



Chapter 1

Tarra and the Mission

The sunrise on Tarra was always spectacular! The morning radiance of the Zun—cool, yet bright orange, blue, and purple— created such a magnificent interplay of colors and shades that even the launching site looked alive. It appeared as if it enjoyed bathing itself in the curious combinations of light.

At this early hour Anthony and four of his best friends stood on the Five Elements launching pad, holding each other's hands. They were thinking about the challenging task at hand. A mighty invader, the fear dust, was taking over their peaceful planet of Tarra, and the team was heading to Earth to find an antidote.

Anthony, as captain of the mission, had to evaluate once again whether each member of the team was ready. He had to be absolutely sure they demonstrated all the necessary qualities for the mission to be a success. He smiled encouragingly to his friends.

The girls, Audrey and Lissy, were standing to his left, quietly discussing the final details of the path. They were ten—the same age as Anthony. Lissy, a slim girl with long blonde hair, was always a surprise to the team. She was full of bubbling energy. New ideas and innovative solutions constantly streamed from her with the speed of a tumbleweed rolling in the strong wind. In fact, Lissy was frequently chosen for the most complicated missions because of her close connection to the Wind element. She was a bright star on the team, a doer with push-through spirit.

Of course, Lissy had her challenges as well. She could get quite short-tempered if the task did not turn out to her liking. The last time, when she thought the launch was not happening quickly enough, she became quite frustrated. Because of the angry Wind gusts inside her, she started conjuring heaps of green feathers and throwing them at her teammates. Audrey had gotten so upset with Lissy's "chicken tantrum," she had to temporarily break the group connection necessary for launching.

Audrey, on the contrary, was calm and well-grounded. She always brought confidence and order to the chaotic actions of the team. Physically, Audrey was as solid as her arguments— well built, strong, and reliable. Her short brown hair neatly framed her round face, which radiated a confident smile. All her life she was a rule maker as well as a rule follower. She loved structure and order. Because of her analytical qualities, she was asked to come up with a solid strategic plan for the mission.

She had not only interviewed each interstellar medium separately about their vision and possible pitfalls of the mission, but also asked each member of the team for their input. She researched all the materials available in the Tarrian Cosmic Library about previous Earth expeditions and spoke to all the astronauts. She studied the subject of fear pollution, the fear dust, and other dangerous space pollutants. She processed all the information in her mind and compiled a brief vision of possible solutions to the problem. Audrey was ready!

All five members of the team were well prepared because of Audrey's analytical and planning skills. Her only issue was that sometimes she had trouble letting old stuff go. Even now, speaking to Lissy, she was half expecting another green feather tantrum from her.

Andy was eight years old. He was the youngest boy in the group. He was a quick thinker and a decision maker, the quality that allowed him to act fast in all situations. Andy was not a tall boy, but he always had a happy smile on his face. It was he who reacted first to the signal from Tarra about the fear dust and promptly shielded the team with the first courage protective coat. It gave the group the time to think about a stronger shield without being immediately affected by the powerful pollutant. He was also a lucky one. Some of the successes of the group were due to his pure luck. Andy was also the soul of the team. Fun and laughter seemed to seep into everything he did. His sense of humor was as necessary for the team as his luck.

Another valuable skill Andy had was a genius splash. Not all of Tarra's children had one. A genius splash was a special award given for achieving a spiritual skill from the Master Skills Manual. Andy learned how to master Fire on his planet. Within a second, he could turn into a flame and back again. Andy was also the technical wizard of the team. He could break multilayered energy codes and get to the bottom of the most entangled energies.

Quite opposite of Andy, the Saashes were never in a hurry. Saash, an eleven-year-old, was the oldest and the coolest. There were really three of them rolled into one. They could be either a girl, a boy, or both, depending on the type of the genetic coding they were using at the moment. On Tarra, they belonged to a group named tri-lingual beings. The team called them the Saashes. The Saashes claimed that when their minds stepped into the slow brain wave during daily contemplation, the ideas for their best inventions popped into them. The Saashes were as fluid as water. In fact, they were the Master of Water, a genius, who could co-create with the Water element of Tarra. Even from an early age, the Saashes were considered a sage, whose advice was sought after even by the most respected professionals.

Andy and the Saashes positioned themselves at the launching mark to Anthony's right. Both were looking patiently at their cosmic timers. They seemed quite composed and calm.

Yes, they are ready, thought Anthony. They are the right people for the expedition. Am I ready though?

Anthony himself had extensive knowledge of Tarra and its nature. In addition to the theory, he'd mastered the Tarrian balancing forces. In case the five elements of nature got out of balance, he could always take a leadership role in harmonizing the five forces. Because of Anthony's expertise, their launches from and landings on Tarra had always taken place smoothly and safely. There had not been a single crash incident on his watch.

Anthony was gifted in many ways. His genius splash was for mastering Sound. He understood the meaning of Tarra's sounds. He heard the harmony tune of crystals and flowers, woods and oceans, land and mountains. Anthony played all the musical instruments available on Tarra. He composed beautiful tunes together with the birds and dolphins. The downside was that because his hearing was so finely tuned to harmony, he could be easily affected by impure sounds, such as noises from non-harmonious activities. Loud arguing or road traffic brought about a pulsing headache.

Unlike many Tarrians, Anthony knew a lot about his lineage. His father told him his family genealogical tree showed a connection to the very first vital signal of life coming from Earth. Anthony suspected he might still have distant cosmic relatives on Earth.

I might even be able to meet them, thought Anthony with a twinge of hope in his heart.

Billions of years ago, when there was no life yet on Tarra, but only the possibility of it, the planet caught a vital signal of life coming from Earth through the Zun. That impulse got rooted on Tarra and marked the beginning of life.

Tarra was the biggest planet in the Brilliant Way Galaxy. The galaxy harbored millions of stars, amongst which the Zun was the brightest and the purest. Tarra was the lucky planet to receive the vibrations of the Zun's magical sounds, vibrant light, beautiful loving energy, and lively mind. Tarra was a creative thinking planet.

Initially there were a lot of similarities to Earth. One might even say that Tarra started behaving like a giant copycat to Earth.

However, before long, it developed its own unique identity. As the Zun streamed its creative thoughts to Tarra, these merged with the vital signal of life from Earth and the seeds of love coming from Tarra's core. Complicated combinations of energy codes translated into the forms of life unique to Tarra. However, the parenting love of Earth was always there.

Having Earth as its faraway ancestor, Tarra was similar to it in some ways. It had vast woods and deep seas, serene villages, and busy cities. However, they were all different. Everything was bigger in size, less dense, and brighter. Everything was more colorful, more animated, and more alive.

The most important people on Tarra were children. They were more mature and skilled than Earth children of the same age. Early, they learned the art of creation. It was called daydreaming. One of such creations was colorful music waterfalls. Tarrian children taught waterfalls to play the music of the rainbow colors. The waterfalls picked up this idea and went even further. They learned to change shapes in accordance with the ideas of the daydreamer. The rainbow-colored singing streams of water formed themselves into pink dolphins, sapphire flamingos, silver elephants, and aquamarine roses.

For many years Tarra was a happy place, where children played, and their imagination thrived, leading to many new ideas and creations. Then one day the fear dust arrived. It came with a blast of cosmic Wind through a crack in time and space created by a meteorite, sent by the evil spirit Bomma. In the past, Tarra was strong because it was united. Its lakes, forests,

mountains, and soil were strong enough to protect Tarra's people. They wove an invisible safety net made of silver energy around the planet to keep the fear dust away from it.

However, when the evil meteorite fell, it broke the unity. The silver energy safety net fell apart and the fear dust seeped through the thin fabric of children's dreams at night. It lodged in the children's hearts when they were asleep and couldn't invent the antidote to fight it off. The fear dust spread on Tarra, creating Bomma bullies, dullness creepers, fun killers, and screaming faces. These terrifying shades started following the children during the day, frightening them, interfering with their creations, and preventing them from having fun. Poor young ones could not play, could not run around in the fields, and could not find happiness anymore. All they could do was sit in the dark caves of Tarra's mountains, shivering from fear. In spite of the children's voluntary isolation and brain protective precautions, the fear dust was finding more and more ways to seep inside the thinking planet, penetrating deeper and deeper into every living being. Life itself was slowing down and starting to show signs of decay.

The members of Anthony's team were lucky. The fear dust was just discovered on Tarra when the group was returning from a scientific research expedition at the Little Monkey Constellation. An emergency signal from Mission Control was sent to Anthony's group to take precautionary measures.

Indeed, the mission detectors began to register high levels of the fear dust pollution when they were just touching Tarra's atmosphere. The shield the group created was strong enough to keep them fear free for a few days. However, it did not have enough power to save Tarra. Because Anthony's group was not yet touched by the evil pollutant, it made them the only ones fit for the special task.

Being Tarra's cosmic parent, Mission Control hoped, Earth itself could help Anthony's team find or create the necessary antidote. Only then could Tarra's children and the rest of the planet be saved.

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