

## A Chance Encounter

Galroy was in a playful mood as he pranced across the plain. It was mid-day and big Helios overpowered any shadows his little sister may have silhouetted against the rocky foothills to the east. It was only an easy hour to water and beyond that shade, nuts, berries, and the firm brown flanks of Raisie. Galroy bucked reflexively at the thought, tussled his tawny head with both hands, and picked up his pace. Raisie! He lengthened his gait again and ground passed quickly beneath his hooves.

Oh! A sudden roar burst over Galroy's head and he bolted instinctively to the right, although there was no cover to be had on the arid landscape. He skidded to halt in a sprawling four legged stance. Every muscle quivered. Fists clenched, his nails cut into his palms. He scanned the sky all about him. Not a cloud. And that sound was like no thunder he had ever heard. But then what was it? What if it happened again? What to do? Where to go? What was safest? What was right?

There was smoke rising from the distant trees, in the direction Galroy had been heading. More like a giant dust cloud slowly settling as he thought about it. No thunder, no fire. He backed away a couple of steps and began to turn. Raisie! She was over there somewhere. He took a few paces forward again for a better look. What to do? Raisie.

Galroy broke into a reluctant trot toward the trees, the unknown, and Raisie beyond. He wasn't thinking about flanks or frolic anymore. Raisie was sweet. Before, after, even when they didn't. Which was a rarity but somehow satisfying. The hold of her hand, her ready laughter, the soft but playful eyes with a hint of sadness behind them. That broad smile that never ceased to dazzle him like little Sola's dusk flash after Helios slept. Her slender white neck and square yet delicate shoulders belying her strength. The feel of her satiny skin just below the throat as the back of his hand brushed gently downward. Galroy convulsed in a buck that brought all fours off the ground and broke into a gallop. Raisie may be trouble!

Commander Ellen "Nell" Higgins tasted blood in her mouth. She instinctively sucked the wound on the inside of her lip. Then she forced her will through the fog.

"Davis!" Nell barked. A groan came from behind her, then a belch.

"I'll live, Skipper."

"Conway!" Nell called. No sound. "Conway! Bobby you okay?"

"I'm...I'm okay Skipper. I think. A bit woozy."

By this time Nell had released her straps and could turn to survey her crew. Bill Davis was already beginning a systems check. Young Conway didn't have his bearings yet.

"Bumpy ride, Skipper," Bobby said.

"Kick ass flying, Skipper," added Bill, "that's what it was." Nell suppressed a smile at the compliment.

"Bobby, can you function?"

Ensign Robert Conway, the junior officer on the three man crew, took a deep breath and shook the dust from his brain. "Ready to rock n' roll, ma'am."

"Okay, listen up both of you. We made it. The first humans ever to reach an Earth-like planet. There's air out there we can breathe. Gravity is virtually the same. Welcome to Chiron!" Nell stood

up in the cramped aisle. “But first things first. Everyone on their feet. Our first systems at check is ourselves. Search for injury.”

“Just few bumps and bruises, Skipper.”

“Me too, ma’am.”

“Alright. I want a full systems check and exterior inspection to make sure that this bird can still fly. I’ll reconnoiter.”

Commander Nell Higgins released the door and ramp locks. She strode out stopping at the bottom edge of the ramp. The next step was it. Armstrong on the moon. Gonzales on Mars, Enwesi on Pluto, and now Higgins on Chiron. The first manned visit to a planet outside the Solar System. She took a moment to appreciate it. They had landed in a sparsely wooded area near the edge of a barren plain, which she could just make out through the trees to the right. To her left, the trees rapidly thickened and there was considerable brush as well. Nell took a deep breath, stepped onto another world and headed left into the forest. Chiron! A euphoric intoxication swept through her almost immediately.

She wasn’t far from the ship when Nell could hear the faint sound of running water. She followed the sound, forced her way through some bushes, and stepped out onto a broad oval lawn enclosed by a variety of dense colorful foliage. On the far side end of a pond, a vibrant spring erupted from a gigantic stone bubbling some ten feet into the air before cascading down again. At the other end of the pool, a stream flowed merrily deeper into the forest. Commander Nell Higgins let out a sigh as the stress and tension of three months in deep space and the constant burden of command began to ease out of her.

She walked quickly to the pond, drawn to it, gazing at the fountain. It was so beautiful her eyes ached. Impulsively, Nell kicked off her shoes and unzipped her flight suit. Socks, panties, and bra were off in a trice. She dipped a toe in the water. Cool. Deliciously so. She strode into the clear soothing water and as it lapped her bottom, dove under. Her senses jolted throughout as the water flowed over bare breasts and bottom. Delicious.

Galroy heard the splash of the dive just as he reached the edge of the greensward. He peered cautiously through the bush. Maybe it was Raisie. This was one of her favorite places. They had met here, loved here, many times. Head and shoulders broke the surface of the pond. Galroy was startled to see short yellow hair. He had never seen such hair. He was fascinated. The figure turned back to shore and Galroy gasped. A female! And with short yellow hair. Where did she come from? He knew all the centaurs of the forest, Raisie’s clan, and this female certainly wasn’t from his own clan of the hills. Galroy suppressed a buck.

The female strode out of the water and Galroy froze in shock. What creature was this? Only two legs! And more like big arms. How strange! Galroy fixated on a patch of curly yellow fur where the strange limbs met her torso. Enchanting! Nell arched her back in a long slow satisfying stretch, legs spread and arms reaching for the sky. She felt glorious. Divine. Galroy grew dizzy striving to control himself, eyes still locked on that patch of curly yellow fur. Fear and lust struggled for mastery.

Nell turned away, bending over to pick up her bra and panties. Galroy was pierced by the sight. With a primal shout that echoed through the forest Galroy, strutted mindlessly into the open toward the female, rearing on his hind legs to display his desire. Nell wheeled around, then stood transfixed. As their eyes met, Galroy shouted again, ecstasy embracin him. Nell shivered and stood her ground

in a broad determined stance at his approach. Shouts invaded their senses as Bill Davis and Bobby Conway came bursting through the bushes onto the lawn. Galroy recoiled in panic and fled deep into the forest.

“What the hell?” shouted Bill in disbelief.

“Are you alright, Skipper?” Bobby asked.

Nell remained rooted where she stood, but turned her head vacantly toward the voices. She knew them. They were her crew.

“I’m fine, Ensign.” She sighed. “I’m fine.” she repeated quietly. Years of training and discipline suddenly kicked in.

“Lieutenant, report.”

“All systems operational, Skipper. We’re cleared for takeoff,” Davis replied.

“Very well.” Nell said. “We’ll conduct suborbital surveillance then find a suitable landing sight for the night. Time to become a good old fashioned airplane.” Bobby simply stared at her.

“Well, what’s the matter with you, Ensign?” Nell demanded.

Bill Davis interrupted with a gentle cough. “The Commander, agh, might want to consider putting her clothes on.” He smiled, “Unless that’s the new uniform of the day.” Nell laughed loudly, enjoying the situation. She strode off toward the ship with her bra and panties still in hand.

“All in good time, boys. All in good time.”

“And gentlemen, try not to spoil this mission for me again. After all”, she grinned, “we are explorers.” Bobby gasped and turned crimson. Bill Davis guffawed.

“I think I’m gonna like this place,” he said.

Galroy was still racing away, following the stream when the ship roared overhead and away with a resounding boom. He ducked instinctively and sprinted even faster. Suddenly he saw centaurs in clusters around the trees and he lessened his pace, searching.

“Raisie!”

“Galroy!”

“I was worried!”

“I was scared!”

“So was I!”

They met in a tight embrace, forelegs off the ground dangling loose. Her small bosom crushed warmly against his chest. They remained that way a long time kissing, murmuring endearments, then laughing as the fear of the recent events became a distant memory. Their fore hooves began to click together playfully. Then they both fell to all fours as their eyes embraced and the ecstasy rushed through them. Raisie turned, flipping her tail up with a giggle as Galroy let out a thunderous shout and bucked forward. And the last vision he saw in his mind’s eye, just before his senses overcame everything else, was a small patch of curly yellow fur.

**The End**