

Planetary support group

Theadosia Kurniawan

THE GALAXY was indeed an amazing spectacle. Swirls of brilliant red, blue and gold, and clouds of dust and rocky debris that dreamily floated across the black realm. Somewhere, an electric motor whirred loudly, and a glass cylinder lift began to decelerate. Level 4.568 billion was displayed on a top screen, and the elevator came to a smooth halt. The glass doors opened and out stepped a cloaked figure, undoubtedly feminine, who walked briskly away from the lift. The figure crossed a long, dimly lit hallway and a reception desk slowly came into view.

The receptionist immediately recognised the figure and said, ‘She’s waiting, go in,’ and pointed to a large door behind her.

The figure gave a slight nod of thanks, and proceeded to open the heavy door. The room inside was a large, round dome, surrounded by stained glass windows in which light shone through, colouring the room as if it were bordered by rainbows. At the centre of the room was a great round table, encircled by ten grand armchairs, all occupied — except for one.

A muscular and good-looking young man was having a deep and somewhat emotional conversation with a large woman next to him. The talk was hushed when the last member of the circle — the figure — finally arrived. The figure, profoundly embarrassed, mouthed a ‘sorry’ to the large woman, and ran to her chair.

‘Ah, I thought there was one more member joining us today! Glad you came my dear, welcome,’ said the woman. She

had a golden complexion, blonde hair, orange eyes, and gold-framed spectacles. The golden woman stood up, displaying a colossal physique, and announced, ‘Well good evening everybody! Welcome to this year’s first support group gathering! I’m Raelene Sun, and I’ll be your group leader.’ She gleamed, looking at her members, ‘Now, to get the ball rolling, I think we should introduce ourselves, one by one, and share our distresses, our troubles and weaknesses — let out all that negativity, yes? Don’t be shy now!’ She looked around again, hoping to see some enthusiasm around the room. After a long silence, she continued, ‘Yes, well, I was having an engaging conversation with Jupe here,’ pointing to the muscly young man. ‘Everyone, Jupe is 17 years old and the head of his football team at school. Why don’t you share your little story with us Jupe?’

Feeling forced, Jupe slowly stood up, his face hanging low. ‘Yeah hi, umm I’m into footy, and well ... I was popular, and I loved being popular. All the guys and girls loved me and wanted to know me. It’s all good until this happened,’ and with that he lifted his head with shame and there, on the centre of his chin, was a big red spot — a giant, swelling pimple. A small and stout young man sitting three chairs away began to burst with laughter, but it died out when Raelene gave him a glare.

‘Well, there’s nothing else I wanna say,’ Jupe sighed and sat back down, humiliated.

Beginning to feel sorry for Jupe and realising his mistake, the small and stout teen decided that he should share his story in return. He stood up and gave an apologetic look towards Jupe, before introducing himself, ‘Sup, name’s Plut Lowell, 16, well, I was in a band, Hades’ Planet, you guys know?’ Some of the congregation nodded. ‘Yeah, well, my idiot manager, Charon, kicked me out, just cuz I was “too small, which isn’t good for the band’s image”. Well that’s that, the end of my epic career; they even changed the band’s name now to Planet X.

I'm sick and tired of the music business.' Plut slumped back in his chair.

'Thank you Plut — and Jupe, of course. It takes courage to be open about your inner angst, but sharing helps.' Raelene patted their backs. 'Now, what about you, my dear?'

The figure — shocked by being singled out — nodded slightly, stood up and adjusted her long cloak. Signs of depression and fatigue were displayed on her pale face, but she was evidently beautiful. Her back was hunched and her figure was hidden underneath a tattered olive green cloak, ripped in most places. Skeletal hands held the cloak in place at the front of her neck. 'I'm ...' she gave a rasped cough, 'ever since Mama passed ten years ago, I've faced bullying non-stop. I love crafting things, it's my deepest passion, and I bring my creations to school, to share with teachers and friends, but people would mock me, thinking I'm trying to be a teacher's pet. I try to fit in with them, be fashionable, but still they ridicule me. Papa works hard, earning money to support me, giving me nice things; I give some as gifts for people but they think I'm showing off my richness and most chuck it away.' She paused as a server entered the room, carrying a tray full of refreshments. The figure swiftly took two glasses of water off the tray and emptied them at once, as if she had not had a drink in days. After a little hiccup, she continued, 'This cloak was mama's precious possession — her nature cloak. People, they try to rip it and ruin it, but I still wear it all the time, because I want Mama to be with me all the time. People take me for granted; they think because I'm so rich I can survive any problem. But the more damage, the weaker I get, day by day. Some people are trying to protect me and give me hope, but the bullies are strong. I feel so degraded!' Tears streamed down her hollow cheeks.

Raelene Sun sniffed, touched by the raw story. 'My dear, thank you for bringing us to your heart, I — we — will do our

best to save you from that dark environment. Everybody, please give our friend a truly warm welcome!’ A hearty applause erupted. In between claps, Raelene whispered, ‘Sorry what’s your name again darling?’

The figure sighed. ‘Earth, my name is Earth.’



Theadosia Kurniawan wrote this in 2013 when she was in Year 12 at St Hilda's Anglican School for Girls in Perth.