continued to fury.

'HE makes music! When HE sings... light comes out! Yes, light! And... Everything turns into blue... and then white... and suddenly you are into it all... and it's getting so

wonderfully warm. Maybe that's why people cry when he sings... but I haven't figured out yet why they get sad?'

'They don't get sad. They just cry out of happiness.'

'Nonsense! That's what's written in the Purpose of Meaning but I don't believe it.'

She re-grouped her energy and Stuart's face disappeared but she let one of his songs play on instead. It is always like that when you want something from the World Information Center. You can take it the very moment you want it and you leave it when you don't need it anymore but the consumed remains are in fact what shapes the hell (or the black holes as they are better known to us).

'Don't you like this song now? Tell me!' She went on. I just looked at her disapprovingly and... all of the sudden she got so sad, as if the entire world's chagrin had fallen upon her. At this moment I truly regretted having started the whole argument. What did I want? She was so young. I only tried to fix up things, 'Hey, your friend's really good.'

'Yeah?' She had already switched to the dream mode. She was there talking to me but all her heart and mind were flickering somewhere far away from here... around Stuart Reynolds. I tried to get back to business, 'Yeah, but you have to come with me now.'

'Let me just check his configuration for tomorrow, please!' Ankaa said impatiently.

The configuration was something like a forecast that had the humans dependant on a certain situation in order to keep the balance between them and other souls they didn't even suspect they existed – for instance, us. In front of Ankaa's face a light hologram shape of the Mercury symbol started to materialize. Very quickly she also evoked with the power of her mind Saturn, Orion, Cassiopeia, Neptune and other symbols. Obviously she had been doing this pretty often because the matter was a heavy task even for a big star and my little friend was handling it with ease. The configuration started to shape while every symbol was searching for its own place within a glowing circle in mild blue and red colors. Pluto, Moons, Haumea, Suns... Ankaa suddenly cried out, 'HE'LL BURN OUT TOMORROW?'

'He'll become a star tomorrow. When somebody leaves the Earth he becomes a brighter star in another dimension.'

She wasn't listening at all. And yes, we were there with the lock of golden hair around her finger. She kept on staring at the configuration giving howls from time to time of something between anger, rage, sadness and strong disagreement. If the singing of the stars had kept the balance of the universe for ages, these howls had just ruined the work that had been done for the last half a century. She just kept on tapping angrily with her bare foot clearly at a loss on what to tackle next. Gradually the howls

lessened in number and at last they came to a stop. She was still staring at the hologram in front of her but she was silent. And this silence was maddening. I didn't dare to move. All of a sudden, Ankaa said, 'I have to see The Boss! At once!'

And before I was able to even blink, she had gone. Didn't I know she was exactly 100 years old and thus too young, I would have sworn this was a declining meteor that had passed me by.

## II

Later on, when I talked with her again, she related to me how the conversation with the Boss had passed. I was sure that if I were her, telling the things she said and behaving like she did, I would have been turned into the most miserable creature in our galaxy and even in the next one as a punishment. However... did I mention her puppy eyes?

'Approach, Alpha Phoenicis!' The voice of the Boss thundered, 'I know why you are here and...'

'Do you?'

Rule Number One: You DO NOT interrupt the Boss. He is the source of ultimate wisdom and you are only supposed to listen to Him.

'Of course, I do.' Here the Boss laughed. (Nobody had ever heard him laughing for real, at least nobody among my friends, and as you know they are in the millions. There had always been an ongoing dispute – does the Boss have a sense of humor at all? Some very old stars, however, claimed they saw the static electricity that was supposed to come with it. Legend had it that this phenomenon occurred ONLY when He laughed with all His heart.) He continued, 'I thought you'd have asked for forgiveness first.'

'Forgiveness? Ah, yes – the choir! Yes, I'll ask for nothing but forgiveness, of course, but there are more important matters-at-hand now...'

Rule Number Two: You DO NOT argue with the Boss because... he is the source of ultimate wisdom and you are supposed to only listen to Him.

It WAS the static electricity in question that beamed all around in the Secret Space that made Ankaa apologize after all but I doubt she would have done it, had she known what it was all about. When all was quiet again, the Boss continued, 'Let's talk about business now. What about Stuart?'

'You really know your stuff!'

Rule Number Three: NEVER question the powers of the Boss! Yet, Ankaa continued with no further ado, 'Stuart's going to burn out tomorrow.'

'And why does this worry you so much?' The Boss asked.

'Because he is going to die.'

'You know that there is no such thing as death, Alpha Phoenicis! Nothing in nature gets lost; it only changes its shape. He will become a star in the sky and he will sing again.'

'That's the point.' What Anka didn't know, yet was that the Boss could have had all his reasons to banish her to a black hole practically forever for breaching Rule Number One, to turn her into ashes for breaching Rule Number Two and to send her hurtling to the sea because of Rule Number Three, so she continued with Rule Number Four – to dispute a decision taken to keep the entire balance of the universe – 'I don't want him to sing,' She went on, 'I mean, I don't want him to sing like us. He is not a star! I mean he is but...at the same time, he isn't! O-o-o-oh, this is so complicated!' The static electricity beamed again but this time Ankaa didn't seem to be really shocked. She kept on waging her own war.

'He sings very well already. Otherwise, he'll sing just like us,' she said.

'And what's so wrong with him singing just like you?' The Boss asked, 'On the other hand, come to think of it, he might not be a star at all. He might be left down there for another earthly transformation as I'd heard some things about drugs and a car accident.'

'Oh, no! You are NOT leaving him there!'

'Are you correcting my actions?'

I had the nerve to listen just up to this part of the story. I had to go out, to cross several moons just to cool down before I went back to Ankaa to listen again to how actually the conversation would end. She was waiting for me on the swing, looking rather anxious as if solving a problem of the 98<sup>th</sup> dimension. The truth was, she simply couldn't see anything wrong in her behavior and for her MINE – running to the moons and back - was the one thing that was totally illogical. In fact, afterwards, the Boss showered her with a portion of His wisdom telling her that Stuart had been loved by too many souls because of his music and that's why it was unlikely for him just to be left for a transformation after all. However the Boss absolutely disagreed to cancel the burning-out. According to Him, Stuart was throwing away a precious gift – his life over the drugs. He had been trying systematically to ruin himself and he had succeeded in it. 'Almost succeeded' was Ankaa's answer, which made the little hairs behind my neck stand up again. Then Ankaa expressed The Boss's next reaction as 'getting mad', which was almost a contradiction in terms as souls get mad ONLY when they cannot take in the Boss's wisdom. To say about the Boss that he got mad meant that you were just one inch from a total extirpation.

'He had everything with regards to the Earth order,' thundered the Boss, 'He was rich, he was famous and the world was at his feet.' However, Ankaa was not someone to be yelled at without yelling back in return, 'The Earth order! Nobody cares about the Earth order. Even the Earthlings don't care about the Earth order. What about the Universal order? What if he didn't have something from the Universal order and he missed it. If He missed it badly even!'

(Oh, my!)

'The Universe graced him with talent and that's the most he could get from the Universal order.'

'But in the Purpose of Meaning it is said that love is... Oh, my God!'

'No need to shout. I'm here!'

'He might have had everything but love! I mean, he had his fans, and this Dian-girl, but she's so wrong for him, and... Make me into a girl!'

It was true that I had bitten all my nails while listening to Ankaa's story and even now, I just get sick when I think of all the nerves this cost me to listen to her. Empathy is a strange thing but even now I can imagine her voice and her dreamy freckled face with one naughty flames-gold lock on her brow, standing there quite alone barefooted and thus fragile and absolutely helpless in front of the ultimate power, answering to His question - Why should He make her into a girl?

'Because he is unique. Because he is more unique than other people and because... I love him.'

### III

Bellatrix<sup>4</sup> and Pollux<sup>5</sup> had already gathered around Ankaa in the garden when I arrived after the choir. Needless to say, Ankaa missed it again but this time the Choir Master – Sargas didn't even bother to get angry. It had become known that Ankaa was to travel and this was the reason for a lot of gossip and speculation that even Sargas gladly took a part in, as Ankaa was only too young. The last star to go on such a trip had been authorized over 50 years ago. This was a small asteroid named B612 and his owner, approximately at Ankaa's age, was allowed to visit Earth because first, he was known to be of noble origin owning some volcanoes, and second, he also owned a very special

---

<sup>4</sup> Bellatrix - Gamma Orionis - *Latin*: 'the female warrior' - Orion

<sup>5</sup> Pollux - Beta Geminorum - *Greek*: immortal Gemini twin brother - Gemini

biological species – a flower, which was considered to have come exactly from the Earth. Given that his mission was rather exploring.

The crowd around Ankaa was gradually becoming bigger. They were all eager to hear the details and started after her when she finally got off from the swing and headed for a walk, as we had initially thought. The stars were whispering to each other excitedly and all of them were trying to get closer to her in order to hear her words. She, as usual, was willing to talk and it was one of those moments when she felt she was at her zenith. Once she shared with me that if she could be the only one to talk and the entire Universe to listen to her, she'd be the happiest soul in the world. So she went on, 'I'll have to prepare myself fast before I go down there. The Boss will prepare things for me. I guess the way He does it here. I'll have everything the Earthlings have – fear, pain – whatever this may mean – but the best part of it is that I'll be able to experience hunger!'

The stars couldn't exactly figure out why she was so excited about that but she decided to put them at ease. Triumphantly she proclaimed, 'Off to McDonalds!'

They only got even more puzzled at that, but she was too busy explaining the situation further, 'I won't be able to sneeze, however, whatever that may mean. When someone sneezes the others tell him 'Bless you!' I have been blessed enough already by being created a star so I won't be able to sneeze anyway.'

Slowly we all approached the World Information Center again.

'Observing the humans again?' Pollux came to it first.

'I told you I had to prepare myself. I have to study. So, see you!' Ankaa said and quickly slipped inside.

Bellatrix couldn't hold it any more, either, 'I wish she was that persevering at the choir, too,' She murmured, but then added softly, 'I envy her in a way, though.'

#### IV

On her last evening among us, I went to visit her in her pannier (or her basket). Like every other star, she had a specific orbit to follow, the common center of the mass of other stars, but then at one particular point of the ellipse, the pannier was put there to serve her as an astronomical home. I wasn't surprised then to see a beautiful hologram copy of a poster of Stuart Reynolds just above her bed.

'I snatched it off from the World Information Center today,' proclaimed Ankaa proudly, 'And I plan to take it with me,' she added.



Stuart looked young and handsome, standing on a stage with a guitar in hand. The captions at the bottom read Tour 2014. I thought Ankaa would be at the top of her excitement that she'd be leaving but in fact she looked quite depressed.

'I've seen it that when people travel they take suitcases and put their stuff in there. They also take a toothbrush, slippers... And all I've got is this,' and she pointed at the poster. I wondered how she could be so worried over a toothbrush rather than the fact that she was going there ALONE. I shot the question that had been bothering me for the past several weeks, 'Will you be able to hear us?'

'No,' she said.

She said it so matter-of-factly, as if that was understood by itself and she didn't give any indication of how this all might end up and when and if we'd see each other ever again. I felt so helpless and sad that I just told her, 'Hey, if you ever need me, just think of me!'

This sounded like a promise and I did mean it to be one but it was said rather as an attempt to come to terms with my own separation from her. 'And I... I will constantly keep my eye on you,' I thought. I kissed her and headed home. I had to go with Alcyone from my Constellation dancing that night. It had been known for eternity that we dated as well as the fact that he was very jealous and no shooting star would prevent him taking me dancing. So, this was the last time I saw Ankaa until...

V

A female voice was echoing in her head. It was persistent and angry.

'Anna! Anna Godart! Anna Felix Godart!'

The room was small but appeared to be packed with visitors. There were reproductions of the Old Dutch Painters on the walls. The tripods were only too close to each other but somehow that made the entire atmosphere cozy. The students were laughing as Mrs. Brix, whom the voice belonged to, concentrated almost all her energy on knocking on Annie's tripod with her pen in vain attempts to wake her up. Mrs. Brix was in her 40s and it seemed that the last thing she possessed on earth was a sense of humor. She had been teaching painting and design for the past four years but nobody had ever seen anything artistic in her. With regards to this, it was really amusing to observe her with all her sophisticated manners trying to hold her nerves. When Annie finally opened her eyes, Mrs. Brix squawked, 'Sleeping again? You're sleeping in my classes again!'

Annie stared in shock. Somebody whooped, 'Our working girl, ain't she?'

Mrs. Brix was in a pre-hysterical condition, 'I tell you, if you keep falling asleep in my classes, I will... I will...,' but she didn't finish the sentence. Her glance lingered over Annie's sketch of a dressed model on the tripod and she softened. It was again time for her to flaunt her impeccable behavior, professional attitude and moral superiority that had made her unpopular even among her colleagues-professors, 'This is very, very good! Look here everyone!'

Mrs. Brix turned the drawing so that everyone in the class could see it and continued her monologue, 'That's what I mean when I say I want a gradation of colors and unification of forms. This is an excellent example! Just superb!'

The bell rang. The students started to pack up and to head for the door, accompanied by Mrs. Brix's complaints that actually she had not dismissed the class yet. Annie didn't move from her chair. She stared incredulously at her drawing and in the end asked aloud, 'Did I do that?'

Mrs. Brix squinted at her, 'You are sleeping all the time and now that the time has run out you prefer to gaze on your own art and don't want to go away. Thank God, I don't think you such a great star yet to tolerate that but yes, you've got some talent. I'll give you that.'

She said that with a face that could as well be used for a vinegar advertisement, but what was her surprise, when Annie smiled all of a sudden, stood up and proclaimed, 'I'm dreaming, right?'

A guy bumped onto her from behind on his way out at this very moment startling her and making it clear that she was not dreaming. The students who had not left yet, giggled. Mrs. Brix was clearly left speechless by Annie's last statement! What boldness! And to leave Mrs. Brix speechless on any subject was a sheer artistry. It seemed that Annie also possessed this talent alongside with the talent for painting. Mrs. Brix gawked at the insolence of it all and forgot to shut her mouth even after she stormed out through the door.

In the next minutes, Annie was left alone in the room. She hesitated for a moment before she took the bag hanging on her chair. She was not sure whom it belonged to but as everybody had already left, she presumed that it should be hers. Anyway, she took it as an instinct rather than a conscious act, as all her mind was busy calculating what to do next. It was then that a dark-haired girl with beautiful blue eyes and mischievous smile popped up at the door.

'Annie, let's go! They have hamburgers in the canteen. Shall we have lunch together?'

The girl disappeared behind the door and the only thing left for Annie to do was follow her. All of a sudden, however, she cried out, 'Annie? My name is Ankaa. Hey, wait a minute!'

But the girl had slipped away into the corridor so Annie just shrugged her shoulders and walked after her.

## VI

The canteen was a large, neat place with a bar offering a fair choice of food. While queuing up to take their meal, Annie noticed that the place was getting decorated. Later on, sitting at the table, excited to have the soft warm sandwich in her hands for the first time she could study the place at leisure. At the other end of the canteen students were hanging a poster announcing 'THE ANNUAL BALL - SUMMER 2009' Then Annie concentrated on the hamburger. She looked at it from above, from below, she rolled it in her hands, and she even tested its softness again and again. In the end, the girl beside her just asked, 'Well, aren't you gonna eat it? I thought it was your favorite.'

Annie obediently took a bite, 'Oh, boy! This is just great!'

The girl burst into laughter.

'You say it every time!'

A nothing-special kind of guy passed their table and politely greeted Annie by name. How come they all knew her by that name and that... they knew her without her knowing any one of them.

'Who was this?' Annie asked the girl beside her.

'I beg your pardon? Are you falling from the skies? You were studying with him like crazy for the Renaissance Art exam last term. That's Aaron.'

'Last term? How long have I been here?'

The girl was trying to swallow, but couldn't as she burst into laughter again.

'Annie, this is not funny any more!' She growled.

At this moment Annie froze. From the far end of the canteen, smiling and handsome, Stuart Reynolds walked straight up to her along with a long-legged girl with raven locks. They passed by Annie and she tried to suppress the emotions that had come over her when it suddenly dawned on her, 'I am down on Earth!' She exclaimed. Then several things happened almost simultaneously. The girl was choked with laughter again. Annie desperately needed to call her name just to share this moment of joy. She glanced upon the name of 'Jessie' written in purple ink and all surrounded by hearts on the girl's

copybooks left on the table, and she shrieked out, 'JESSIE! THIS IS STUART REYNOLDS!' She was all shaking with emotion.

'Sure, it's Stu! Mr. Untouchable.' Jessie was still trying to get back her breath. She was rather indifferent, though.

'But, but he has changed a bit.' Annie said.

'Changed? He's pretty much the same as he was yesterday.'

'But he used to have longer hair.'

'THE ANNUAL BALL - SUMMER 2009'. Stuart Reynolds walking towards her – young, full of charm. Jessie's notebooks with her name written on it. Annie sighed noisily in relief and thought that the Boss knew his stuff. But then she also realized the most important thing - she had been given time. Time to complete her task. She extended her gratitude from the bottom of her heart to Saturn who was the one to patronize time.

'He looked the cutest during his college years, anyway,' Annie proclaimed, playing nervously with Jessie's copybooks.

'Oh, yes,' you wanted to copy the last lecture,' Jessie said without even hearing her, 'You may have it! OK, gotta go now but we'll see each other tonight at the bar.'

'What shall we do there?'

'Hey, working girl! It's Thursday, remember? It's our shift tonight. See you!'

Jessie got her stuff and went out. Annie was left alone and took a look around. Stuart and Dian were not to be seen anywhere so she could follow them. Jessie left. Annie was clearly at a loss as to the next steps to be taken and for awhile she just kept on sitting at the table as a small child might if left alone to wait quietly for the return of his or her parents. Then all of the sudden she got an idea.

'Excuse me,' she stopped a girl passing by, 'do you by any chance know where I can find a positive magnet field?'

The girl gaped, 'Try the Physics Department at the College of Science and Technologies,' she answered caustically and wanted to go but it was a pair of puppy eyes that checked her midway. The girl relented, 'What do you need this for, for God's sake?'

'When you travel and you get lost you better go to the first place where you could be directed. I need to find a positive magnet field in order to receive enlightenment on the way.'

The girl seemed to be getting it, 'Try the chapel down the main alley of the college park.'

It was a beautiful spring day and Annie didn't mind going for a walk at all. This was her first expedition here so to say. The trees full of blossoms, the lush grass, the warm earth underneath. She was strolling on the main alley when she felt it – energy radiated more and more powerfully and brightly from everything around her. Then she saw it - a

small building, all painted in white that was situated under the trees. There was no mistaking it – this had to be the chapel. She entered and sat on the pew. The vibrations here were even stronger than outside and the small neat place gave her as much comfort as the real positive streams that ran back home. She didn't see the big gate to the Boss's Secret Space, yet she felt as if she were standing in front of it. She took her chance for a talk with Him, 'All right,' she spoke softly, 'I admit it now I don't know what to do. I don't know where to go. I don't know anyone... except Jessie. You promised to take care of me so you have to do it now.'

She was done with all said and she waited... And she waited. (The lock around the finger.) And she waited. (The tapping of the foot.) And she waited. (This part of the truth that was... well – relevant for the moment.)

'I had to prepare myself but you also said you'd prepare things for me.'

Nothing. **(The eruption!)**

'OK, I know I have chosen it myself but won't you help me?' (Still nothing) 'OK, stay there! I'll do it myself.'

Annie stood up in anger and walked to the exit. On the doorstep she just cast an angry glance back to the inside and left.

'Maybe it doesn't work as it does at home,' she thought, 'maybe they don't use it for enlightenment here. Maybe they use it for something else but why then are all the parameters like back home? Maybe the parameters look like the ones at home but they slightly change because everything is on a much smaller scale. Yet, when you feel the positive magnetic field you simply know that it is IT. You can't mistake it for something else – for space dust, for instance.' It was an endless monologue on Astro-physics.

## VII

'It's too melancholic.'

It's never too melancholic. It expresses real feelings.

'Stu must be brokenhearted again.'

'Again? What do you mean again?'

'I mean you are never content, Stu. The chick is hot for real.'

Stuart, Chris, Bob and John had a rehearsal. It was one of those rehearsals, which, in fact, they spent in a more casual than professional atmosphere. This was helpful in overcoming the emotional differences with regards to this or that song as the guys, themselves, were only too different from each other. Chris, for instance, was the ultimate heartbreaker of the band – the drummer with the long blond hair and the green eyes, who

could make just about any girl behave inadequately in his company. Bob was THE guitar-player. He was the pro. He had the habit of studying you when you least expected it under his bang which practically always hid his eyes. He had never been seen to put much effort in his playing but in return the playing itself was so full of emotions - as if they were spurting in a magical way right under his fingers. John was the quiet guy and the bassist. You'd never hear him talking just for the sake of it. However, when he did, he was equally capable of cutting you like a pickle with just a couple of words if he thought you were not right or calm you down better than your own mum could if he felt you needed it. And Stu... well, Stu was THE passion.

'The hot chick said some things she didn't have to say,' murmured Stu in response to Chris's remark but Chris kept on teasing him.

'She hurt your feelings, eh? Stu sleeps with his guitar and that's because he cannot drag the piano into the bed,' he explained to the rest of the group. They all snickered.

'I've had enough of this crap,' Stu retorted, 'now put a bit of a blues rhythm to this and let's try it again.'

## VIII

Annie walked down the alley kicking at a stone. It rolled and rolled and Annie measured every time with her steps the distance she kicked it away from her. 7 steps, 8 steps, 15 steps. They used to do this whenever an asteroid shower came around, only she didn't measure her steps then but the light miles. The stone rolled into a curve and stopped right before a building which indicated the Students Desk. Annie smiled at this discovery and couldn't refrain from thinking about the Boss, 'Yes, I told you I'd get by'. She was still a little bit angry that she was not taken care of, as He had promised. She entered the building.

Margaret was behind the counter as usual, busy – as usual. She was one of the senior students here. Almost in her 30s, she still wore a punk-style hair, military boots and piercing on all possible body parts. However, she was a very good administrator. Now she was focused on doing several things at the same time – talking on the phone, and trying to arrange a meeting for the Dean, while copying a book on the copy-machine, trying in the meantime to get a coke from the automat for soft-drinks. For a moment Annie observed her fascinated. When the telephone conversation was finally over, and the coke can was finally in the machine's slot but not before a tough kick with a military boot had been delivered to it, did Margaret just peacefully and quietly turn the next page of the book to put it on the glass of the photocopier. And if

so far she had not given any indications of noticing Annie, now she turned with a broad smile to her, 'Hi Annie, what's up?'

'Eh, I was wondering, if you could help me,' uttered Annie.

'Lost your keys again! I knew it!' Margaret knit her eyebrows.

'Keys? What keys?'

'That would be the second time this month, but you could sleep at Aaron's, y'know!' Margaret's look changed quickly from grumpy to mischievous.

'I could arrange it, y'know. He fancies you.'

'But he's a boy!' Annie objected. Margaret burst into laughter.

'Well, what's your problem?'

'I... I...,' Annie stuttered. 'I don't know where to go.'

'This depends on where you want to go,' Margaret adopted now the professor's manner of speaking.

'I want to go home!'

'Oh, well, freshmen!' Margaret thought. She has seen tons of them and it has always been the same story. She could sense the real problem.

'Annie, your home is here now! Guys, parties, fun – 24/7. Don't be sad! You will never have a problem with me in case you wanna go out of campus – to a bar, a disco. I won't give you away. You can count on me for it.'

'Oh, yes, the bar too!'

'Don't worry - I won't tell anyone.'

'But I work in a bar!'

'Oh, this is no secret to anyone!'

'To anyone?' Annie murmured, and then added, 'But Jessie told me only this afternoon.'

'Oh, are you switching jobs then?'

Annie was wondering how she was supposed to know given that she had just arrived. The only thing she could do was to try beating about the bush.

'Oh, well... Actually... you know....'

Margaret was getting curious, 'Now tell me, tell me...It used to be The Blue Bar, right?'

'YESSS! The bar is called The Blue Bar.' Annie thought excitedly. Then she said aloud 'Right! It is still The Blue Bar.'

'Oh, I was about to congratulate you on a new job but ... You know... don't pay attention to what all these jerks tell you about your job! They are all mum's and daddy's kids. Never made an effort in my life to deserve a thing! You shouldn't be

ashamed that you have to work. I also have to do it if I want to stay here as you can see. OK?’

‘Yeah,’ Annie replied but now it was again time for the troubleshooting, ‘Well, so can you help me now because...?’

‘Oh, yes, back to the topic! Lost your keys again! They were in your bag the whole day, but now they are gone.’

Annie instinctively put her hand in her bag and while Margaret kept on lecturing her on how absentminded Annie was, Annie felt something metal between her fingers. She took it out and saw a tag with a key on it.

‘Oh, well,’ Margaret exclaimed – ‘All’s well that ends well. You see! Block B - the best dorm, too! Do you still enjoy the view from your window so much?’

‘Sure, it’s great! I can see all the way to the river!’ Annie answered and it was just afterwards that she realized that she shot it out just like that before even thinking of it. She stopped amazed at what she’d just said but Margaret only smiled, ‘When I was in my freshman’s year my favorite place was the river, too,’ she said. Annie thanked her, ‘Thanks a lot. You were really very helpful. I hope some day to be able to return your kindness,’ She was ready to go but now Margaret stopped her.

‘Annie, wait! Well, talking of kindness... I wonder if you could do me a favor... I hear there will be a check... Y’know, for the stuff... No one will search YOUR room, for sure. You’ve always been the good girl, so could you just have these with you for awhile?’

Margaret pulled out a drawer and took out some funny, little sticks. They looked really bizarre, but harmless too so Annie just took them and dropped them in her bag. Margaret winked at her.

Annie was too happy with her discoveries to bother about the little things. Once outside again, she couldn’t hold it any more, ‘Now to Block B we go! YESSS!’

## IX

Annie opened the door to her room and got in. The first thing she saw was Stu’s poster on the wall – this time a paper one, off course but who cared.

‘YESSS! I’m at home!’ And she just threw herself on to the bed. She stood there for awhile trying to fully take in what had happened that day. She didn’t have any memory of the journey itself but eventually it all ended... ON EARTH! Too excited, Annie got up to take a look around. There was a desk covered with books and notebook, and also many sketches. Some of them were lying on the floor practically covering the entire area



around the desk. She checked one or two but they were not of much interest. Then she turned around and saw the wardrobe. She opened it carefully and saw her clothes. Her first thought was how come they were so colorful when all she had ever worn were silver-white tunics, but then she remembered that all would be prepared for her and she felt a wave of ecstasy just because even the disguise had not been forgotten. Retracing her way from the wardrobe to the bed again she noticed a side door and she almost froze... The bathroom. Again it was time to check the truth, her own personal truth. It was going to be ages before she could forget this moment but yes, when she opened the door on the small tub there it was – the TOOTHBRUSH. She screamed out of excitement. Then she took it happily like a box full of treasure and didn't put it back before all its scientific specifications were studied most thoroughly – the color, length, number of bristles, the material they were made of, aerodynamics of the form etc. etc. And just when she put it back in place and thought that now she was for sure the happiest person in the Universe... she saw her reflection in the mirror above the tub.

'Oh, my God! OH, MY GOD! What do you think you've done to me? No, just tell me what do you think? He is a ROCK-STAR! Or he will be! You always say you know everything, don't you? Didn't you know that rock-stars date only actresses and top-models? Couldn't you do me at least like... like Liv Tyler? No-o-o-o – everything should be more difficult because Ankaa is stubborn, and she decided to get down here by herself and you should prove her wrong! How could I ever look at him... with a FACE LIKE THIS!'

She got out of the bathroom, and slammed the door. She was helpless, and angry, and upset at the same time. For awhile she just nervously walked around – to the bed, to her stuff on the desk and back but then she went up to the window. Outside something was going on but, still being angry, Annie didn't realize at once what was happening. She gradually did and this caught her attention– the sun was setting.

'NIGHT!' She exclaimed enlightened. 'AN EARTH NIGHT! The Earth Sun goes below the horizon. I have always observed this from above but NEVER from below! It is also known as nighttime!' And she began reciting a lesson, '*Goodnight* – a common wish for a good sleep! *Tonight* means this night. Hi-hi-hi-hi, *tonight* is the time mostly preferred for dating at a restaurant or a bar. TONIGHT!? Jessie said that tonight WE ARE at the bar.'

## 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

