

Naiya

Danger

Life for McKenzie was nice. In fact, it was more than nice. Her grades were decent, her family was well-off, she was the most popular person in her school. But this also meant that she always got what she wanted; designer clothes, top-of-the-range facilities - she only had to start screaming for it. But this isn't just about her, oh no! This was how friendship was forged between a human - and an alien.

I was so annoyed - a detention! What for? I was TWO MINUTES late for class, two minutes! But that stupid teacher made me stay in - I had things to do, important things! My trail of thoughts stopped as suddenly, out of the blue, I heard a crash. A loud one. I started running.

Why? I do not know. But something inside kicked - like this was something I had to do, someone I had to be. I stopped. I stared. In front of me was a thing - a big thing. Someone stepped out. My head froze for a second, I took a breath. Words tumbled out of me and I heard myself saying, "What's your name?" One second, two seconds, three seconds; I wasn't getting an answer. This is just a really weird dream where you're gonna see a crashed alien in your school, and you're gonna snap out of it in a sec!" I thought. Behind me, the alien moved. "Danger," it said.

Danger looked a lot like a human. 'Their planet must have had really similar conditions to ours,' I thought silently. Her (I think it was a 'she') skin was a pale minty green - a beautified pastel. But otherwise, she looked just like one of us. Soft brunette hair cascaded down her shoulders, like a waterfall, gently falling into a crystal pond. It was a sense of regality, but calm; drama, yet composure that hung on to her. She was everything all at once.

Her teeth were perfectly formed - nails manicured beyond perfection. Gingerly,

I touched her arm, and her eyes turned towards me. I had never seen such eyes - so smooth, soft and brown. Despite this, they contained so much expression, and, even though she wasn't smiling, laughter and happiness. Everything beautiful in the world seemed condensed into those two eyes. "Hello," Danger said.

"You can speak English?" I stammered, unable to contain my surprise.

"Of course I do," she laughed, a soft tinkling noise escaping her lips, "I've been here for 53.2167 seconds!" I gasped, "Your kind must be much cleverer than we are - it takes years to speak a language fluently!" It was Danger's turn to look surprised. The next half hour or so passed like a haze - I had never met someone so friendly, so warm. Then I took her to The Cupcakery. Maria, the woman at the stand gaped; I suppose the pastel skin is hard to get around your head. "My friend feels a little ill," I said quickly, "We'd like two chocolate and walnut cupcakes please."

Outside, Danger said, "You didn't have to cover up for me you know I blushed, then smiled. It was like there was a connection between the two of us, like we were bonded somehow. Then, a thought occurred to me, "How did you get here?" I asked, biting into my cupcake. "Well..." she replied "It's complicated..."

"Our planet - Centauri - was beautiful. On one side, was a thick jungle of plants, greenery and exotic animals. On the other side, a world of robots, artificial intelligence, and metal. I had to live on the robot side, but life was hard," she explained. "Were you poor?" I interrupted, then turned red. It seemed quite intrusive when I said it like that. "Nothing of the sort," she replied "life was just - repetitive. It was difficult to breathe in the built-up areas, and sometimes I felt... restricted."

ya "But how did you get here?" I repeated. "It was pointless, staying on our planet. Centauri was being pulled into a strange orbit by our planet star, and every minute we were being pulled closer to the sun. Water was scarce, days got hotter, life was becoming harder. That's why the Zalikki was formed."

"Zalikki?" I echoed. "Yes, it means 'fighter' in our language. It allowed all of the higher classes to fly off to a new planet ~~to~~ and colonize there. The poorer citizens, however, had to fight for it. A test was created - difficult in all aspects - and to get off the planet, you had to pass it. Which got me here - every spacecraft had to room for one person only, with room for up to two children. I was piloting alone, explaining wh-" She was interrupted. We weren't alone.

"No, No!" Danger cried. "I have to hide!" It was too late. An alien walked in, he looked rather like Danger. "Princess Zarata Leopara, you must come with me," he boomed in a lordly voice. "Princess!" I thought. But this was the least of my concerns - as more aliens ~~dis~~ appeared! "No, I won't!" Danger shouted, "I won't!" Tears were now falling down her cheeks, like she had been holding something in for years. "I think we'd better talk inside," the alien snapped, glaring at me icily.

My eyesight was blurred - I only remember seeing a jet of blue light hit me. I fell back. Everything went black.

Was this dying? It wasn't as painful as I thought it would be. No, this wasn't death, I decided. Instead, my vision came back, and I could see Danger. The alien ship had vanished.

I still don't know what exactly Danger had said or done.

but in that precise moment, words failed me. I just smiled -
because I knew I had a friend for life.

Crash! The noise echoed through the night. Now awoken, I opened the door to investigate. Racing towards the forest, I jumped over the ditch and manoeuvred through the tall trunks. A spaceship - Dust-covered yet unmistakable, a spaceship had crashed into the Earth's surface. My heart was racing, and a whirlwind of incredulity, disbelief and surprise swirled in my mind. Accompanying the moon's dull glow, the outermost ring was decorative, with coloured bulbs and tubes positioned along it. The spaceship was made of an unfamiliar metal, bolted together with nails so strong, not even the crash separated the sturdy structure. A large, transparent dome fitted perfectly on the top, polished so immaculately, that despite the layers of soil and earth that shrouded it, I could vaguely see a mysterious creature lying inside...

Suddenly, the dome lifted, and the creature clambered out. It had an aquamarine body with splashes of orange and green. With toenails like talons and long, black horns, the alien walked towards me and boomed, "Salutations, Earthling. My spaceship seems to have malfunctioned. I seek your aid, as my mission here is of the utmost importance."

As shocked as I was to hear this, I tentatively took a few steps closer. "I'll help you," I replied. "But first, you must tell me how you got here."

And so the story began.

"It was a million light years ago," he said. "I resided with my colony on another planet, far from here. We were all content, living our own civilised lives in the company of good friends and associates. That was before the destruction started. As the plates of our world began to collide, giant earthquakes and volcanic activity occurred frequently; generations worth of food and natural resources were obliterated. Magma seeped through the gaps in the ground, taking many lives and whatever we had left. Alone and starved, every alien that remained zoomed across the everlasting darkness of space. For what seemed like

The Mole and the Eagle

Rebekah Allen (Broomfield House School)

Darkness echoed around the gloomy forest. Despite the evening moon only beginning to stretch up into the starry sky, like a fist punching the blackness slowly, an important discussion was about to happen. Quietly, a scratching noise against the earth sounded as Mole, who was the wisest animal in the forest kingdom, poked his head above the ground to see at least twenty shivering mice huddled under a low-hanging branch of the mighty oak tree. Mole padded over softly: the mice felt very relieved. For a moment, all of the mice's beautiful black button eyes stared into Mole's like only he could save them from the Eagle's terrible doings.

Whispers emerged from the group of animals, all of them desperate for Mole's advice. So, he began, "This is about Eagle, isn't it? I've told you before; he won't listen to me. If you...". The frightening flapping of wings stopped Mole from speaking. Everyone knew what that meant. Eagle was near. "If, if Eagle takes another one of my family, I'm going to hide in my hole forever. I mean I'd be devastated... Heartbroken," a male mouse declared. Nodding heads and worried mumbles crowded the group. Caws screeched from above the trees. The mice's stomachs flipped and twirled like a dancing acrobat.

Suddenly, Eagle swooped down.

Proudly, Eagle stalked around the mice and Mole. "I've heard you talking about me," Eagle claimed in his mocking voice, "I hope it was all good. Or else." All the helpless mice cowered against the humungous oak tree as Eagle jammed his beak in their direction. In the bravest voice Mole could manage, he retorted, "Or else, what?" Quickly, Eagle transformed into a red colour; even his sharp beak became as crimson as lava. "Brain is better than brawn," Mole teased, summoning up all his courage.

A thought frantically jumped into Mole's head, what would Eagle think of this? He probably doesn't think anything: he just acts. Crackle! Lightning violently struck the ground; rain plundered down like an army. Eagle paused in his tracks. He didn't even shiver as coldness crept up on him and pounced – a tiger onto its prey. Only after Mole had stated that Eagle must stop animal-napping his poor, helpless friends, did Eagle dare to move a muscle. "Why should I do that? What am I going to eat? Mice are a real delicacy." Eagle finally remarked. Gasps rose from the group. Thump. A mouse fainted and collapsed onto the soaked green grass. Mole stayed stock still: unable to understand the petrifying news.

A very loud silence descended through the stormy forest. Mole was wondering how to stop evil Eagle when a lightbulb went off in his head. Lightning cackled with increased force. All the animals were dripping wet but the raging rain

refused to stop. Minutes, which felt like hours, strolled past until Mole decided to act. Slowly, Mole turned his back on Eagle – with the taste of fierce anger resting on his tongue.

“It’s ok mice. I know what to do; if that doesn’t work,” Mole sighed, “then he must be banned from this peaceful kingdom. Forever.” He declared, emphasising the last word.

Shaking, Mole put his plan into action. With all the bravery he could muster, these words escaped his lips: “If you actually thought about what you were doing by hurting mice then you wouldn’t be in this terrible situation. Look at all these poor, poor mice.” Eagle glanced at the devastated mice, with their sniffing noses and tear-stained fur. Suddenly, Eagle realised what he had done. At that moment, two feelings crept into Eagle’s black heart: love and guilt. Eagle started crying and crying. Teardrops streamed down his feathers like a gushing waterfall. The dark clouds cleared as sunlight beamed onto the forest. “I promise that I will never harm another animal again. I’m so sorry. And you are right Mole, I should think before I act. Brain really is better than brawn.”

My friend the alien

Alexander Hertlein (The Pointer School)

"Tell us one of your amazing stories Grandpa!" exclaimed Maia in an excited voice.

"Yeah, tell us a story Grandpa!" shrieked her brother Kaine so loud that vibrations echoed throughout the bedroom".

"Okay then," I responded with a smile. I always loved it when my grandchildren asked for a story.

"What kind of story would you like?" I asked.

They whispered to each other until Maia answered with sheer delight, "a story about an alien!"

"As it happens, I have the perfect story. It's about the day I became friends with an alien. I was fifteen at the time. London was in lockdown due to the infamous Covid-19 virus and I was running around Greenwich Park. As I jogged past an old sycamore tree something strange caught my eye. I thought the shimmering morning light was playing a trick on my mind as it appeared that a purple creature was crouching behind a bed of orange daffodils. However, when I looked again it was a young boy with a pale face. At first he assiduously abstained from moving towards me but nervously he did and before I had time to react he had meekly placed his index finger upon my forehead".

"Hold on a minute," interrupted Kaine, "you said this was a story about an alien".

"It is Kaine," I replied. "You see, it turned out that this alien possessed a couple of impossibly unique abilities. The first was that he could change form into anything he wished. The second was the power to communicate and share memories with other lifeforms simply through the power of touch. I will never forget what I saw and felt the first time our two minds connected.

"The first image he shared with me was of him in his true form. He was a cross between a human and a dragon. He looked as fast as a jaguar, with purple skin and sharp, pointy, curved horns dotted all over his head. He had green hair as if grass grew on the top of his head. It curled around his jaggy forehead and freckles stretched across an oversized nose. Underneath his neck were four underdeveloped, bright orange wings that were creased, each of which pointed in different directions. When the wings were flapped up and down they closed against each other so it looked as though he had a line of two wings rather than four. I also noticed he had miniscule spear-like spikes protruding from his sides.

"I then experienced a series of the alien's memories. In the first he was tremendously happy, beaming with a wide toothy grin while one of his purple hands grasped a stopwatch that showed he had beaten his record for air-hovering (it was now 6 Kogras and $\frac{1}{4}$ macrokogras). In another he was sat beside a roaring fire eating an iridescent bizarre fruit, which I have to say looked utterly disgusting. Based on these memories, he seemed to be kind and trustworthy despite his ferocious and dangerous physical appearance

"The alien then shared images of his home world. In one I saw towering limestone hills rising over a silver ribbon of water, creating a landscape straight out of a dream. In another, wonderful, harvested marshes and tiny huts that paled in comparison to the size of the mountain next to them. I saw a picturesque citadel surrounded by enormous volcanoes each of which were spurting magnificent molten lava in multiple directions. Strange vulture-like

birds squawked beautifully in colossal trees that were twice the size of giant redwoods. A jackal-headed beast barked madly and unapologetically, fetching and chasing multi-coloured fruits dropped by the birds. Above, three bright red moons illuminated the night sky with eternal light.

“The final memory he shared with me was of himself standing next to what appeared to be a spaceship. His parents were by his side. They seemed agitated and were arguing about something. I saw plumes of thick smoke rising in the distance.

“At that point, the visions ended and I heard the alien’s voice inside my head. He told me his name was Xen and that his planet was called Kokra. It had been a peaceful and harmonious place until just over a year ago when a race of ancient aliens from a neighbouring solar system invaded due to its abundance of natural resources. After his parents were imprisoned Xen was forced to flee Kokra and had been travelling ever since”.

“So, what’s he doing on Earth Grandpa?” interrupted an impatient Kaine.

“and what happened to him?” asked a captivated Maia.

“Both excellent questions but ones which will have to wait until tomorrow night as I’m afraid it’s well past your bedtime”.

“Ah Grandpa, you’re kidding me,” gasped Kaine as I turned to switched off the bedside lights.