



heavenly twins

HEAVENLY TWINS

It's a well-known phenomenon, that when a pretty girl passes by, strange things happen to a man. But if that girl should smile at the man.....whole universes can change.

Here is a true, light-hearted, story of two young girls adrift in the galaxy, with only their smiles to protect them.

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PHIL LEWIS

I started writing short stories when I was about ten. Yes....they were about robots and space ships. I loved the plots, twists and turns, enjoying the writing and then the reading of them.

I have always been creative, earning my living as an illustrator and designer – but always continued writing as a hobby.

Now I am retired, I can look back on my extensive collection of novels, plays and short stories and try to do something with them – hence my website (<http://www.phil-lewis.net/publications>) to which I will be adding anything worth reading over the course of the next few years.

If you like my work, please email me to tell me so (publications@phil-lewis.net). If you didn't – I'm sorry. No refunds.

Thanks for reading this e-book.

Take care.

Phil Lewis

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PART 1 - THE COMPETITION

From where he stood, he could just see the bottom of the hatchway and the ladder that led down from it. The ugly shuttle craft shuddered to a halt and the Ion discharge dissipated into the warm air. Barnaby waited.

Poised behind him were a battery of remote cameras and other media recording devices. The whole planet appeared to have sent representatives to greet the celebrity arrivals. As the hatch cranked slowly upwards, he heard increased noise, as motors whirred and circuit boards hummed into life. He felt the machines closing in on him, invading his space. He tried to hold them back with a wave of his hand.

He smoothed his hair back and adjusted his tight fitting jacket. As a last minute idea, he changed its colour to light green, he thought it matched his eyes better. He lengthened the size of the collar and hoped it would highlight and frame his lean good looks. He straightened his long back and produced a smile. He should strike an imposing sight - tall, elegant and handsome. That was the effect he was looking for. Billions of sentient beings around the Universe couldn't be wrong.

The first of the honoured guests was just stepping down the ladder now.

All he could see at first were the feet. The podium on which he stood had been hastily erected, minutes before the guests were due to arrive. It had been placed a safe enough distance from the landing pad, but near enough so the guests didn't have far to walk in the open air. The covering above him was too low, making him bend down to see out across the short distance to the parked ship.

The feet looked shoeless until he realised the new arrival was wearing almost invisible boots. He could just make out the shimmer of the see-through material, but his attention was on the feet themselves. They were exquisite. The delicate structure of bone and muscle, the tendons and sinews. As she stepped down....more like 'glided' down..... the ladder, her calves undulated in the sunlight. The curve of the muscle and the blending into the foot caused his mouth to hang open. This was sheer muscle, sinew and flesh perfection. This girl MUST be some model. Her legs MUST be insured for billions. It was probably the most stunning sight he'd seen in real life. Her knees now dropped into view.

He could kiss them. He wanted to kiss them. They moved like well-oiled machinery, like tigers on ice. The proportion exactly right, a sculptor could not improve on the shape of those knees - the thighs followed. By now he knew he was dribbling. The slow, tantalising, downward movement of this most perfect being enthralled him. Was it happening in slow motion, or did this woman KNOW how to move!

As the thighs sank into view he found himself stooping. Craning his neck to get a complete view of this vision before him. He was convinced she was naked, as no sign of clothing covered her so far. As her hips came into view, there was a subtle blurring of detail and he could now see, she was not naked. But he couldn't clearly see what she wore either. A leg dipped on to the next rung and the other followed. She was waist deep in his vision now.

Her waist was small and flowed like a smooth range of hills from her perfect hips. The swell reversed and started to climb up towards her chest. They just kept on swelling. She was facing him and he could see her breasts would reach him long before her head would. They were magnificent!

He was totally immobile now. Frozen in a stoop, which allowed him to see the Goddess before him, but stopped him doing anything else, even blinking. The chest swooped majestically towards the neck. Long and

delicate, sweeping into the woman's head and face. His breath stopped. If he died on the spot it may have been worth it. She had the most beautiful face he had EVER seen in his life. Her mouth formed the most perfect of cupid lips. Softened and smoothed into a shape that made him return to his thoughts about kissing. Her nose had the cutest of uplifts at the end, enough to be there, but not too much to distract from those eyes!

Bright, bright, bright blue and deep as a lagoon. White as snow and flawless as milk. They looked straight at him, then through him, and on to infinity.

His final image was that of golden hair, flowing from all over her head. Moving with an independence and grace of its own. As she bounced gently down the steps, the hair writhed in a dance of its own. Sprawling out from her head, extending beyond her broad shoulders it seemed to hang suspended by air, catching the rays of the sun and throwing them back in a challenge for supremacy.

She stood before him, staring deep into his soul. His jaw remained slack and his eyes vacant. The overall image was too much to take in at one moment. He just stared at the vision and knew he was in heaven.

"You must be Barnaby Babyloncitiy." Her voice like velvet on ice cream. Cool, strong, full of flavour and strength.

He managed to nod. "And you must be Waynnetaaudrynellldorisellenrachael." But no sound came from his mouth.

"I'm Waynnetaaudrynellldorisellenrachael. And this is my sister," she turned to wave at another figure gliding down the steps.

He tore his eyes away from the Goddess and watched, struck even dumber as another pair of feet descended the stairway. By the time the sister stood before him he was seeing double. If he thought the first was the most perfect creature he'd ever set eyes upon he was wrong. These two were almost identical. The second girl differed in the colouring of her hair. It was raven black and in an even larger in style than the first woman.

".....Wendylrenenormanancyirisedith," she finished with a smile.

The smile did it. He had not taken a breath for two minutes, he felt his vision blur and slip into darkness. He fainted in front of two Goddesses. He could die now. Nothing could ever be better than this.

Barnaby awoke to a crowd looking down at him. After he focused his eyes, he began to recall his last waking moments and embarrassment hit him like a wooden plank dipped in honey. He sat up quickly, head spinning, immediately he lay back down again until the fuzziness subsided.

The faces above him looked concerned. Apart from the few who were openly smiling. Behind them he could see an explosion of blonde hair, moving behind the crowd. Embarrassment hit him again.

A sudden crash of frozen water hit his face and his eyes shot open. The shock arching his back and forcing him into a seating position. His eyes stung as he grasped. "What the prak was that!"

Blonde hair filled his vision. Two eyes dived into his body and froze him solid.

"Only cold water. Are you all right?" The voice was velvet and screwed his insides into a neat wet ball.

“I’m fine, thank you. Are you all right? I’m soooo sorry. I must look a fool.....” but nothing came out from his mouth.

“Are you a mute?”

He shook his head and pointed to his throat. Shaking his head and trying to speak.

“Are you stupid?” Waynnetaaudrynellldorisellenrachael said, getting anxious.

Again Barnaby shook his head and pointed to his throat. Waynnetaaudrynellldorisellenrachael shook her head, puzzled by what he was trying to tell her.

Barnaby was chocking to death. He couldn’t move and yet he was dying in front of the woman her loved more than any other in the universe. Apart from one, that is – her sister. Fear overcame embarrassment and emotional seizure. With a violent effort he jerked himself upright, stabbing down with his thumb towards the ground.

Waynnetaaudrynellldorisellenrachael looked downwards and saw her apparently naked feet. With a gasp and a giggle, which made near death almost worthwhile for Barnaby, she took her foot off his jacket collar and breath flooded into his lungs again.

Waynnetaaudrynellldorisellenrachael knelt beside him and held his face in her hands. “I’m so sorry.” She planted a kiss on his cheek. He immediately fainted again.

She felt a tug on her arm and she stood facing her sister. WendyIreneNormanancyIrisEdith pointed towards the barrage of media recorders and both girls turned in unison and smiled. Several fuses blew in the equipment and any human operators felt themselves growing weak at the knees, and a few other parts of their anatomies.

A young assistant forced her way through the barricade and stood before the two honoured guests. With a startled look at the lenses all focused on her, she tried to smile and knew instantly she was no competition for the two sisters. To start with, she was much shorter than they were, less pneumatic and certainly not as beautiful. Although, she had received a fair number of compliments in her time. She tried to hang on to that thought.

Mellianna looked at the prostrate form of her boss and her face showed contempt. She quickly replaced the look with another. They had a job to do and she was all they had. A quick check of her notes, a grin and into the interview.

She hadn’t dressed for the cameras, but her outfit was befitting an Inter-galactic welcoming committee. Her collar was tall, proud and sparkled in the early sunshine. The centrally secured flared cloak hid her more....ample hips and revealed her more shapely legs. She had to go with what she’d got and she was certainly doing that.

“Welcome to Earth, ladies. Have a good journey?”

The bank of media equipment surged forward for the answer. Mellianna felt her hair getting snagged and brushed the nearest recorder away. It snapped back at her and bit her hand. With a vicious swipe of her note board she smacked it back, sending it spinning to the ground. With an angry face she trod on it, shattering it into countless pieces.

As it died it said, "That'll cost you." She trod on it again.

Waynnetaudrynell-doris-ellen-rachael said, "Very pleasant. Thank you for asking."

With a smile to the rest of the media representatives Mellianna said, "Good. Were you surprised to hear you'd won the competition?"

Waynnetaudrynell-doris-ellen-rachael turned to her sister and pulled her nearer. The two were now in close shot and the cameras zoomed ever closer. Mellianna nearly losing her balance as the media pack pushed into her back. She was a cat's hair away from the two girls and she took a good look at their flawless faces. Mellianna was disappointed. There wasn't a blemish there. As she looked closer, no make-up, either!

"Surprised and delighted. I said to Winnie, we've won something at last. She was delighted too. And surprised."

"Winnie, you call her Winnie. Is that your nickname for her?"

"Sort of. It's her other name, really. Mum couldn't decide between six girl's names, so she rolled them all into one – Wendy-Irene-norma-nancy-iris-edith. We took the initials of each name and it came out as Winnie."

"So your name would be....?"

"Waynneta-audry-nell-doris-ellen-rachael. Wander."

"Wander and Winnie. The terrible twins."

"What's so terrible about us?"

"Sorry. It's just a phrase."

"Why do you think we're terrible?"

"It's a.....saying. Just a saying. I didn't mean...."

Wander looked at her sister and scowled, "She's calling us terrible, Winnie!"

Winnie shook her head and said quietly, "It is just a saying, Wan. Just a saying. She doesn't mean we're terrible. Just a saying."

"Why did she say it then, if she didn't mean it?"

Unaware of the battery of recorders a painted nail's length from her face, Winnie said, "This is a different world, Wan. Different worlds, different people. Go with it. Don't take everything so literally."

With a glare at Mellianna, Wander turned to the cameras and smiled. The sun was eclipsed. "We're not terrible."

She took a step back to get some space between her face and the automated machines. Mellianna tried to push the machines back again, stepping between the sisters and the cameras.

Another smile switched on, “Well, welcome again to Earth. We’ll be seeing more of you.....” she hesitated as she realised she could see almost all of the two women already, “...shortly. We’ve a special show which goes out tonight. So we’ll see you both then.”

A scream came from the feet of Wander. Mellianna looked down to see Barnaby being crushed by the slow march of the sisters, herded by the media. He was being trampled underfoot.

With a glare and a harsh, “Will you back off, for prak’s sake!” a space was made to raise Barnaby to his feet. Supported either side by the Amazonian sisters, he was half dragged to safety.

He’d died and gone to heaven.

Wander was soaking in an activ-bath in one room and Winnie sat in the huge recliner in another. As it massaged her back, Mellianna apologised to Winnie for the ten thousandth time.

The suite was luxurious, by any universal standards. The girls had the top floor of a three-hundred floor hotel, overlooking the Niagara Falls. They had a bedroom each and one spare, where Barnaby was currently recovering. The main reception area, where Winnie reclined like a Goddess on a high cloud, contained the minimal amount of furniture. If the guest wanted more, they only had to ask. A word brought the furniture from out of the walls, ceiling, or floor. The wall to wall, ceiling to floor window overlooked one of Earth’s magnificent views of the Falls. After two minutes, both girls agreed - they’d seen it.

Mellianna was explaining.....”you’ll see the ten wonders of the Universe. We are soooo pleased to have you here.”

Winnie nodded and looked distractedly out of the window. Her eyes were closing and she realised that she needed to sleep. She eased herself out of the recliner and Mellianna felt the pang of envy at the gracefulness and symmetry of Winnie, as she moved so effortlessly towards her bedroom.

“I don’t wish to be rude, Mellianna, but I’m very tired. Will you please excuse me. Just a few hours sleep, please?”

“Of course! Please, do as you please. I’ll call back later. How stupid of me. Space lag. See you both later.” She eased out of the door and stood in the corridor. The absolute cathedral silence made Mellianna take a few deep breaths. This was not going well at all.

She started to move away from the door when she said, “Prak. Barnaby!”

Her finger was a Dragonfly’s wing away from the door chime and she hesitated. Should she disturb them again?

Winnie fell headlong on to the bed and was asleep before she stopped bouncing. She sighed and turned in her sleep. Soft dreams moved through her mind and slipped away as forgotten memories. Her smile curled and relaxed. They were pleasant dreams and more were to follow.

Wander pressed the stud. The active-bath began to dry her and spray scented oils on to her skin. The air-massage finished the job and her clothes formed around her again. This time, less translucent and a more opaque pale blue, setting off her blonde explosion of hair.

She glided into the reception room to find it empty. In puzzlement she walked into Winnie's room and saw her sister fast asleep on top of the bed. Her clothes had automatically receded and she was lying completely naked on the bed. A noise behind her made her turn.

Barnaby had awoke and moved out of the spare bedroom. Seeing Wander standing at the door he had moved towards her, trying to think of something to say to this vision of beauty. As he looked past her, he saw the naked form of Winnie on the bed.

It was the sound of him hitting the floor that had caught Wander's attention.

It was a struggle, but Wander managed to get Barnaby back on to the spare bed and eased the door shut on him. She looked for an outside lock, but there wasn't one. She shrugged, he was not a threat to them. She yawned and decided that a sleep was a good idea. Returning to her own bedroom, she lay on the bed, feeling it adjust to her shape and soon fell into a light sleep.

Barnaby had been sedated, so he was not his usual bubbly self. His eyes held a glazed look as he stared at his reflection, wondering what was happening to him. His eyes were dark and he felt weary. His head of normally jet black, smooth hair was in disarray and spiky all over his head. His heart beat was erratic and he felt hot all the time. He was sickening for something, although the medipak said he was fine. He picked up the pack and held it to his head again. After a few seconds he looked at the readout.

"You are fine."

He wasn't convinced, so he pulled down his lower eye lids and looked for any discolouration. He felt his pulse and it seemed....normal. Then why was he in such a state? A tap at his door made him sit upright and try to look casual.

"Enter."

Mellianna put her head around the door and smiled. "Feeling better?"

"Fine. I'm fine. I don't know what all the fuss is about. What's happening out there?"

"We're nearly ready for you. The twins are in Preparation and they'll be ready by the time you get on set."

He felt his heart racing at the mention of the two women. "I'll be right there then." He stood to emphasise his intention. Mellianna's head disappeared and he sat down again. He dropped his head into his hands and began to weep.

The Preparation Room staff were confused. "Have these been done?" The junior production assistant trainee asked the question towards a pea-sized camera lens in the wall. "They don't need anything on them for the cameras."

"They're perfect," added another assistant.

“Get them on to the set,” a disembodied voice sounded in the room.

Winnie and Wander were escorted through a few corridors and out onto the main set. They looked up in wonder at the extravagant vista before them. They stood in a large vaulted area that was full of imitation stars.

“It’s supposed to look like the Universe,” an assistant helpfully explained. “During the show, several of the stars will grow bigger and brighter. They’ll represent all the planets you’re going to visit. I’m soooo jealous of you winning. I entered, but even if I won, I couldn’t go.”

Wander looked at her and smiled, “Why not. Are you ill?”

Winnie smiled too and said, “Because you’re part of the show?”

The assistant nodded, lowering her head. Those teeth were too perfect. They must have spent a fortune on surgery. ‘Fraid so,” she managed. “Will you follow me, please?”

They moved towards the large raised dais in the middle of the star dome. Wander looked high into the ceiling and couldn’t begin to count the number of points of lights above. A life-like rendition of the planet Earth hung at the horizon as if rising, or setting, on the stage. Directly opposite, hung the Earth’s moon. A splendid example of emotion stirring Stella beauty. The girls were obviously impressed by the set. They slowly became aware they were now the objects of attention, as the silence alerted them that everyone was now watching them.

They took their places in the two silver seats on the stage. The centre gold chair was for the host of the show. They sat and tried to relax.

“Is this your first appearance on ISB?” another assistant asked.

“ISB?” queried Wander.

“InterStellaBroadcasting. Is this your first time?” The assistant placed the recording devices carefully on the volumous chest of Wander, who was watching her every move.

“What’s that?” Wander asked without a smile.

“A microphone. So we can hear your voice?” Wander accepted the explanation and watched to see if it would move around her bosom on its own. “Have they briefed you on the running order of the show?” Both girls shook their heads in unison. “Oh, well. Just follow the lead Mr. Babyloncity will give you. You’ll be fine. Just smile a lot. Okay. You’re ready.” She moved away and disappeared somewhere past Orion.

Mellianna watched from the studio, hidden behind the curve of the set. She was anxious that Barnaby hadn’t turned up yet. There were too many cameras used on this piece, she thought. They’d be forever flicking from shot to shot, giving the viewers a headache. Where was he? She went back to the dressing room area.

Barnaby was staring into the mirror and was unaware when Mellianna enter the room. She watched the detached look on his face and knew they were in for trouble this night.

“Barnaby?”

His eyes focused in the mirror and saw her standing there. He straightened up, smiled and said. "Ready when you are."

Winnie and Wander were getting bored. They'd been sitting on these thrones for a long while and were getting uncomfortable, mainly from the growing number of people arriving to stand and stare at them.

Wander leaned over and whispered, "Are we freaks, or something? Why are these people staring at us?"

Winnie leaned nearer and whispered, "I think, on this planet, we're considered attractive."

Wander grimaced. "Well I've never seen an uglier species. But then, I've never been off Poortantween before."

The disembodied voices said, "Sorry to keep you waiting ladies. Barnaby Babyloncity is on his way."

Wander looked at Winnie and mouthed, "Can they hear us?" Winnie nodded. "Prak!" Aloud, Wander said, "Well, when I said ugly, what I meant was....."

Barnaby hurried onto the dais and looked everywhere except straight at the sisters. He seemed flustered and ill at ease.

"Sorry to keep you, ladies. Now are we all ready to go?" Barnaby looked into the night sky as if waiting a divine intervention.

The voice said, "Ready. Let's go. Start recording, we'll edit it later. Go Barnaby."

Wander tried to see what Barnaby was looking at as he started his introductory speech. He was looking towards the stars in the distance and she tried to see what he could see. A look of puzzlement crossed her face and she looked at her sister, who shrugged and started to squint into the distance too.

Barnaby tried to conduct an interview without actually looking at his guests. He was painfully aware that his trousers were showing signs of excitement and his heart raced to match his libido. He was flushed and just knew the whole Universe could see exactly what he was thinking. One slight consolation to him was, that the male audience were probably thinking exactly the same as him. It was the worse performance of his career and should've been his best. He couldn't wait for the first natural break, when he left the dais at a run.

Winnie and Wander waited, as he disappeared towards the Pole Star and wondered if they were ever going to get an opportunity to speak. Mellianna looked on in horror, as her boss ran off the set in obvious distress. She hurried to the dressing room to find Barnaby in tears.

"Barnaby? What's the matter?"

"I don't know. I just feel.....awful. I can't concentrate, I can't....do anything."

"You're thrown by the twins, aren't you." His nod was almost indiscernible. "Well, pull yourself together. You've seen beautiful women before. Just remember the last Miss Universe competition. Come on, Barnaby, you're better than this."

Barnaby was shaking his head. Mellianna sat beside him and put her arm around his shoulder. "They're only women. Aliens, I grant you, but they look human and happen to be....a little more attractive than the norm. Just look at them as aliens and get through the next few hours. Okay?"

He nodded and wiped his nose. "I'll try."

She slapped him hard across his face, bringing him upright with a sudden jerk. "You WILL pull yourself together. This show needs you. Get out there and be yourself, not this simpering love-struck wimp. Move it!" She shoved him out the door and hustled him onto the dais, giving the thumbs-up sign to the six producers as she sat him down.

The short sharp shock was just what Barnaby needed. His eyes unglazed and he smiled into the tiny camera in the distance. His autocue was running in front of his own eyes, projected from a miniscule unit fixed behind his ear. He ran through the script and turned with some hesitation to look directly at the blonde bombshell to his right. He held the stare and controlled the timbre in his voice.

"Welcome to the show, Wander, how're you enjoying it so far?"

She smiled and Barnaby felt his heart rate soar, he fought down his natural response mechanism and tried hard to concentrate on what she was saying. It was difficult, but he was desperately hanging on as she spoke.

"Fine, thank you. We love it here. We haven't seen much, but those Falls! Excellent."

"We're pleased that...you're pleased. Winnie. Welcome. How does Earth compare with Poortantween?"

She saw his discomfiture and refrained from smiling. He was extremely grateful for that. She was so kind, he could kiss her. That set off a chain of fantasies that increased his heart rate even further. He held her stare and tried desperately to concentrate on what she was saying and on composing his next question.

"I think it's as pretty as our home world, but then, as Wander says, we haven't seen much of it yet. Perhaps tomorrow?"

"Sure. That would be nice. Good. Excellent. Right." Barnaby tried to see his notes through blurred vision and shook his head to clear it.

"Stop!" the disembodied voice said. "Barnaby. Get yourself sorted. Ten minutes everybody. Then Barnaby will be back on form."

Barnaby slumped in his seat and looked asleep.

Wander whispered, "What's wrong with him?"

Winnie smiled at her and put her hand over her recording device on her chest. "We're too much for him."

Wander shook her head and said, "He needs to get more Prakking."

Winnie nodded, "Perhaps we should help." The girl's eyes met and there was a natural unspoken understanding there.

Before he knew what was happening the two sisters were man-handling him back to the dressing room. Mellianna watched on the monitor and moved to intercept them. By the time she got to the dressing room, the door had been shut and locked. She knocked gently and then a little louder. She heard sounds from inside and her face coloured. There was no mistaking what was happening in there and she felt a flash of anger. How dare he! She knocked harder.

Five minutes later, with sore knuckles and attitude to match, she tried again to get their attention once the noises had stopped. The door opened slowly and Wander stood in the doorway, almost filling it. Her hair was as wild as ever.

“Yes?” she smiled.

“Errr, is Barnaby there?”

Wander looked into the room and then back at Mellianna. “Yes. He’ll be right with you.” The door closed slowly.

Barnaby walked back to the set in a daze. He sat down and stared ahead. Mellianna stood beside him and pushed her face into his vision.

“What was THAT all about!”

“It was FANTASTIC!”

“I’m sure. But what are you doing, fraternising with....” She looked around to see if anyone was in hearing distance, “....the guests?”

“That was some fraternising, I can tell you.”

“I know. I heard.”

The two girls arrived and took their seats. There had identical self-satisfied smiles of confidence on their faces and they grinned at Mellianna.

“He’ll be all right now,” they both said in unison.

Barnaby sailed through the rest of his written material. Openly flirting with his guests, they responded with smiles and giggles, endearing themselves to all the male population of the Universe that liked two legs, two arms and a head on their species of choice. The women were not so easily swayed. The sisters were universally hated by women with two legs, two arms and one head.

The Grunnican sisters spoke as well as they were able, answering unanswerable questions, such as, “What would you like to have done if you hadn’t won this competition? What did you want to be when you were grown up? You must have been a beautiful baby, because baby, look at you now.”

Barnaby Babyloncity swung a dramatic arm across the indoor galaxy and said, “Let’s take a look at where you’ll be going on this wondrous of wonderful trips.”

A segue of all the points of interest were scrolled across the screens of the Universe. In many a home planet cries of, “That’s us. I live there!” rang out unheard by the rest.

The twins watched in awe at all the places they were going to be visiting. Their hands crept together and they squeezed each other. A smile reached their lips and nearly threw Barnaby off his track. But his intimacy with the two women had produced a cathartic result. His fear of their beauty had been diminished. He'd experienced the ultimate in physical pleasure, his ultimate dream had come true. After that there could be no fear, no anxiety, just an inner satisfaction. Plus, of course, the desire for more of the same.

Stars flickered and glowed as Barnaby's hand swept across the Universe. There were too many to count. The hand came to rest in front of his face as Barnaby said, "And all this goes to the lucky winners of our 'Must Visit' competition. Two months ago we asked all our viewers across the Universe to vote for the top ten best places to visit in the Universe before you die. Well, we had quite a response, I can tell you. In the end we had to break it down into three sentient being species. No offence to your hard shell creatures out there, but the first species was named 'Bugs', the second 'Human and derivatives' and the last, 'Non-human, but not bugs'."

He grinned at the camera, "And members of the Human and derivatives won. So now we have the top ten places Human and derivatives would like to visit as voted for by our viewers. Here they are....."

Ten stars glowed and their names appeared by each of them. "The top ten places to visit in the Universe. And the Grunnican sisters are going to all of them as winners of our inter-galactic competition. Well done ladies!"

He applauded wildly and was joined by the ring of watchers outside of the camera's range. It was the first time they took their eyes off the twins and did something. Wander and Winnie smiled at each other and had the same thought, "*When will this be over?*"

The show reached out across the ether of space and touched the worlds of countless beings. Some of who could even understand the broadcast, while others who thought it a torture show. By the time it was edited and dubbed into three thousand different basic tongues, the show would be seen the Universe over. It paved the way for the journey of a lifetime for the two homely sisters from Poortantween.

Winnie was in the activ-bath and Wander sat naked on the balcony. She was half asleep and dreaming of her trip of a lifetime. She was finally beginning to look forward to it. She didn't relish all the hype and hullabaloo surrounding the media interest in the competition winners, she just wanted to get on with the holiday.

She was missing her family already and her mother had just called to say she'd seen the broadcast - and how ugly the people on Earth were! Although Wander agreed with her mother's sentiments, Winnie had told her not to voice them. They were guests on this planet, not invaders. Wander looked down at the Falls. There was a lot more water on this planet than her homeland. She scratched her thigh and felt the material begin to form. She tapped the skin lightly and the material receded. She had no need for clothes at the moment. She hated wearing clothes at any time. At home, no one needed clothes.

She looked at the menu again and tried to decide what she wanted to eat for the evening meal. The food was strange and confusing. She needed to discuss it with Winnie and get a little help from her enforced guardians. On that thought she wondered how Barnaby was doing. She rose from the chair and went into the spare bedroom. He was fast asleep, naked on top of the bed. She smiled at him and felt a little sorry for the pure human race. Their second bout of sexual athletics was a little more entertaining for the girls. They were normally used to the men taking more of an active role, but this man was still too overwhelmed by their bodies to do anything but lie back and enjoy it. It was also difficult for the girls, there were two of them and him with only one.....

"Hello." Winnie stood in the doorway and looked at the sleeping form on the bed. "Still asleep? Not much stamina."

Wander shook her head. "None at all. Perhaps he'll get better with practice."

"If he doesn't die with pleasure first."

The both laughed and Barnaby stirred in his sleep.

"At least he won't see us as so much of a mystery as before."

"His stare was that of wonder and stupefaction. They certainly think we look odd here, don't they?"

"They look odd to us too. So....uglyyyyyy." Both laughed again. Barnaby opened his eyes briefly, smiled and was asleep again.

They touched the door jam and the door slid silently closed. They stood on the balcony and admired the view once again.

"We'll see the wonders of the Universe that'll make this look pale," said Winnie, in a far away voice.

"It doesn't look much to me anyway," said Wander.

Far below a crowd was gathering, looking up toward the roof of their hotel. "What're they looking at?" Wander craned her neck to look upwards. There was a short structure above her, but they were in the top suite of the building.

"Us, I think," said Winnie with a wave. The crowd responded. "I think we'll have to use more clothing here."

"Speaking of which, we should pack."

Winnie shook her head. "Already done. They've supplied everything. I think they've got a clothing contract or something. For each planet we'll have different clothes."

"Great! Do we get to chose?"

Winnie shook her head. "Unlikely. We'll just have to see how it goes."

Wander leaned her back against the rail and looked at her sister. "Are you happy about Barnaby and Mellianna coming along with us?"

Winnie shrugged, "I don't see we have a say in it. They represent the sponsor and the media company. Without them we wouldn't be here. We just have to turn up for photo shoots and be good girls. In the meantime, we just have to enjoy it all as best we can."

They clasped hands and hugged each other. Their minds were in tune and their thoughts shared. Their smiles were identical and the excitement shone from their eyes.

Barnaby turned in his sleep as he recalled the recent tumble on the bed with the fantastic Grunnican sisters. He was amazed at the firmness of their young bodies, breasts you could bounce a coin off. He was not at all put off by the size, or the quantity of bosoms on each of the women. He'd looked at the nipples on each of the six breasts and hadn't known where to put his face.

PART 2 THE ICE FIELDS OF ZACARON.

Wander hated the take-off. Parts of her body wanted to be where other parts of her body already were. It seemed to her that one breast wanted to swap with one of the others. Her heart coveted the position her two livers currently occupied, while her eyeballs wanted freedom from her skull. She was pleased when the stressful part was over. Now came the boring part.

Their journey from Poortantween had been particularly boring. It had taken nearly three Earth weeks, which equated to two Poortantween weeks, and Wander had become particularly fretful. The ship had been a basic, people carrier, with little in the way of luxury, or time displacement activities. The sisters had been almost confined to their cabin, except for meal times, when the small dinning area had shifts to feed the passengers. On several occasions they had come close to arguing, something they rarely did.

The sisters rarely enjoyed playing games, but the endless hours of inactivity drove them to seek something to occupy their minds somehow. They had slowly become addicted to SnaggIT, a board game requiring little skill and a great deal of noisy participation. An indecisive result often had the girls mock-fighting over who had won. Several times their rolling around the small cabin had produced bruises and bumps, quickly resolved with an application of bots. It had given them hours of joyful entertainment and had bonded them even further as sisters.

Wander held the box in her lap and waited for her sister to join her for another game. She lay stretched out on the wide couch and looked around the spacious lounge they occupied as a new 'family'. The walls were predominantly pink, her least favourite colour, but it wasnice. The huge front window looked out directly into space, a thing she could not bring herself to do. The feeling of falling into a bottomless pit overwhelmed her. The others loved it, but she could not even look anymore.

The smooth, soft, curving walls blended together with the floor and ceiling, giving Wander the sensation of being back in one of her mother's wombs. She settled back deeper into the couch, it adjusting to support her bone structure and individual fleshy padding. The lighting was low at this moment and could be adjusted by voice commands. She played for a while raising and lower it, until she became bored. She was getting fidgety. 'Busy legs', her mother called it. She stood and walked around the room.

The wall-sized screen glowed in anticipation, but she ignored it. She'd never been enticed by screen entertainment, she always wanted the real thing. She wanted to be doing things, rather than watching somebody else do them. She ran her fingers over the velvety surface of the walls, feeling it shy away from her touch.

Lights, off," she said and the room was in darkness. A soft glow from the floor allowed her to see where she was walking and she moved towards the closed window. She was shaking as she said, "Window, open." The cover dissolved and the mighty depth of space was before her. She closed her eyes quickly and then opened them slowly.

The view was breathtaking, but fearsome as well. The black backdrop was lightened by so many stars. Many bright points of lights, blurring out the rest. The suns, the moons and planets. All to see and wonder at.

"Window closed." She'd seen enough. She was feeling anxious and disturbed, but she was trying to overcome her fears. During this trip around the Universe, she'd need to overcome many of her fears and prejudices. She sat back on the couch, cradling the board game. Where was her sister?

Winnie looked in the mirror and hated her hair. She pulled and pushed at the long strands and they stayed exactly where placed. She turned around and looked at it from all directions and finally decided that the wild look had outlived its welcome. She tried smoothing it down and shorting the length. Then she pulled the strands out and let the body of hair hang down to her waist. She didn't like that either. Far to, 'young woman'!

"Back to normal," she said and watched her hair writhe itself into her standard style. She nodded in satisfaction, but made a mental note to discuss a new style with Wander. Where was her sister?

Barnaby opened his eyes and sighed. That was a good book, he thought. The images and words blended nicely over his cornea and the machine switched off the images as he opened his eyes. He would recommend that title to Mellianna. He sat up from his sleeper chair and stretched. He had no idea of time, or what day it was. After a week on board he was only just beginning to get bored. He'd used the time so far, to unwind his mind. He'd been particularly stressful in the build up to this tour. There had been a great deal of work to do to make the show a success. The arrangement for the tour had become a nightmare and he was grateful to Mellianna for taking much of the strain. She needed this break too.

He looked unseeing at the wall screen and the colourful images of the unknown programme. He was looking forward to this trip, even more looking forward to getting to know the Grunnican twins better. He stood and reminisced again about his two experiences with these fantastic examples of womanhood. He could not keep the smile off his face and his knees went weak as he remembered the detail. A chime sounded and he ended his reverie to open the door to his mini-suite.

Mellianna stood smiling in the corridor. He waved her in. He regretted being disturbed from his pleasant daydreams, but he was pleased to see her. She was not unattractive. But today she seemed....more feminine? When he made any comparison with the twins, he knew there was no competition. But he had to remind himself that in a few short months the twins would be back on Poortantween and he would be back on Earth. He was determined to enjoy his time with them, but knew in his heart it was not going to be a long term relationship. In the meantime he had a job to do and Mellianna was an important part of that job. He must remain professional and courteous to her.

What was different about her?

"I thought we ought to double check on the arrangements for Zacaron. If you have a moment or two, Barnaby?"

He nodded and let the door close silently. "Of course. Make yourself comfortable, Mel. A drink?"

She instinctively looked at the timer on her finger and shook off the fantasy that there was any reality to time when in space. If you fancied eating, you ate. If you felt like a drink, you drank.

"Are you having one?"

Barnaby thought a moment before nodding. "Let's get into the mood. We've some Zacaronian Gin here somewhere." He turned to the blank wall and said, "Two Zacaronian Gins. Ice and Relmon."

He turned to Mellianna and smiled. "Won't be long."

Moments later a sigh sounded from the wall and an aperture appeared. He took the frozen globes and placed them on a low table by the side where Mellianna was sitting. The large vessels swirled with the spirity liquid and the bright blue Relmon fruit added a colour clash that was both pleasing and off-putting at the same time.

He sat beside her and raised his glass. "Harmony."

"Harmony," she responded and took a tentative sip. The glass was cold on her lips and the spirit exuded a powerful and erotic smell. She felt her nasal passages clearing as she breathed in. The taste was at first quite bland and then it took over the mouth, section at a time. The tip of the tongue became numb and the sides then experienced an intense sweetness, followed by a tingling sourness that changed rapidly back into sweetness again. Mellianna could feel her body almost wriggle with pleasure as the liquid moved through her blood stream. She placed the glass carefully on the table until she was sure what the lasting effects were going to be. She didn't want to make a fool of herself in front of her boss. That was his job.

Barnaby sipped his appreciatively and joined his glass with hers on the table. "Bow's your yabin?" he asked, his tongue a little numb.

"Bardon?"

"More slowly this time, "How IS your cabin?"

"Vine. Tank you."

"Good. Bery good."

They took another sip and sat back in their recliners.

“Bice dink. Don you fink?”

“Mmmm.”

Wander was drifting into sleep, something she often did when there was nothing else to occupy her mind, or body. Despite the luxurious suite, plenty of space and three companions, she still felt alone. What were the chances of that! She briefly thought about a little Ladies and Gentleman with Barnaby, but quickly dismissed it. He was too boring. She liked her men with some action in them. She turned her thoughts towards the crew. So far, she'd only met the Captain, who was a female, and a first Lieutenant. A callow human derivative youth with lack-lustre eyes. There had to be more crew, hadn't there?

Her mind was drifting to a place far away and a long time ago. To a boy that broke her hearts. A dalliance in the afternoon led to a long and wonderful relationship that stretched on forever. She was reliving the experiences as she drifted into sleep and the smile on her face brought another to Winnie as she stood over her sister as she slept.

Winnie was bored too. Where was everyone? She revealed the window and looked out into space. She loved this view. This feeling of falling into the unknown, not knowing when you'd stop. The stars seemed unmoving, yet at the same time moving her towards them.

The trip to Earth was the first time she'd been off-world and so far she'd found the experience exhilarating and special. She knew Wander had more reservations about this trip than she had, but she knew Wander well enough to know she would enjoy it all - eventually. They had to make the most of it. They would probably never get the opportunity leave Poortantween again.

The ten planets each held an exciting venue for recreation. Sentient beings from many galaxies had voted these planets as the very best in the Universe. If it was good enough for them.....

The stars looked cold and uninviting, yet held a fascination that had been shared by countless squillions of watchers down the millenniums. The stars were there before any life stirred in the Universe and they would probably be there when all life left the Universe. That was a long way down in history and time. Right now it was important to seize the moment. Winnie was ready for that.

She turned and watched Wander sleeping. The wild blonde hair lay relaxed around her shoulders, framing the delicate bone structure favoured by the inhabitants of Poortantween. The bots had removed any vestige of clothing as Wander slept, as always, completely naked and relaxed in her own world.

The stars drew her back and she made herself comfortable, watching their imperceptible progress. Her thoughts turned to Poortantween and the people she'd left behind. Her parents had not wanted her to leave. They were fearful that two young women alone in the Universe could only come to harm. They knew their daughters' resolve and determination, but it was the deep rooted parental urges that drove them to voice their fears and trepidations.

“Be careful,” was the cautionary warning. As if they would want to do anything else but, ‘Be careful’.

“There may be men out there that will disrespect you. Use you and abuse you.....” The thought train had been too much and their mother had not finished her sentence.

Wander had whispered aside, “What about the men? They don’t know how much we can use and abuse MEN, yet.” Winnie had forced a smile away and nodded slightly.

Their father watched his daughters and sighed. “You’re mother’s only concerned about you. It’s natural. When you become parents, you’ll know all about it. Humour her, pacify her and don’t EVER send messages back that will worry her. Understood?”

The girls had nodded and he moved towards them for a family hug. He was proud of his girls. He held back a tear or two as he hugged his daughters for what may be the last time. He knew there were distractions and attractions out there in the galaxy and expected the sisters to be tempted. They may never want to return. His wife knew that and he knew it. But did the girls know it?

The headache was becoming too painful to bear. Mellianna could not raise her head and therefore could not even get medication. She lay and hoped it would get better. It didn’t. An hour later and she was feeling even worse. She was very close to vomiting and the pounding in her head was now unbearable. Difficult as it was, she had to get up and grope her way to the bathroom and find something to take. She made the bathroom, but her stomach contents refused to remain where they were supposed to. This made her headache even more excruciating. She lay on the floor and struggled to stay alive.

Sometime later Barnaby had a similar reaction and found himself sharing the floor with Mellianna. They were distantly aware of each other, but were not in the mood to acknowledge each other’s existence. They lay together on the floor, while time slipped away. The distance they travelled growing further from Earth and nearer to Zacaron.

The ball was a mass of different colours, looking like something a child would love to chew. Winnie stood and watched through the window, with Barnaby by her side. Barnaby watched Winnie’s reflection in the window, studying every curve on her body. He ached to touch her again and repeat the most exciting moments of his life, but the girls had been strangely aloof since being on the ship. He was hoping a spell of planetfall would help them change their mind towards him again. He longed for another trip to heaven.

He noticed a movement behind them and saw Mellianna watching the planet as well. He tuned and smiled at her. She too had been strangely distant from him, especially since the incident with the Zacaronian Gin. They both felt very embarrassed about that. She smiled back and he noticed how nice that smile was. It seemed genuine. Had she forgiven him? Better not push things too soon. They had to work together for the whole trip, if she got mad at him now.....

What was it about her that was different? He’d spent the most of the journey thinking about it. She’d changed something about herself that made her seem moreattractive. If he couldn’t figure it out he would have to ask her, it was a puzzle that was driving him crazy.

He was also being driven crazy by what Winnie was almost wearing. He was close enough to touch her and could see the fine and delicate material that covered her most feminine areas of her body. The colouration was

unusual - a red animal fur effect, with the stripes curving around her breasts and in between her legs. The material even looked like it had a texture of fur, but Barnaby knew it was all an illusion. There were no clothes on these girls, just bot effects.

The globe increased in size as the ship started its approach orbit and more detail could now be seen. The multi-coloured patches blended into each other and became whole tracts of land tinted in separate colours.

“What’s that?” Wander said from behind them, hardly daring to watch.

“Zacaron,” said Mellianna.

“What’re all those pretty colours?”

“Snow,” answered Mellianna.

“Snow?” said Wander and Winnie together. “What’s snow?”

The landing was less violent than the take-off and Wander expressed her gratitude for that. “Prak!” she said, to anyone listening.

The luggage was all packed and ready to be taken to their hotel, leaving the visitors free to disembark by foot. The ramp was long and shallow, but under cover. It took them all by surprise how warm the air was, for a planet supposedly covered in snow and ice. The passageway led them into the terminal where a very provisional custom service operated. As special guests to the planet, they were soon whisked through and away to the awaiting transport. As they stepped in to the large vehicle they could see a row of recording equipment following their every move. The media machine was up and running.

Barnaby made a point of waving to the cameras and stopped to give a statement as one of the remote recoding heads zoomed towards him, stopping a bird’s feather away from his mouth.

“We’re delighted to visit this beautiful planet of Zacaron. Yes, the Grunnican sisters had a very good trip and are really looking forward to see the sights of the most famous winter sports planet in the Solar System, indeed, the Universe.”

Mellianna hovered behind him and gently pushed him in the back, to get him to move away and into the car.

“We’ll have a press conference later tomorrow and give you all the details of the visit then. I have to go now. Bye.”

The car accelerated, throwing them back into their seats, climbing into the bright pink sky. It banked to the right and they could look down over the spaceport, crowded with ships of all shapes and sizes. It was daylight and the pink sky suffused everything with a rosy glow. The ships glistened in the strong sunlight and the tarmac reflected the sun back in a reddened dazzling shine. The car banked again and the spaceport was gone. Paler pink sky surrounded them and they felt the vehicle accelerate rapidly. Wander felt her major organs moving again and wished this movement would soon stop.

With an almost physical lurch, they all felt the craft start its decent. Winnie looked out of the window to see the city below. The area was covered in pink snow and glistening. High on a mountain clung a city of steel and

glass. It was like a crystal growing in the snow, delicate points of buildings rising at odd angles from the ground. The birthing sun catching the sides of the glass and sparkling the reflection back. Winnie thought it was the most beautiful sight she'd ever seen.

The car dipped and glided towards the high mountain range. As it turned for landing they could see the whole city and marvelled at its design and charm. Except for Wander who was trying not to be ill. The landing site was an open area in the centre of the ring of buildings and the craft dropped and landed gently on the packed snow. The whine of the engines died and they knew they'd arrived at the first of ten of the most spectacular destinations in the Universe.

The Hotel 'On the Piste' welcomed them with open arms. Primarily because of the phalanx of the Universe-wide auto media machines lined up in the lobby. The manager, Jonno Huutch, hastened over to the two guests and shook their hands profusely. A human derivate who could not take his eyes off Wander's triple breasts, was suddenly lost for words until his more able female assistant stood in for him and finished the welcoming speech. Wander prised her hand away from his, dried it on her ultra thin strip of pink clothing around her waist and faced the cameras again.

She had memorised the speech Barnaby had written for them and she finished with a smile. Huutch's attention was switched to the smile. He was fully entrapped in her spell.

Wander noticed his reaction idly and muttered under her breath, "Not another one!" She saw Winnie looking at her and interpreted that look instantly. She needed to behave. She turned on the smile and directed the lethal weapon directly at Jonno. He melted. Straight into the carpet and the assistant led them away from the crowds and media banks. They found themselves in a large elevator and the doors silently closed.

"One-oh-one," the assistant whispered. The lift accelerated upwards. Wander held her stomach and lost her smile.

"Welcome, once again, to the 'On the Piste'. My name's Jossy. Call me anytime you need anything. We'll go to your suites shortly and I hope everything will be to your liking."

The doors opened and they walked the silent corridors to a series of gold doors. Four of them opened as if by their presence and Jossy stood and waved them into the rooms.

"Take any you wish. They're all the same. The best we have. I'll see you later. Have a special day at the 'On the Piste'."

Winnie stood in awe at the room before her. It was massive and seemed to stretch forever. At the far end was a picture window that looked out over the mountains of pink snow. The whole room was softly coloured and furnished and looked the height of luxury. There was nothing like this on Poortantween. She rested her hands on the warm soft window and stared down the slopes. Hundreds of skiers swooped their way down the runs and seemed to be having a great time. It would be her turn soon and she was looking forward to it.

Mellianna couldn't believe her luck in being part of this holiday of a life-time. She was getting the same treatment as the two people who had won the prize. She smiled as she took in the ambience of the room. By

the time she'd investigated the bathroom facilities, the huge triple-size bed in the bedroom, her luggage had arrived and hotel staff were unpacking it for her. She was in a dilemma. She'd arranged for solid currency for this planet, along with currency for all the planets they were to visit. But she was unsure how much she was supposed to tip the staff.

Here problem was solved when she offered a small wad of notes to the last of the porters, before he quietly closed her bedroom door. With a polite shake of his head he left, refusing to take the proffered tip. This brought another thought to her mind, the girls needed some spending money and she decided to get that to them right away.

Barnaby was delighted at the respect the hotel had shown him and his entourage. It was obviously very good PR for the hotel with all the media interest. He'd meet with the manager later and see what he could get out of this deal. He looked out at the view and smiled. This was a truly inspiring place.

Wander sat in the chair and watched the huge screen along one wall of her living area. They had three days in here and she was already bored. The screen showed a rolling promo of the city, the hotel and the skiing. She was resentful and couldn't figure out why. She should be having a great time, just being here. What was her problem? She tried to analyse it and she just felt.....down.

Wander knew that her personality lacked...what was it her mother said?.....'sparkle'. She lacked sparkle. Winnie had sparkle in abundance, but Wander never made the grade when it came to sparkling. She watched the walls subtly change colour and thought back over the recent years - how she'd become more and more morose. She reached behind her and lifted the large pink glass and sipped at the totally transparent liquid. It was only the trickling down her throat that confirmed there was anything to drink in the glass at all. It burned briefly and a warm flush through the body quickly followed. She immediately started to relax.

A few years back, she'd watched images of her childhood and had seen a happy, laughing girl. Where had that child disappeared to? She fought to concentrate, bend her memory back into early youth and beyond. Something had happened that had turned a happy girl into a sombre woman. She took another sip. She wanted the happy girl back.

Jonno Huutch lay on his bed and turned restlessly. Sleep was not forthcoming, neither did he seek it. It was midday and he should be hard at work, managing the most prestigious hotel in this part of the galaxy. But he was struck down by an emotion he could not control. His staff had been notified that he was taking a break and would return sometime later in the day.

Jonno got off the bed and walked into his bathroom. It was as palatial as the rest of the hotel, yet he saw only a haunted face staring back at him. His eyes were red rimmed and his face looked drained of colour. He wiped the mirror and yet the image remained the same. His pale blue hair swept back dramatically from his high forehead, giving him the gloss of sophistication that was the current fashion in middle-aged human derivatives. He was handsome in a ...sort of off-world kind of way. His bright blue eyes had a stare that few men could

hold for long. Jonno was no push-over when it came to physical activity. He never backed-down in arguments and almost always got his way. He reminded himself of this as he tried to get his old mind-set working again.

He took a deep breath and told himself he should pull his thoughts together. He was an adult, not an adolescent kid. This was a stupid, if intense, infatuation with a guest in the hotel. He mustn't take this further and he must remain professional. He squared his shoulders and took another deep breath. He would apologise to the lady.....personally.

Winnie had spent an hour in her dream suite and was becoming aware that she missed Wander. She decided to suggest they shared one of the suites. It was pointless them being alone! It was a good idea and her sister should see the practicality in it. She touched her thigh and images appeared on her skin. A sarong effect was being created that hid her nipples and crotch enough to be 'decent'. She walked out of her door and moved to the next and pressed the guest tone.

There was no response so Winnie pushed the open fingerstud and walked in. She stood and looked down the length of the room and saw her sister near the window. Not so much near the window as up against the window, with a man thrusting his intentions on her. Winnie started to run until she realised it was Wander making the 'happy' noise and so she slowed down. Wander saw her sister enter the room and winked at her as she responded to the man's urgent attentions. He was pressing her even further up against the window, where anyone outside could look up and see a good exhibition of Ladies and Gentlemen.

Winnie's face fumed, but in deference to her sister's wishes, she slowly backed out of the room. She stood in the corridor and tried to control her growing anger. How could she! She was supposed to be on her best behaviour. They hadn't been on the planet more than two hours and she was.....Winnie kicked the wall and hurt her toe. She held back the scream and waited for the bots to get there and sort it out. The pain eased and she limped back to her room.

Barnaby sat opposite Mellianna and tried to concentrate on the job at hand. There were many detailed and complicated arrangements to be formalised for their visit to Zacaron. The list was almost complete and everyone in the loop had been informed of the schedule and even the media had a complete list of times and venues.

Barnaby shook his head and said, "The girls don't seem to have much free time to themselves?"

Mellianna nodded, "Neither do we." She looked up sharply and added, "I mean, the support team....as such. It's a busy schedule. Has to be to get to all ten planets, in as many weeks."

Barnaby nodded and sighed, "Well, better give them the 'good' news."

Mellianna remained seated as she said, "What do you think of the Grunnican sisters?"

"In what way?" Barnaby said, heading for the door.

"In any way," Mellianna said carefully.

Barnaby stopped and turned his stare on her. “Nice girls. Very attractive. Good for the company profile.”

Mellianna looked at her handheld and said, “I meant...more at a personal level?”

Barnaby’s eyes narrowed and he said quietly, “What do you mean?”

“I mean...more, what are they really like? Are they going to become a problem? Get troublesome. Be easy to manage. That sort of thing.”

“I think they’ll be great.” Barnaby looked slightly relieved. “They seem happy enough women. Don’t you agree?”

“I’m not sure. Wander seems.....distracted and Winnie goes along with anything we say. I just get a feeling.....”

“What?”

“I just think they’re going to be trouble.”

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