

ADDENDUM D

FIRST READER'S CRITIQUE

QUEST FOR LIGHT

QUEST FOR LIGHT PROLOGUE

Reader, this book is a journey of the imagination - a journey of discovery.

You will find yourself in a labyrinth which you must puzzle out. In chapter nine you are faced with choices and you will have to decide which of the three 'endings' is the true ending of the story. Clues are given throughout the story. Chapter ten also plays an important part to unravel the mystery.

So, take a deep breath and start the search for light

QUEST FOR LIGHT

CHAPTER ONE

"Twinkle, twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky ...
How I wonder **what** you are?"

While peering through the foggy Abzullian night sky, Nini repeats the words her granny has taught her a long time ago, the remnants of a bygone era of an age old civilization. This nursery rhyme is all that she has left to remind her of her heritage. She refills her glass of reverie and stares down at her garden. How she wishes her granny was still alive. Bami always understood so well and always knew what to say.

"Bami, I hope you can hear me. I feel so broken so shattered. I feel like a solitary star in an insane universe. Why am I not like all the others? Why, why, why?"

Nini tries to drown out the events of the day that have pained her so. The faces with the very expressive eyes, eyes which had registered utter disbelief. The thought of their eyes brings back the incredible wave of emotion which she feels so deeply and which causes uncontrollable shivers to run up and down her spine. She remembers the pain, the humiliation and the rebellion. Why did they not react to it? The reason is that this act violated their souls and strengthened their inferiority complex which they have tried so hard to hide. The indoctrination of centuries kicked in at that specific moment and all

the hard work of a whole year was shattered in an unthinking, unfeeling moment of discipline.

“I could not be part of that gross act of inhumanity!” Nini’s heart shouts to the stars.

Nini grabs her computer diary and whispers her password: “ASTRO”

Thursday, 10 Hamat 2999

Dear Diary

Today was a Nightmare!

I have to order my thoughts to clarify the darkness of the emotions that holds me captive in this nightmare. Was there any signs that I misread about what would happen this specific day?

The day started in its usual fashion. I got onto my mofu and rode the airwaves to my pick-up point. Elle and I gossiped about Zeli and her new boyfriend. The school's airbuses hissed past because the staff bus was late once again. We glanced at each other and voiced our thoughts: "Zeli and her new boyfriend".

Our airbus arrived, the shuttle door opened and we got in. The usual dialogue commenced - teachers "badmouthing" unresponsive little "Aliens" and the one or two little "Humans" who also attended the school. Was the unusual ease of our journey a premonition - the silence before the storm?

It was an extremely cold day for this time of the year. I remember seeing the little Abzullians who live on the farms of the "Human" landowners, the Land Barons, wrapped in a multitude of colour. Pink, red, yellow, orange, brown and blue covering the green of their uniforms.

Was it a coincidence that the concept dictatorship came under scrutiny in the novel under discussion? A tale about twentieth century earth which is still so relevant, nine centuries after its creation - a classic.

I remember feeling uneasy and cancelling the drama practise scheduled for break. The principal entered the staff room ... I could not believe what my ears were telling me. We, the substitute mothers and fathers of the children outside, were being forced to strip them from their clothes, their warmth and their dignity.

My whole being refused to collect the jerseys and jackets and I turned a blind eye to some of the learners who tried to hide, in nearly all the cases, the only warm item they possessed.

The children were so upset and shivering from the cold after assembly that I could not divert their attention from the cold to the academic work at hand. And then ...

The little spies, the so-called CRC - the Children's Representative Council, made their rounds to ensure that no culprits escaped this disciplinary measure for not wearing the "appropriate" uniform. The children who should represent the children's cause were acting as the principal's disciplinary committee.

Appearances are more important than the actual goal of preparing the children for the future, it seems. I cannot keep quiet I have to say something, even if it costs me my job!

Nini saves the diary entry and quits the program. She puts her glass in the recycle unit and moves towards her sleep unit. She sets the timer and orders deep REM sleep for tomorrow dawns dark and foreboding.

CHAPTER TWO

(The staff room is a buzz of activity. Nini sits quietly, her face mirrors no emotion.)

LIZZ: You are particularly quiet, Nini. What's wrong?

NINI: Nothing, really.

LIZZ: You are lying to me, tell me the truth.

NINI: I feel sick, sick to my stomach.

LIZZ: Is it because of yesterday?

NINI: Yes ...

LIZZ: You are not going to say something, are you?

NINI: Yes, I am.

LIZZ: Are you off your rocker? Do you have Abzullian fever or what?

NINI: Lizz, I can't live with myself if I don't say something.

LIZZ: You are going to regret it!

NINI: No, I am ...

LIZZ: Shush, here comes the principal.

(The principal enters the staff room.)

PRINCIPAL: Good morning

(The staff responds in muffled tones)

PRINCIPAL: First of all, before we discuss the business of the day, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those teachers who supported me yesterday. Thank you, you are the cornerstones of this institution. In particular I would like to thank Mrs. Matthews and Mr. Fox without them there would be no discipline at the school.

NINI: Sir?

PRINCIPAL: Yes.

NINI: I would like to say something in response.

PRINCIPAL: What is it? We don't have all day.

NINI: It pains me to have to say this, but to clear my own conscience I have to speak. Yesterday might have been a triumph for discipline but at what cost? Humiliation? Pain? (Tears start to run down her cheeks). That is what I felt yesterday - an overwhelming sorrow. I have the ability - some people say it's a gift, but I see it as a curse - to see past the outer shell of a person to look deeper seeing the person's inner being, his true self, his soul.

Nini remembers the first day she became aware of this ability to sense the inner feelings of people. She was eight years old growing up in a 'pure' Human settlement elevated from the planet's surface. This was an artificial, secluded and protected world, far from the ugly realities it was hiding. She was sent on an errand which changed her life.

Nini had to exchange a faulty replicator at a repair store near the settlement on the planet surface in the so-called "Grey Zone". There she was faced with two doors. She could not remember which one her mother said she should enter and opened the door on the right. Five pairs of the very expressive eyes in the dark blue faces were turned towards her as the dable flowers turn their faces to the Abzullian sun. She felt the shock and surprise of these Abzullians and could not move, not understanding what was happening to her. The shopkeeper's command to enter the 'other' door shocked her back into action ...

NINI: Who gives us the right to violate them so?

PRINCIPAL: Violate? What are you talking about girl? These children did not abide by the rules. Therefore they were punished.

NINI: It was unfair to punish them without giving them a warning. It isn't really winter. It was a freak weather occurrence in a very hot summer. Who would have guessed that it would suddenly turn so horribly cold?

PRINCIPAL: If you are not satisfied with this school, you should go and find yourself another job.

NINI: Sir, I don't know if I expressed myself clearly or not. It is not that I am dissatisfied with my job, but I see myself as the mother of these children and you as the principal as the father, if I think that you are too strict or unfair it is my duty to comment on it. You on the other hand have the right to agree or disagree with me. But I must feel free to express myself and face the consequences.

PRINCIPAL: This is a matter for you and me in my office. This is not a matter for the whole staff. Come and see me in my office.

Nini 'knew' that she would keep her job, but that from this day forward her relationship with him would never be the same again. She has also caused pain and has hurt him deeply in her efforts to alleviate the pain of the Abzullians.

CHAPTER 3

I, Nini of Abzullia, stare out of the shuttle's window down at the Abzullian landscape fast-forwarding underneath me. Suddenly, a cold shiver gives me goose bumps all over and then ...

... the airbus hisseszzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz, spur..ts

and

loses

altitude!

What an end to a disastrous day? After such an emotionally tiring day, all I want to do is to get home and to indulge myself by getting into a revitalizing bath of blue, healing liquid. I really don't have the strength to wait for hours until Sonny has repaired the airbus or until an empty children's bus arrives to take us home.

I look around the bus to see if my bottled up feelings are mirrored by any of the others. I glance at Lizz and she looks at me knowingly. Irritation and reproach in her eyes reveal her thoughts. She must be thinking she should have stayed at the school and completed some of her many managerial tasks. Then she could have gone home as she came to school this morning - **IN STYLE** - in the small shuttle kept at school for the managing staff's convenience who go to school "earlier" and stay "later".

Zeli interrupts my stream of thoughts, “Oh no!! I don’t BELIEWEE this. Now I will be late for my date with Zakes!”

"Don't worry he'll wait for a hot babe like you. Sometimes you must play hard to get", said Smurf.

Alfha places her hand on Zeli's shoulder, "Don't pay attention to Smurf he just wants to be funny."

Innes quickly moves forward to help Gorgi to control the airbus and to manoeuvre it for a safe landing. The airbus flops down in a clearing. The walls of the airbus seem to squeeze the air from my lungs. I have to get out! Gorgi opens the door to assess the damage in order to relay his observations to Sonny.

The Abzullian air feels cold and refreshing on my face. I look at the purple horizon. What dark speck is that? It might be the school's shuttle - no it has government markings on it. If it stops I am going to hitch a ride, I don't care - like the others do - even if it is only manned by Aliens. The shuttle passes over my head and my hopes for escape are instantly destroyed, but then it turns round and hovers above our ship.

The calm, deep manly voice from the space craft mesmerizes me and before I know what has hit me, I am sitting in the shuttle with Zeli next to me. I look up and ... I don't believe my eyes. In front of me is the vision of my dreams. In my dreams he was human, but now he is an alien reality. We stare at each other transfixed as if suspended in time, unable to move a muscle. His friend's interference breaks the intensity of the spell. He turns to the controls and the shuttle starts moving. I have difficulty to breath and swallow, very aware of the electricity between us. I am just aware of Zeli's communication with the companion of my dream apparition.

Standing next to my mofu and waving at the disappearing shuttle, I feel in control of myself for the first time, again. What has happened to me?

At home I grab my diary to try and make sense of today. "ASTRO!"

Friday, 11 Hamat 2999

Dear Diary

I can't make sense of what has happened to me ...

Conflicting emotions have dropped me in an infinite labyrinth of chaos. Will I ever understand what has happened to me today. It is scary to lose control like that!

What am I going to do about it?

Maybe I should attribute this to an unexplained occurrence which will never happen again. It might be better to forget it, to preserve my own sanity.

Bauk, the cause of Nini's distress sits with his friends in the "Thasmee", a traditional drinking place of the Abzullians. Varush, his lifelong friend, teases him, "Guys you should have seen Bauk a puppy in the hands of that Human bitch."

"Varush, you are just jealous that she didn't look at you the way she looked at me. You all know who really runs after the human women and who wants to marry one?" Bauk and his friends laugh out loud.

Tonight Bauk drinks more than usual for he has found his soul mate. He tries to drink away this knowledge and its inevitable end. He hated begin psychic and remembered his rebellion when his mother had told him that it was his legacy and his gift. A "gift" he has always fought against and disguised from his friends. However, it seems that it has;

caught up with him and that he will not be able to escape it now, for he has found her. His mother explained that if this should happen there was no turning back. How he wished that she was still alive to help him, but he knew that she had trained him for this and that he should follow his destiny. The only real obstacle was the fact that she was human and that might ruin all his plans for the future. He voiced his anger and frustration, "Damn!"

"And now my friend?" Varush responded.

"It's nothing. I'm just tired of canvassing votes for the party. I think I am going home now. Are you coming?" asked Bauk.

"No I'll ride home with Xab", answered Varush.

That night Nini and Bauk lie awake thinking of what has happened today. A phenomenon which will certainly have an effect on their lives.

CHAPTER 4

Nini stares at the letter on the screen. She reads ...

Dear Nini

You don't really know me, but I'm the guy who gave you a lift when your airbus had broken. You must be wondering why you have received this letter. The thing is I felt something incredible and I think you also felt it.

What we have felt is called "labieng" which means bonding. This usually happens when two psychic soul mates meet. After our experience I have done some research and this is the first occurrence involving a human, so I presume you must be confused and scared.

I wrote you this letter so that you will not be frightened, when I start to contact you telepathically.

Your soul mate

Bauk

Nini reads the letter again and voices her disbelief and despair, "Oh, NO! I can't stay here. I have to get out, NOW!"

She runs out of the house and the house computer locks the house automatically. She jumps on her mofu and drives away, trying to escape, escape what?

Bauk felt her disbelief and despair as she read his letter. The pain and confusion she was feeling wanted him to reach out to her and comfort her, but he knew that would only confuse her more and intensify the pain she was feeling.

After driving around aimlessly for about half an hour, Nini knows exactly where to go to help her to think clearly. She turns her mofu away from the settlement and towards the hills. She parks the mofu in front of the Hall of Memories. The caretaker greets the familiar face when Nini passes him.

She walks over to the place which always brings calm and acceptance. Her fingers trace the letters:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER.

YOU ARE NOW ONE OF THE BRIGHT STARS IN THE UNIVERSE.

BAMI, YOU WILL BE SORELY MISSED BY ALL WHO HAVE LOVED YOU IN THIS DIMENSION.

THIS UNIVERSE IS A LABYRINTH -

A LABYRINTH OF INTERLACING AND INTERSECTING PATHS WHICH LINKS EVERY PATH WITH EVERY OTHER.

IT HAS NO PERIPHERY,

NO EXIT

IT IS INFINITE

“Twinkle, twinkle little star ...” is the password to activate the holographic memory program. As if by magic, Nini is transported back in time.

She sees Bami sitting at her kitchen table as she knocks at the kitchen door.

BAMI: Is that you Nini, my darling.

NINI: Yes, it's me, Bami.

BAMI (commanding the house computer): Open!

Nini finds herself inside Bami's kitchen once more. The old fashioned appliances, utensils and in the corner a mural of Earth.

BAMI: Nini, what a surprise to see you. You look so upset ... What is wrong my darling?

Tears stream down Nini's face as she realizes that this holographic projected image of this computer program would never ever be able to deal with the complex nature of the situation at hand.

NINI: Nothing is wrong Bami. I just wanted to know how you were doing.

BAMI: That is so sweet of you my girly. Would you like some tea?

NINI: That would be lovely, thank you.

Sitting with the holographic image of a dearly loved grandmother, brings back so many bitter-sweet memories. These memories fill Nini's conscious mind and act as a healing balm.

As she says goodbye to Bami, ending the computer program, Nini feels relaxed and ready to face the challenges the future might hold.

A sigh of relief is the physical manifestation of Bauk's gratitude, after the inner havoc Nini has caused by her emotional reaction to his letter. He mutters to himself, "I'll give her time, time to adjust."

CHAPTER 5

**FIGHT BACK:
WE HAVE THE POWER!**

**LEDWIN
FOR
PRESIDENT!**

**UNITY
IS THE
ANSWER!**

Slogans flash in the air, holographic images, propagating different political perspectives. Bauk manoeuvres his shuttle through the traffic. Today is a very important day and he has rehearsed his speech well. "I can't let anything interfere", he mumbles to himself. His party's slogan declares to the whole planet that they are positive that the election will keep them in power.

He parks the shuttle and enters the hall ...

She is here it flashes through his brain. Iron self-discipline and self-control keep him on his feet.

Officials usher him to the front and show him his chair. The chairperson introduces the other officials. When it is his turn to stand, he is nearly knocked down by Nini's intense attention. He smiles politely to the head of education to mask his shock and delight. Bauk does not have a choice he has to make contact.

"You know I am here, I can feel it. Please don't be scared. I didn't want your first telepathic experience to be in public. However, I need your help I can't make this speech if you focus on me. Please think of something completely different. Please!"

Nini knows it is him when Bauk is introduced. Shock and bewilderment register on her face which she quickly masks with indifference. Suddenly, she feels his presence in her mind - a heavy feeling at the back of her head. She feels dizzy, but instinctively knows that she cannot refuse him access and that scares her the most. Nini, feigns a stomach cramp as reason for her dizziness and excuses herself from the meeting.

Bauk sees her leave, two conflicting emotions run riot in his head, relief and resentment. "How am I going to handle this? Politics and romance do not mix!"

Outside the conference centre, Nini is faced with conflicting emotions. Her inner turmoil is centred around flight and fight. "Should I just stay or should I leave? If I try to run away, how far should I have to go to escape this situation. I can't stop him contacting me, if I try to run away. The only solution is to confront him face to face, but will I be able to stand my ground in his presence or ...

Bauk's speech is a tremendous success. The crowd gives him a standing ovation. After the meeting his friends, party officials and even an odd Human or two come to

congratulate him. Zeneth, his mentor and an important party man, expresses his delight and promises that the Party Leader will be informed of his eloquence and the carrot of promotion is dangled in front of his nose. Bauk waits until everybody has left, making the excuse that he has some papers to attend to. "Where is Nini? I can't let them see my reaction to her. This was too close for comfort! Why do I have to be psychic?"

As he walks to the door he feels her presence very strongly. They meet at the door.

NINI: How dare ...

Her anger fades when she sees the appeal in his expressive eyes. At that moment she realizes that he finds himself in the same predicament.

BAUK: We have to talk ...

NINI: Face to face.

BAUK: I know a place, a neutral place, an old fashioned coffee-shop.

NINI: Lead the way, I will follow.

Bauk gets into his shuttle and Nini on her mofu. He drives slowly to accommodate her, something which makes her resentful. He waits for her and they enter together. Humans as well as Abzullians look at them apprehensively for a man-woman relationship between different planetary origins is still frowned at, five years after segregation has been abolished. Abzullia was one of the last planets in the federation, who gave up Human Rule after increased pressure from the other federation members.

They find a table and order a Latvia coffee from the replicator next to the table. He stares at her surprising, blue eyes in her light brown face. She is beautiful in her own

special way which is emphasized by her brilliant aura. Her aura indicates that she is a sensitive, caring person who is hurt very easily, emotionally. She meets his enquiring gaze with puzzlement, but turns away from the questioning, expressive green eyes in the dark blue face.

BAUK: What do you want to know?

NINI: In your letter you spoke of "labee ..."

BAUK: You mean "labieng", I suppose?

(She nods)

BAUK: It is the bonding between psychic soul mates.

NINI: But I'm not psychic.

BAUK: You are a very strong power, but untrained. That makes you very dangerous to me.

NINI: Dangerous, how can that be? I don't WANT to hurt you.

BAUK: You are a diamond in the rough, but with training you will be very powerful in a controlled way. You were so powerful in the meeting that I could not focus. Thank you for leaving, although if you were trained you could have just altered your focus on something else as I suggested, which would also have worked.

NINI: How can this bonding happen without my free will?

BAUK: This has been a question for many years among my race. It is suggested that this is ordained before our births. We were chosen to be soul mates

by the SUPER BEING and linked to one another which no logic can explain. You are what we call a latent power who was awakened by our contact.

NINI: Do you have more than one soul mate?

BAUK: I know what you're getting at. You wonder if you or I could have a soul mate in our own race, so that we could escape this bonding. Unfortunately, if bonding has taken place nothing can be done about it. We cannot escape our destiny, because we will always be drawn to one another and feel the other ones presence very intensely.

NINI: It is not so bad now. I can talk to you without being spellbound as before.

BAUK: It is because of my training in mind control, but I can't keep it up for much longer. See, I'm starting to tremble. It could have last a little longer if you could also control your mind and feelings.

NINI: If I could learn to control this, then we could break this bonding.

BAUK: Unfortunately, not. This bonding will lead to becoming one, what you call marriage.

NINI: No!

BAUK: My sentiments exactly, this could not have come at a worst time than now. The politics are so volatile. My party would not tolerate any cohesion of their "Sunshine Boy" with the enemy, a human female.

NINI: Let's try and fight it for both our sakes and our families.

BAUK: We could try. Maybe until after the elections or maybe even longer. Our race difference might be the key. I'll send you information about mind power.

NINI: That would be fine. We should at least try to fight it first, before we just give in. I see you are sweating a lot. I have to go.

BAUK: You are very considerate. I'll also send you notes on communicating through telepathy. It's much better than physical contact - that is if the pair is fighting their bonding.

NINI: What happens if we accept it?

BAUK: We mate for life ...

NINI: What? I have to go, I feel you are losing control. Bye.

Nini rushes from the coffee shop. Abzullians and Humans smile slyly, because of the "illicit pair's quarrel". Bauk sits a while longer. He orders another drink, finishes it and leaves the shop.

CHAPTER 6

Nini sits on the floor of her house doing the meditation exercises to help her focus and control her mind. *"This is not working! I'm feeling everything more intense now."*

Bauk, the patient teacher, interrupts her thoughts. *"Nini, you are developing. It will take time."*

Nini recites the words on her grandmother's memorial plate. The words which describes the inner chaos and turmoil, she is experiencing.

This universe is a labyrinth -
a labyrinth of interlacing and intersecting paths
which links every path with every other.
It has no periphery,
no exit
it is infinite ...

"A labyrinth, I find myself in a labyrinth. It is infinite ...

No, there must be a way out an exit! I MUST find it!"

Nini tries desperately to control her mind, every free moment is used for mind control. Slowly but surely Nini gains control over this strange "power" by placing herself in a

shell and hardening the shell wall to drown out all the emotions of the people around her. However, Bauk's presence is a constant reminder that she might be fighting a losing battle.

"Bauk, please don't bother me. I have a deadline! I have to punch in the content marks for these creative writing questions."

"Nini, I sensed that you were very tired. You should take a break."

"You also seem tired. How is it going with your election campaign?"

"There is a lot of tension around, but I'll cope. I leave you now to work ..."

The "telepathic relationship" between Nini and Bauk develops day by day as they start to get to know each other. This makes their "bonding" less volatile and more accommodating for both. The outside distractions of work also in some way help to alleviate the terrible yearning they both feel.

Nini sits in her little recreational den, when the Planetary INFO screen automatically switches on. It announces that a government shuttle has crashed, while on a canvassing mission and that the names of the deceased would be released as soon as the next of kin have been informed.

A shock wave hits Nini. Could it be Bauk? If he was involved she would have known, or would she? Without thinking Nini cries out telepathically ...

"Bauk! Bauk!"

Sitting in a meeting, Bauk is deafened by her mental outcry.

"Nini, softer darling. My head's going to explode."

"Thank goodness you are alright. I thought it was you who were involved in the accident."

"Are you disappointed, you could have been free from me?"

"How could you say such a thing? You ... you are a friend."

"A friend, you say?"

"Yes, I have to go. Sorry for interrupting you."

"Nothing to feel sorry about. You know now how to contact me. Surprise me again, but you don't need to shout next time."

"Bauk!"

CHAPTER 7

Nini closes her eyes and moves to the calming music. She feels the vibrations on her skin. Whenever she feels depressed or sad, the soothing tones of the HI-FI-VIBRA always makes her feel composed and tranquil.

Then she feels him make contact. At first this had been obtrusive, but now it was so familiar and pleasant that it did not bother her anymore.

"Nini, Nini" His voice whispers seductively in her head.

"Bauk?"

"I'm here." He stands on the balcony, while staring at her moving shadow reflected on the blinds.

"Here?"

He opens the balcony's sliding door, enters and touches her shoulder. She turns slowly, feeling the warm touch of his hand on her shoulder and how it reverberates through her entire body. His touch feels so titillating, so right. He takes her in his arms and they start to move rhythmically to the music. Bauk and Nini realizes that this is what they have longed for all their lives.

He caresses her lovely blond hair and lingers his fingers on the sensitive parts of her ear. Nini wonders why he knows exactly how to please her. Instinctively, she opens her mind and pries into his. His lips searches for hers and as their lips meet, two souls

are reunited. At that moment both of them feel complete. Never will they ever feel at odds again.

A power greater than their own takes hold of them and sweeps them away to a place none of them have ever been. A place of ecstasy ...

After the storm, they lie contented in each others arms. Nini airs their thoughts, "Why did we ever try to fight this?"

Bauk feels the sun on his face. He realizes that he is late for work. He kisses Nini on the forehead, her eyes flutter open. She knows that he has to go, but is thankful she does not have to spoil this feeling of contentedness by rushing off to work for it is the Lada school holidays.

NINI: Would you like something from the ...

BAUK: No, thank you darling. I have to go. I'll contact you again.

NINI: Please don't risk it. You know how your party feels about us, Humans.
Don't jeopardize your future. I love you too much to be the cause of ...

BAUK: What's the use? Without you there is no life.

NINI: I don't want to see you unhappy ...

BAUK: You make me happy.

Nini puts on a robe as Bauk gets dressed. She walks him out and turns her head so that their lips could meet one more time. A Human passing by frowns at this indiscretion.

Bauk gets into his shuttle and disappears from sight. Nini sends him a telepathic message, "I love you and I always will."

He responds with only one word, "*Ditto!*"

CHAPTER 8

Nini is worried, she has missed her period again. Something is definitely wrong. Could it be?

The only way to find out is to take a home pregnancy test. Nini places her request and the replicator obliges. This simple urine test is very accurate, it can determine pregnancy directly after intercourse. Nini wonders why she has not thought of it earlier.

Maybe I'm worrying needlessly, but I have to be sure. Would a human pregnancy test show a half-breed pregnancy? I don't want to see ...

Monday, 31 Zadat 2999

I don't know what to do!

One night of passion ...

How stupid I have been! If only I had used my head for it sounded out the warnings. I know the rules - I'm a fool! What must I do?

My parents must never know, it will hurt them so. What am I supposed to do? I can't involve him, I can't make him a victim of my fate. What must I do?

I wish I had seen that my sweet surrender, left me without a friend!

WHAT MUST I DO!

Bauk senses that something has upset Nini. However, her newly acquired mind control makes it impossible to fathom her distress. He tries to contact her telepathically, but she has shut him out of her thoughts. This disturbs him greatly for he has found his soul mate. He has tried contacting her through e-mail, but has had no response.

It is the week of the election and it is impossible for him to go to her house and to confront her face to face. There is so much to be done and so little time. After several *rebuffs* from his superiors, Bauk decides to block out his awareness of Nini. He promises himself that after the votes have been counted that he will then get to the bottom of this.

CHAPTER 9

As the Abzulians and Humans go to the polling stations to cast their votes in the second democratic election of this planet, Nini also has to cast a very private vote. She is faced with her own personal choices to make. What she decides will change the course of her life forever, just as the votes of those of this planet will change the course of the history of the planet forever.

The choices she is facing will not only change her life, but also those she loves the most. The rest of the planet have to decide between political parties, Nini has to decide on abortion, adoption or keeping the baby.

It is the day after the elections. According to the latest results from the different voting stations around the planet, it seems that the Abzullians will govern for a second term. Nini sees the despondency in the faces of the Humans she passes in the street. She has also been defeated by the Aliens, by one in particular. However, she still has some power - the power to make choices about her own body.

The clinic is a cold, grey building looming in front of her. Nini looks around her to see the world one more time as the person she is today. Then the door opens and she steps inside.

After registering, she is ushered into a windowless room. The doctor enters and the termination apparatus is put to use. Only fifteen minutes later, Nini walks out of the building. She feels as cold, grey and lifeless as the building she has just left.

Bauk finds Nini huddled on a chair staring at the sunset. He approaches her carefully and places his hand on her shoulder. Nini has to incorporate all the mind power she has obtained of late to steel herself against his touch. His touch which has changed her life so dramatically and which has brought so much sorrow to her life.

BAUK: What's wrong Nini? I feel that something is upsetting you. Tell me, what it is.

NINI: Bauk ... you have a right to know ...

BAUK: To know what?

Nini opens her mind. She registers his utter disbelief and pain. He rushes from the murderer of his first child, without uttering a word.. He gets into his shuttle and drives recklessly. What has he done wrong? Why would his soul mate commit such an atrocity?

He must be rid of her! Bauk sees death mountain in front of him, without consciously knowing it he had set out for the mountain which has claimed wuch a lot of Abzullians who could not face their reality. He crashes his shuttle.

Nini has completed what she set out to do. After Bauk has left she stumbles to the bottle of sleeping pills she has slowly but surely collected for today. She takes a handful of pills and swallows them to drown out everything, forever ...

The Abzullians are in power once more. All reports on the information highway shouts out this message to the inhabitants of Abzullia.

Bauk finds Nini in her house. He can sense her nervousness. Seeing her confirms his suspicions that something is very wrong. He tries to probe her mind, but cannot break through her defences.

BAUK: Nini, let me in! What is bothering you?

NINI: Bauk, I don't know how to say it.

BAUK: Just say it!

NINI: Bauk, you'll never guess ...

She opens her mind to him. All her hopes and dreams also spill out. She watches his face change to - horror!

BAUK: What?

NINI: Yes, we are going to have a baby.

BAUK: I knew our meeting was a curse. How could you?

NINI: I'm not the only one to blame!

BAUK: But what about my political career. No Abzulian in his right mind would want me in government.

NINI: If politics is more important than me and your child, then just leave! I said leave! Never come near me again and never ever contact me. It is a curse for I'll have to live with the knowledge of your presence at the back of my head each and every day. It's punishment enough! Just leave!

Bauk leaves without another word. His life has changed now forever. Why did she have to fall pregnant? Why did everything have to change.

NINI: What must I do? I can't keep the baby. I am alone and my parents will never help raise an Alien. They still see them as their inferiors. How will I explain an Alien child to the people at work? Those people have still so much prejudice to deal with, I might lose my job! The best thing could be to let the child be adopted. If it has predominant Alien features, then Aliens could adopt it. On the other hand if it has predominant Human features, then Humans could adopt it.

The following eight and a half months (Aliens take eight months / Humans take nine months) are utter hell for Nini. She has Human as well as Alien complications ranging from vomiting to vibrating!

Bauk's unfeeling actions with "others" hurt her even more. How could her soul mate abandon her so? How can he live with himself? Easily it seems for he uses drink and drugs to shut her out.

In hospital the baby is extracted from her womb. Nini sees the little Alien face with her blue eyes and cannot stop the tears from streaming down her face. He will be raised as an Alien.

Nini walks out of the hospital empty handed. Her father's words echoes through her head, "You have done the right thing."

If it is so Nini wonders why she feels so empty inside. Nini makes contact with Bauk one last time, *"How can you live with yourself - I can't!"*

She steps in front of the fast moving mole-train ...

The day after the elections, the Abzullians are announced the winners. They are in power for the second term running. Opposition parties consisting of Humans and Aliens from other planets start to form a coalition in order to present the ruling party with a strong opposition.

Bauk finds Nini sitting on the floor grading papers. He places his hands over her eyes. She teases him by naming fictional lovers. He kisses her so as to "help" her identify him.

BAUK: I missed you so!

NINI: Me too.

BAUK: Nini, what is wrong? You are masking it, but I still feel your unease.
Please, tell me.

NINI: Bauk, the thing is I don't want to make you a victim of my fate.

BAUK: Open your mind if it's so difficult for you to say what's bothering you.

NINI: Bauk, I don't ...

Nini feels how Bauk intensifies his focus and how he employs his psychic and telepathic abilities to grasp at the truth. He is so very strong. Nini gives up and opens her mind, because he has a right to know.

His lips form an engaging smile which brings stars to his eyes. With one big swoop of his muscular arms, Nini finds herself in his arms twirling round the room.

NINI: Bauk, I am glad you're so happy, but what about your political aspirations.
Won't a half Human child from a Human mistress make ...

BAUK: It's just a job. If they don't want me in office, I can find another job. A job
is easy to find, but to find another you would be impossible.

NINI: Bauk, I love you.

BAUK: Ditto.

As Nini walks down the aisle of the old traditional wedding chapel alone (her father has refused to be part of this "spectacle"), she knows that she has never been as happy as she feels today. When Bauk winks at her, she also knows that together they could conquer the world. Together they will turn the antagonism, adversity, criticism and disgust of others into love.

She places a loving hand on her stomach, knowing that she is carrying a very special person inside her. A person who will bring reconciliation and peace.

CHAPTER 10

I am Neo, the son of Bauk the Abzullian, and Nini, the Human. I am twelve years old. I came to existence in this physical dimension by their psychic bonding. They were explicitly chosen in order for me to come to being. My parents psychic abilities have made it possible for me to be a channel. I am guided by my spirit friend, Diza. This was decided before I took my physical form. I represent hope - new beginnings. I was sent to fulfil a guiding role in difficult times. I'll let Diza talk now.

Neo calls out to Diza. His posture changes and his voice becomes deeper. White light becomes noticeable around Neo's body - Diza.

DIZA: This is a time of great unfolding upon you planet, a time when old forms will rip open so that new life can present itself. This is a critical point in the planet's development. There is an implied destruction of old forms as well as an implied bursting forth of new energies! In order for you to reach a stage of greater maturity, you will need to undergo a major purification of existing values and social organization. These major changes might be accompanied by changes in the planet itself - such as earthquakes and volcanic activity. Political structures and religions come and go, but you continue to violate the planet and each other. The change must occur in you, in your essential being in order to survive. As your sense of unity and identification develops through different intuitive practices, it will become more harmful to harm another. For you will truly know that in wounding another you wound yourself and in exploiting the planet you exploit

yourself. So stop raping the planet and killing one another. My connection to Neo and this planet is to serve at a time of great transition. I am here to guide and to help you, through Neo, so that you might experience enlightened living.

QUEST FOR LIGHT EPILOGUE

Reader, you have created your own individual story by figuring out your own ending.

You have revealed something about yourself!

If you chose ending two, you are a left brain person who believes in realistic stories.

A left brain person:

Likes to read a realistic story.

Likes to write non-fiction.

Is rational.

Prefers verbal instruction.

Prefers individuals.

Copies pictures in detail.

Is almost never absent minded.

Solves problems logically.

Prefers to learn by structured assignments.

Is attentive during long verbal explanations.

Reads for specific details and facts.

Is good at maths.

Remembers things specifically studied.

Cannot be hypnotized.

Needs total quiet to study.

Thinks better sitting down.

Is a dog lover.

If you chose ending three, you are a right brain person who believes in fantasy.

A right brain person:

Likes to read fantasy.

Likes to write fiction.

Is philosophical.

Prefers visual instruction.

Prefers groups.

Makes up own drawings.

Is almost always absent minded.

Solves problems intuitively.

Prefers to learn by free exploration.

Is restless during long verbal explanations.

Reads for main ideas.

Is good at art.

Dreams about that which never happens.

Can be hypnotized.

Can listen to music when studying.

Thinks better lying down.

Is a cat lover.

(Adapted from TRAMPE, K. 1999. Left or Right Brain? That is the question. [Web:]

<http://www.anglefire.com/wi/2brains/images/rstlne.gi> [Date of access: 3 July 2000].

ADDENDUM E

EXTERNAL CRITIC'S CRITIQUE

QUEST

FOR

LIGHT

QUEST FOR LIGHT

CHAPTER ONE

"Twinkle, twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky ...
How I wonder **what** you are?"

While peering through the foggy Abzullian night sky, Nini repeats the words her granny has taught her a long time ago, the remnants of a bygone era of an age old civilization. This nursery rhyme is all that she has left to remind her of her heritage. She refills her glass of reverie and stares down at her garden. How she wishes her granny was still alive. Bami always understood so well and always knew what to say.

"Bami, I hope you can hear me. I feel so broken so shattered. I feel like a solitary star in an insane universe. Why am I not like all the others? Why, why, why?"

Nini tries to drown out the events of the day that pained her so. The faces with the very expressive eyes, eyes which had registered utter disbelief. The thought of their eyes brings back the incredible wave of emotion which she feels so deeply and which cause uncontrollable shivers to run up and down her spine. She remembers the pain, the humiliation and the rebellion. Why did they not react to it? The reason is that this act violated their souls and strengthened their inferiority complex which they have tried so

hard to hide. The indoctrination of centuries kicked in at that specific moment and all the hard work of a whole year was shattered in an unthinking, unfeeling moment of discipline.

"I could not be part of that gross act of inhumanity!" Nini's heart shouts to the stars.

Nini grabs her computer diary and whispers her password: "ASTRO"

Thursday, 10 Hamat 2999

Dear Diary

Today was a Nightmare!

I have to order my thoughts to clarify the darkness of the emotions that holds me captive in this nightmare. Was there any signs that I misread about what would happen that specific day?

The day started in its usual fashion. I go onto my Mofu and rode the airwaves to my pick-up point. Elle and I gossiped about Zeli and her new boyfriend. The school's airbuses hissed past because the staff bus was late once again. We glanced at each other and voiced our thoughts: "Zeli and her new boyfriend".

Our airbus arrived, the shuttle door opened and we got in. The usual dialogue commenced - teachers "badmouthing" unresponsive little "Aliens" and the one or two little "Humans" who also attended the school. Was the unusual ease of our journey a premonition - the silence before the storm?

It was an extremely cold day for this time of the year. I remember seeing the little Abzullians who live on the farms of the "Human" landowners, the Land Barons, wrapped in a multitude of colour. Pink, red, yellow, orange, brown and blue covering the green of their uniforms.

Was it a coincidence that the concept dictatorship came under scrutiny in the novel under discussion? A tale about 20th century earth which is still so relevant, nine centuries after its creation - a classic.

I remember feeling uneasy and cancelling the drama practise scheduled for break. The principal entered the staff room ... I could not believe what my ears were telling me. We, the substitute mothers and fathers of the children outside, were being forced to strip them from their clothes, their warmth and their dignity.

My whole being refused to collect the jerseys and jackets and I turned a blind eye to some of the learners who tried to hide, in nearly all the cases, the only warm item they possessed.

The children were so upset and shivering from the cold after assembly that I could not divert their attention from the cold to the academic work at hand. And then ...

The little spies, the so-called CRC - the Children's Representative Council, made their rounds to ensure that no culprits escaped this disciplinary measure for not wearing the "appropriate" uniform. The children who should represent the children's cause were acting as the principal's disciplinary committee.

Appearances are more important than the actual goal of preparing the children for the future, it seems. I cannot keep quiet I have to say something, even if it costs me my job!

Nini saves the diary entry and quits the program. She puts her glass in the recycle unit and moves towards her sleep unit. She sets the timer and orders deep REM sleep - for tomorrow dawns dark and foreboding.

CHAPTER TWO

(The staff room is a buzz of activity. Nini sits quietly, her face mirrors not emotion.)

LIZZ: You are particularly quiet, Nini. What's wrong?

NINI: Nothing, really.

LIZZ: You are lying to me, tell me the truth.

NINI: I feel sick, sick to my stomach.

LIZZ: Is it because of yesterday?

NINI: Yes ...

LIZZ: You are not going to say something, are you?

NINI: Yes, I am.

LIZZ: Are you off your rocker? Do you have Abzullian fever or what?

NINI: Lizz, I can't live with myself if I don't say something.

LIZZ: You are going to regret it!

NINI: No, I am ...

LIZZ: Shush, here comes the principal.

(The principal enters the staff room.)

PRINCIPAL: Good morning

(The staff responds in muffled tones)

PRINCIPAL: First of all, before we discuss the business of the day, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those teachers who stood behind me yesterday. Thank you, you are the cornerstones of this institution. In particular I would like to thank Mrs. Mathews and Mr. Fox without them there would be no discipline at the school.

NINI: Sir?

PRINCIPAL: Yes.

NINI: I would like to say something in response.

PRINCIPAL: What is it? We don't have all day.

NINI: It pains me to have to say this, but to clear my own conscience I have to speak. Yesterday might have been a triumph for discipline but at what cost? Humiliation? Pain? (Tears start to run down her cheeks) That is what I felt yesterday - an overwhelming sorrow. I have the ability - some people say it's a gift, but I see it as a curse - to see past the outer shell of a person to look deeper seeing the person's inner being, his true self, his soul.

Nini remembers the first day she became aware of this ability to sense the inner feelings of people. She was eight years old growing up in a 'pure' Human settlement elevated from the planet's surface. This was an artificial, secluded and protected world, far from the ugly realities it was hiding. She was sent on an errand which changed her life.

Nini had to exchange a faulty replicator at a repair store near the settlement on the planet surface in the so-called "Grey Zone". There she was faced with two doors. She could not remember which one her mother said she should enter and opened the door on the right. Five pairs of the very expressive eyes in the dark blue faces were turned towards her as the dable flowers turn their faces to the Abzullian sun. She felt the shock and surprise of these Abzullians and could not move, not understanding what was happening to her. The shopkeeper's command to enter the 'other' door shocked her back into action ...

NINI: Who gives us the right to violate them so?

PRINCIPAL: Violate? What are you talking about girl? These children did not abide by the rules. Therefore they were punished.

NINI: It was unfair to punish them without giving them a warning. It isn't really winter. It was a freak weather occurrence in a very hot summer. Who would have guessed that it would suddenly turn so horribly cold?

PRINCIPAL: If you are not satisfied with this school, you should go and find yourself another job.

NINI: Sir, I don't know if I expressed myself clearly or not. It is not that I am dissatisfied with my job, but I see myself as the mother of these children and you as the principal as the father, if I think that you are too strict or unfair it is my duty to comment on it. You on the other hand have the right to agree or disagree with me. But I must feel free to express myself and face the consequences.

PRINCIPAL: This is a matter for you and me in my office. This is not a matter for the whole staff. Come and see me in my office.

Nini 'knew' that she would keep her job, but that from this day forward her relationship with him would never be the same again. She has also caused pain and has hurt him deeply in her efforts to alleviate the pain of the Abzullians.

CHAPTER 3

I, Nini of Abzulia, stare out of the shuttle's window down at the Abzullian landscape fast-forwarding underneath me. Suddenly, a cold shiver gives me goose bumps all over and then ...

[illegible]

and

looses

altitude!

What an end to a disastrous day? After such an emotionally tiring day, all I want to do is to get home and to indulge myself by getting into a revitalizing bath of blue, healing liquid. I really don't have the strength to wait for hours until Sonny has repaired the airbus or until an empty childrens' bus arrives to take us home.

I look around the bus to see if my bottled up feelings are mirrored by any of the others. I glance at Lizz and she looks at me knowingly. Irritation and reproach in her eyes reveal her thoughts. She must be thinking she should have stayed at the school and completed some of her many managerial tasks. Then she could have gone home as she came to school this morning - **IN STYLE** - in the small shuttle kept at school for the managing staff's convenience who go to school "earlier" and stay "later".

Zeli interrupts my stream of thoughts, “Oh no!! I don’t BELIEVVEE this. Now I will be late for my date with Zakes!”

"Don't worry he'll wait for a hot babe like you. Sometimes you must play hard to get", said Smurf.

Alfha places her hand on Zeli's shoulder, "Don't pay attention to Smurf he just wants to be funny."

Innes quickly moves forward to help Gorgi to control the airbus and to maneuver it for a safe landing. The airbus flops down in a clearing. The walls of the airbus seem to squeeze the air from my lungs. I have to get out! Gorgi opens the door to assess the damage in order to relay his observations to Sonny.

The Abzullian air feels cold and refreshing on my face. I look at the purple horizon. What dark speck is that? It might be the school's shuttle - no it has government markings on it. If it stops I am going to hitch a ride, I don't care - like the others do - even if it is only manned by Aliens. The shuttle passes over my head and my hopes for escape are instantly destroyed, but then it turns round and hovers above our ship.

The calm, deep manly voice from the space craft mesmerizes me and before I know what has hit me, I am sitting in the shuttle with Zeli next to me. I look up and ... I don't believe my eyes. In front of me is the vision of my dreams. In my dreams he was human, but now he is an alien reality. We stare at each other transfixed as if suspended in time, unable to move a muscle. His friend's interference breaks the intensity of the spell. He turns to the controls and the shuttle starts moving. I have difficulty to breath and swallow, very aware of the electricity between us. I am just aware of Zeli communication with the companion of my dream apparition.

Standing next to my mofu and waving at the disappearing shuttle, I feel in control of myself for the first time, again. What has happened to me?

At home I grab my diary to try and make sense of today.

“ASTRO!”

Friday, 11 Hamat 2999

Dear Diary

I can't make sense of what has happened to me ...

Conflicting emotions have dropped me in an infinite labyrinth of chaos. Will I ever understand what has happened to me today. It is scary to lose control like that!

What am I going to do about it?

Maybe I should attribute this to an unexplained occurrence which will never happen again. It might be better to forget it, to preserve my own sanity.

Bauk, the cause of Nini's distress sits with his friends in the "Thasmee", a traditional drinking place of the Abzulians. Varush, his lifelong friend, teases him, "Guys you should have seen Bauk a puppy in the hands of that Human bitch."

"Varush, you are just jealous that she didn't look at you the way she looked at me. You all know who really runs after the human women and who wants to marry one?" Bauk and his friends laugh out loud.

Tonight Bauk drinks more than usual for he has found his soul mate. He tries to drink away this knowledge and its inevitable end. He hated being psychic and remembered

his rebellion when his mother had told him that it was his legacy and his gift. A “gift” he has always fought against and disguised from his friends. However, it seems that it has caught up with him and that he will not be able to escape it now, for he has found her. His mother explained that if this should happen there was no turning back. How he wished that she was still alive to help him, but he knew that she had trained him for this and that he should follow his destiny. The only real obstacle was the fact that she was human and that might ruin all his plans for the future. He voiced his anger and frustration, “Damn!”

“And now my friend?” Varush responded.

“Its nothing. I’m just tired of canvassing votes for the party. I think I am going home now. Are you coming?” asked Bauk.

“No I’ll ride home with Xab”, answered Varush.

That night Nini and Bauk lie awake thinking of what have happened today. A phenomenon which will certainly have an effect on their lives.

CHAPTER 4

Nini stares at the letter on the screen. She reads ...

Dear Nini

You don't really know me, but I'm the guy who gave you a lift when your airbus had broken. You must be wondering why you have received this letter. The thing is I felt something incredible and I think you also felt it.

What we have felt is called "labieng" which means bonding. This usually happens when two psychic soul mates meet. After our experience I have done some research and this is the first occurrence involving a human, so I presume you must be confused and scared.

I wrote you this letter so that you will not be frightened, when I start to contact you telepathically.

Your soul mate

Bauk

Nini reads the letter again and voices her disbelief and despair, "Oh, NO! I can't stay here. I have to get out, NOW!"

She runs out of the house and the house computer locks the house automatically. She jumps on her mofu and drives away, trying to escape, escape what?

Bauk felt her disbelief and despair as she read his letter. The pain and confusion she was feeling wanted him to reach out to her and comfort her, but he knew that would only confuse her more and intensify the pain she was feeling.

After driving around aimlessly for about half an hour, Nini knows exactly where to go to help her to think clearly. She turns her mofu away from the settlement and towards the hills. She parks the mofu in front of the Hall of Memories. The caretaker greets the familiar face when Nini passes him.

She walks over to the place which always brings calm and acceptance. Her fingers trace the the letters:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER.
YOU ARE NOW ONE OF THE BRIGHT STARS IN THE UNIVERSE.
BAMI, YOU WILL BE SORELY MISSED BY ALL WHO HAVE LOVED
YOU IN THIS DIMENSION.
THIS UNIVERSE IS A LABYRINTH -
A LABYRINTH OF INTERLACING AND INTERSECTING PATHS
WHICH LINKS EVERY PATH WITH EVERY OTHER.
IT HAS NO PERIPHERY,
NO EXIT
IT IS INFINITE ...

"Twinkle, twinkle little star ..." is the password to activate the holographic memory program. As if by magic, Nini is transported back in time.

She sees Bami sitting at her kitchen table as she knocks at the kitchen door.

BAMI: Is that you Nini, my darling.

NINI: Yes, it's me, Bami.

BAMI (commanding the house computer): Open!

Nini finds herself inside Bami's kitchen once more. The old fashioned appliances, utensils and in the corner a mural of Earth.

BAMI: Nini, what a surprise to see you. You look so upset ... What is wrong my darling?

Tears stream down Nini's face as she realizes that this holographic projected image of this computer program would never ever be able to deal with the complex nature of the situation at hand.

NINI: Nothing is wrong Bami. I just wanted to know how you were doing.

BAMI: That is so sweet of you my girly. Would you like some tea?

NINI: That would be lovely, thank you.

Sitting with the holographic image of a dearly loved grandmother, brings back so many bitter-sweet memories. These memories fill Nini's conscious mind and act as a healing balm.

As she says goodbye to Bami, ending the computer program, Nini feels relaxed and ready to face the challenges the future might hold.

A sigh of relief is the physical manifestation of Bauk's gratitude, after the inner havoc Nini has caused by her emotional reaction to his letter. He mutters to himself, "I'll give her time, time to adjust."

CHAPTER 5

FIGHT BACK !

WE HAVE THE POWER!

LEDWINN

FOR

PRESIDENT!

UNITY

IS THE

ANSWER!

FIVE

IS

POWER!

Slogans flash in the air, holographic images, propagating different political perspectives. Bauk manoeuvres his shuttle through the traffic. Today is a very important day and he has rehearsed his speech well. "I can't let anything interfere", he mumbles to himself. His party's slogan declares to the whole planet that they are positive that the election will keep them in power.

He parks the shuttle and enters the hall

She is here it flashes through his brain. Iron self-discipline and self-control keep him on his feet.

Officials usher him to the front and show him his chair. The chairperson introduces the other officials. When it is his turn to stand, he is nearly knocked down by Nini's intense attention. He smiles politely to the head of education to mask his shock and delight. Bauk does not have a choice he has to make contact.

"You know I am here, I can feel it. Please don't be scared. I didn't want your first telepathic experience to be in public. However, I need your help I can't make this speech if you focus on me. Please think of something completely different. Please!"

Nini knows it is him when Bauk is introduced. Shock and bewilderment register on her face which she quickly masks with indifference. Suddenly, she feels his presence in her mind - a heavy feeling at the back of her head. She feels dizzy, but instinctively knows that she cannot refuse him access and that scares her the most. Nini, feigns a stomach cramp as reason for her dizziness and excuses herself from the meeting.

Bauk sees her leave, two conflicting emotions run riot in his head, relief and resentment. "How am I going to handle this? Politics and romance do not mix!"

Outside the conference center, Nini is faced with conflicting emotions. Her inner turmoil is centred around flight and fight. "Should I just stay or should I leave? If I try to run away, how far should I have to go to escape this situation. I can't stop him contacting me, if I try to run away. The only solution is to confront him face to face, but will I be able to stand my ground in his presence or ...

Bauk's speech is a tremendous success. The crowd give him a standing ovation. After the meeting his friends, party officials and even an odd Human or two come to congratulate him. Zeneth, his mentor and an important party man, expresses his delight and promises that the Party Leader will be informed of his eloquence and the carrot of promotion is dangled in front of his nose. Bauk waits until everybody has left, making the excuse that he has some papers to attend to. "Where is Nini? I can't let them see my reaction to her. This was too close for comfort! Why do I have to be psychic?"

As he walks to the door he feels her presence very strongly. They meet at the door.

NINI: How dare

Her anger fades when she sees the appeal in the expressive eyes. At that moment she realizes that he finds himself in the same predicament.

BAUK: We have to talk ...

NINI: Face to face.

BAUK: I now a place, a neutral place, an old fashioned coffee-shop.

NINI: Lead the way, I will follow.

Bauk gets into his shuttle and Nini on her mofu. He drives slowly to accommodate her, something which makes her resentful. He waits for her and they enter together. Humans as well as Abzulians look at them apprehensively for a man-woman relationship between different planetary origins is still frowned at, five years after segregation has been abolished. Abzulia was one of the last planets in the federation, who gave up Human Rule after increased pressure from the other federation members.

They find a table and order a Latvia coffee from the replicator next to the table. He stares at her surprising, blue eyes in her light brown face. She is beautiful in her own special way which is emphasized by her brilliant aura. Her aura indicates that she is a sensitive, caring person who is hurt very easily, emotionally. She meets his enquiring gaze with puzzlement, but turns away from the questioning, expressive green eyes in the dark blue face.

BAUK: What do you want to know?

NINI: In your letter you spoke of "labee ..."

BAUK: You mean "labieng", I suppose?

(She nods)

BAUK: It is the bonding between psychic soul mates.

NINI: But I'm not psychic.

BAUK: You are a very strong power, but untrained. That makes you very dangerous to me.

NINI: Dangerous, how can that be? I don't WANT to hurt you.

BAUK: You are a diamond in the ruff, but with training you will be very powerful in a controlled way. You were so powerful in the meeting that I could not focus. Thank you for leaving, although if you were trained you could have just altered your focus on something else as I suggested, which would also have worked.

NINI: How can this bonding happen without my free will?

BAUK: This has been a question for many years among my race. It is suggested that this is ordained before our births. We were chosen to be soul mates by the SUPER BEING and linked to one another which no logic can explain. You are what we call a latent power who was awakened by our contact.

NINI: Do you have more than one soul mate/

BAUK: I know what you're getting at. You wonder if you or I could have a soul mate in our own race, so that we could escape this bonding. Unfortunately, if bonding has taken place nothing can be done about it. We cannot escape our destiny, because we will always be drawn to one another and feel the other ones presence very intensely.

NINI: It is not so bad now. I can talk to you without being spellbound as before.

BAUK: It is because of my training in mind control, but I can't keep it up for much longer. See, I'm starting to tremble. It could have lasted a little longer if you could also control your mind and feelings.

NINI: If I could learn to control this, then we could break this bonding.

BAUK: Unfortunately, not. This bonding will lead to becoming one, what you call marriage.

NINI: No!

BAUK: My sentiments exactly, this could not have come at a worst time than now. The politics are so volatile. My party would not tolerate any cohesion of their "Sunshine Boy" with the enemy, a human female.

NINI: Let's try and fight it for both our sakes and our families.

BAUK: We could try. Maybe until after the elections or maybe even longer. Our race difference might be the key. I'll send you information about mind power.

NINI: That would be fine. We should at least try to fight it first, before we just give in. I see you are sweating a lot. I have to go.

BAUK: You are very considerate. I'll also send you notes on communicating through telepathy. It's much better than physical contact - that is if the pair is fighting their bonding.

NINI: What happens if we accept it?

BAUK: We mate for life ...

NINI: What? I have to go, I feel you are losing control. Bye.

Nini rushes from the coffee shop. Abzulians and Humans smile slyly, because of the "illicit pair's quarrel". Bauk sits a while longer. He orders another drink, finishes it and leaves the shop.

CHAPTER 6

Nini sits on the floor of her house doing the meditation exercise to help her focus and control her mind. *"This is not working! I'm feeling everything more intense now."*

Bauk, the patient teacher, interrupts her thoughts. *"Nini, you are developing. It will take time."*

Nini recites the words on her grandmother's memorial plate. The words which describes the inner chaos and turmoil, she is experiencing.

This universe is a labyrinth -
a labyrinth of interlacing and intersecting paths
which links every path with every other.
It has no periphery,
no exit
it is infinite

"A labyrinth, I find myself in a labyrinth. It is infinite

No, there must be a way out an exit! I MUST find it!"

Nini tries desperately to control her mind, every free moment is used for mind control. Slowly but surely Nini gains control over this strange "power" by placing herself in a shell and hardening the shell wall to drown out all the emotions of the people around

her. However, Bauk's presence is a constant reminder that she might be fighting a losing battle.

"Bauk, please don't bother me. I have a deadline! I have to punch in the content marks for these creative writing questions."

"Nini, I sensed that you were very tired. You should take a break."

"You also seem tired. How is it going with your election campaign?"

"There is a lot of tension around, but I'll cope. I leave you now to work"

The "telepathic relationship" between Nini and Bauk develops day by day as they start to get to know one another. This makes their "bonding" less volatile and more accommodating for both. The outside distractions of work also in some way help to alleviate the terrible yearning they both feel.

Nini sits in her little recreational den, when the Planetary INFO screen automatically switches on. It announces that a government shuttle has crashed, while on a canvassing mission and that the names of the deceased would be released as soon as the next of kin has been informed.

A shock wave hits Nini. Could it be Bauk? If he was involved she would have known, or would she. Without thinking Nini cries out telepathically ...

"Bauk! Bauk!"

Sitting in a meeting, Bauk is deafened by her mental outcry.

"Nini, softer darling. My head's going to explode."

"Thank goodness you are alright. I thought it was you who were involved in the accident."

"Are you disappointed, you could have been free from me."

"How could you say such a thing? You ... you are a friend."

"A friend, you say?"

"Yes, I have to go. Sorry for interrupting you."

"Nothing to feel sorry about. You know now how to contact me. Surprise me again, but you don't need to shout next time"

"Bauk!"

CHAPTER 7

Nini closes her eyes and moves to the calming music. She feels the vibrations on her skin. Whenever she feels depressed or sad, the soothing tones of the HI-FI-VIBRA always makes her feel composed and tranquil.

Then she feels him make contact. At first this had been obtrusive, but now it was so familiar and pleasant that it didn't bother her anymore.

"Nini, Nini" His voice whispers seductively in her head.

"I'm here." He stands on the balcony, while staring at her moving shadow reflected on the blinds.

"Here?"

He opens the balcony's sliding door, enters and touches her shoulder. She turns slowly, feeling the warm touch of his hand on her shoulder and how it reverberates through her entire body. His touch feels so titillating, so right. He takes her in his arms and they start to move rhythmically to the music. Bauk and Nini realize that this is what they have longed for all their lives.

He caresses her lovely blond hair and lingers his fingers on the sensitive parts of her ear. Nini wonders why he knows exactly how to please her. Instinctively, she opens her mind and pries into his. His lips search for hers and as their lips meet, two souls are re-united. At that moment both of them feel complete. Never will they ever feel at odds again.

A power greater than their own takes hold of them and sweeps them away to a place none of them have ever been. A place of ecstasy

After the storm, they lie contented in each others arms. Nini airs their thoughts, "Why did we ever try to fight this."

Bauk feels the sun on his face. He realizes that he is late for work. He kisses Nini on the forehead, her eyes flutter open. She knows that he has to go, but is thankful she does not have to spoil this feeling of contentedness by rushing off to work for it is the Lada school holiday.

NINI: Would you like something from the ...

BAUK: No, thank you darling. I have to go. I'll contact you again.

NINI: Please don't risk it. You know how your party feels about us, Humans.
Don't jeopardize your future. I love you too much to be the cause of ...

BAUK: What's the use? Without you there is no life.

NINI: I don't want to see you unhappy ...

BAUK: You make me happy.

Nini puts on a robe as Bauk gets dressed. She walks him out and turns her head so that their lips could meet one more time. A Human passing by frowns at this indiscretion.

Bauk gets into his shuttle and disappears from sight. Nini sends him a telepathic message, "I love you and I always will."

He responds with only one word, *"Ditto!"*.

CHAPTER 8

Nini is worried, she has missed her period again. Something is definitely wrong. Could it be?

The only way to find out is to take a home pregnancy test. Nini places her request and the replicator obliges. This simple urine test is very accurate, it can determine pregnancy directly after intercourse. Nini wonders why she hasn't thought of it earlier.

Maybe I'm worrying needlessly, but I have to be sure. Would a human pregnancy test show a half-breed pregnancy? I don't want to see ...

Monday, 31 Zadat 2999

I don't know what to do!

One night of passion ...

How stupid I have been! If only I had used my head for it sounded out the warnings. I know the rules - I'm a fool! What must I do?

My parent's must never know, it will hurt them so. What am I supposed to do? I can't involve him, I can't make him a victim of my fate. What must I do?

I wish I had seen that my sweet surrender, left me without a friend!

WHAT MUST I DO!

Bauk senses that something has upset Nini. However, her newly acquired mind control makes it impossible to fathom her distress. He tries to contact her telepathically, but she shut him out of her thoughts. This disturbs him greatly for he has found his soul mate. He has tried contacting her through e-mail, but has had no response.

It is the week of the election and it is impossible for him to go to her house and to confront her face to face. There is so much to be done and so little time. After several rebuffs of his superiors, Bauk decides to block out his awareness of Nini. He promises himself that after the votes have been counted that he would get to the bottom of this.

CHAPTER 9

As the Abzulians and Humans go to the polling stations to cast their votes in the second democratic election of this planet, Nini also has to cast a very private vote. She is faced with her own personal choices to make. What she decides would change the course of her life forever, just as the votes of those of this planet would change the course of the history of the planet forever.

The choices she is facing will not only change her life, but also those she loves the most. The rest of the planet have to decide between political parties, Nini has to decide on abortion, adoption or keeping the baby.

It is the day after the elections. According to the latest results from the different voting stations around the planet, it seems that the Abzulians will govern for a second term. Nini sees the despondency in the faces of the Humans she passes in the street. She has also been defeated by the Aliens, by one in particular. However, she still has some power - the power to make choices about her own body.

The clinic is a cold, grey building looming in front of her. Nini looks around her to she the world one more time as the person she is today. Then the door opens and she steps inside.

After registering, she is ushered into a windowless room. The doctor enters and the termination apparatus is put to use. Only fifteen minutes later, Nini walks out of the building. She feels as cold, grey and lifeless as the building she has just left.

Bauk finds Nini huddled on a chair staring at the sunset. He approaches her carefully and places his hand on her shoulder. Nini has to incorporate all the mind power she has obtained of late to steel herself against his touch. His touch which has changed her life so dramatically and which has brought so much sorrow to her life.

BAUK: What's wrong Nini? I feel that something is upsetting you. Tell me, what it is.

NINI: Bauk ... you have a right to know ...

BAUK: To know what?

Nini opens her mind. She registers his utter disbelief and pain. He rushes from the murderer of his first child, without uttering a word. He gets into his shuttle and drives recklessly. What has he done wrong? Why would his soul mate commit such an atrocity?

He must be rid of her! Bauk sees death mountain in front of him, without consciously knowing it he had set out for the mountain which has claimed such a lot of Abzulians who could not face their reality. He crashes his shuttle.

Nini has completed what she set out to do. After Bauk has left she stumbles to the bottle of sleeping pills she has slowly but surely collected for today. She takes a handful of pills and swallows them to drown out everything, forever ...

The Abzulians are in power once more. All reports on the information highway shouts out this message to the inhabitants of Abzulia.

Bauk finds Nini in her house. He can sense her nervousness. Seeing her confirms his suspicions that something is very wrong. He tries to probe her mind, but cannot break through her defences.

BAUK: Nini, let me in! What is bothering you?

NINI: Bauk, I don't know how to say it.

BAUK: Just say it!

NINI: Bauk, you'll never guess ...

She opens her mind to him. All her hopes and dreams also spill out. She watches his face change to - horror!

BAUK: What?

NINI: Yes, we are going to have a baby.

BAUK: I knew our meeting was a curse. How could you?

NINI: I'm not the only one to blame!

BAUK: But what about my political career. No Abzulian in his right mind would want me in government.

NINI: If politics is more important than me and your child, then just leave! I said leave! Never come near me again and never ever contact me. It is a curse for I'll have to live with the knowledge of your presence at the back of my head each and every day. It's punishment enough! Just leave!

Bauk leaves without another word. His life has changed now forever. Why did she have to fall pregnant? Why did everything have to change.

NINI: What must I do? I can't keep the baby. I am alone and my parents will never help raise an Alien. They still see them as their inferiors. How will I explain an Alien child to the people at work? Those people have still so much prejudice to deal with, I might lose my job! The best thing would be to let the child be adopted. If it has predominant Alien features, then Aliens could adopt it. On the other hand if it has predominant Human features, then Humans could adopt it.

The following eight and a half months (Aliens take eight months / Humans take nine months) are utter hell for Nini. She has Human as well as Alien complications ranging from vomiting to vibrating!

Bauk's unfeeling actions with "others" hurt her even more. How could her soul mate abandon her so? How can he live with himself? Easily it seems for he uses drink and drugs to shut her out.

In hospital the baby is extracted from her womb. Nini sees the little Alien face with her blue eyes and cannot stop the tears from streaming down her face. He will be raised as an Alien.

Nini walks out of the hospital empty handed. Her father's words echoes through her head, "You have done the right thing."

If it is so Nini wonders why she feels so empty inside. Nini makes contact with Bauk one last time, *"How can you live with yourself - I can't!"*

She steps in front of the fast moving mole-train ...

The day after the elections, the Abzulians are announced the winners. They are in power for the second term running. Opposition parties consisting of Humans and Aliens from other planets start to form a coalition in order to present the ruling party with a strong opposition.

Bauk finds Nini sitting on the floor grading papers. He places his hands over her eyes. She teases him by naming fictional lovers. He kisses her so as to “help” her identify him.

BAUK: I missed you so!

NINI: Me too.

BAUK: Nini, what is wrong? You are masking it, but I still feel you unease.
Please, tell me.

NINI: Bauk, the thing is I don't want to make you a victim of my fate.

BAUK: Open your mind if it's too difficult for you to say what's bothering you.

NINI: Bauk, I don't ...

Nini feels how Bauk intensifies his focus and how he employs his psychic and telepathic abilities to grasp at the truth. He is so very strong. Nini gives up and opens her mind, because he has a right to know. His lips form an engaging smile which brings stars to his eyes. In one big swoop of his muscular arms she is in his arms and he dances with her round the room.

NINI: Bauk, I glad your so happy, but what about your political aspirations.
Won't a half Human child from a Human mistress make

BAUK: It's just a job. If they don't want me in office, I can find another job. A job
is easy to find, but to find another you would be impossible.

NINI: Bauk, I love you.

BAUK: Ditto.

As Nini walks down the aisle of the old traditional wedding chapel alone (her father has refused to be part of this "spectacle", she knows that she has never been as happy as she feels today. When Bauk winks at her, she also knows that together they could conquer the world. Together they will turn the antagonism, adversity, criticism and disgust of others into love.

She places a loving hand on her stomach, knowing that she is carrying a very special person inside her. A person who will bring reconciliation and peace.

CHAPTER 10

I am Neo, the son of Bauk the Abzulian, and Nini, the Human. I am twelve years old. I came to existence in this physical dimension by their psychic bonding. They were explicitly chosen in order for me to come to being. They were explicitly chosen in order for me to come to being. My parents psychic abilities has made it possible for me to be a channel. I am guided by my spirit friend, Diza. This was decided before I took my physical form. I represent hope - new beginnings. I was sent to fulfill a guiding role in difficult times. I'll let Diza talk now.

Neo calls out to Diza. His posture changes and his voice becomes deeper. White light becomes noticeable around Neo's body - Diza.

DIZA: This is a time of great unfolding upon your planet, a time when old forms will rip open so that new life can present itself. This is a critical point in the planet's development. There is an implied destruction of old forms as well as an implied bursting forth of new energies! In order for you to reach a stage of greater maturity, you will need to undergo a major purification of existing values and social organization. These major changes might be accompanied by changes in the planet itself - such as earthquakes and volcanic activity. Political structures and religions come and go, but you continue to violate the planet and each other. The change must occur in you, in your essential being in order to survive. As your sense of unity and identification develops through different intuitive practices, it will become more harmful to harm another. For you will truly know that in wounding

another you wound yourself and in exploiting the planet you exploit yourself. So stop raping the planet and killing one another. My connection to Neo and this planet is to serve at a time of great transition. I am here to guide and to help you through Neo so that you might experience enlightened living.

ADDENDUM F

FINAL DRAFT

QUEST

FOR

LIGHT

QUEST FOR LIGHT PROLOGUE

Reader, this book is a journey of the imagination - a journey of discovery.

You will find yourself in a labyrinth which you must puzzle out. In chapter nine you are faced with choices and you will have to decide which of the three 'endings' is the true ending of the story. Clues are given throughout the story. Chapter ten also plays an important part to unravel the mystery.

So, take a deep breath and start the search for light

QUEST FOR LIGHT

CHAPTER ONE

"Twinkle, twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky ...
How I wonder **what** you are?"

While peering through the foggy Abzullian night sky, Nini repeats the words her granny taught her a long time ago, the remnants of a bygone era of an age-old civilization. This nursery rhyme is all that she has left to remind her of her heritage. She refills her glass of reverie and stares down at her garden. How she wishes her granny were still alive. Bami always understood so well and always knew what to say.

"Bami, I hope you can hear me. I feel so broken, so shattered. I feel like a solitary star in an insane universe. Why am I not like all the others? Why, why, why?"

Nini tries to drown out the events of the day that have pained her so. The faces with the very expressive eyes, eyes which had registered utter disbelief. The thought of their eyes brings back the incredible wave of emotion which she feels so deeply and which causes uncontrollable shivers to run up and down her spine. She remembers the pain, the humiliation and the rebellion. Why did they not react to it? The reason is that this act violated their souls and strengthened their inferiority complex which they have tried so hard to hide - like brainwashed humanoids bowing to their human master, shattering their concept of self.

"I could not be part of that gross act of inhumanity!" Nini's heart shouts to the stars.

Nini grabs her computer diary and whispers her password: "ASTRO"

Thursday, 10 Hamat 2999

Dear Diary

Today was a Nightmare!

I have to order my thoughts to bring light into the darkness of the emotions that holds me captive in this nightmare. Were there any signs that I misread about what would happen this specific day?

The day started in its usual fashion. I got onto my mofu and rode the airwaves to my pick-up point. Elle and I gossiped about Zeli and her new boyfriend. The school's airbuses hissed past because the staff bus was late again. We glanced at each other and voiced our thoughts: "Zeli and her new boyfriend".

Our airbus arrived, the shuttle door opened and we got in. The usual dialogue commenced - teachers "badmouthing" unresponsive little "Aliens" and the one or two little "Humans" who also attended the school. Was the unusual ease of our journey a premonition - the silence before the storm?

It was an extremely cold day for the time of the year. I remember seeing the little Abzullians who live on the farms of the "Human" landowners, the Land Barons, wrapped in a multitude of colour. Pink, red, yellow, orange, brown and blue covering the green of their uniforms.

Was it a coincidence that the concept *dictatorship* came under scrutiny in the novel under discussion? A tale about twentieth century earth which is still so relevant, nine centuries after its creation - a classic.

I remember feeling uneasy and cancelling the drama practice scheduled for break. The principal entered the staff room ... I could not believe what my ears were telling me. We, the substitute mothers and fathers of the children outside, were being forced to strip them of their clothes, their warmth and their dignity.

My whole being refused to collect the jerseys and jackets and I turned a blind eye to some of the learners who tried to hide, in nearly all the cases, the only warm item they possessed.

The children were so upset and shivering from the cold after assembly that I could not divert their attention from the cold to the academic work at hand. And then ...

The little spies, the so-called CRC - the Children's Representative Council - made their rounds to ensure that no culprits had escaped this disciplinary measure for not wearing the "appropriate" uniform. Those children who should really represent the children's cause were acting as the principal's disciplinary committee.

Appearances are more important than the actual goal of preparing the children for the future, it seems. I cannot keep quiet I have to say something, even if it costs me my job!

Nini saves the diary entry and quits the program. She puts her glass in the recycle unit and moves towards her sleep unit. She sets the timer and orders deep REM sleep - for tomorrow will dawn dark and foreboding.

CHAPTER TWO

(The staff room is a buzz of activity. Nini sits quietly, her face mirrors no emotion.)

LIZZ: You are particularly quiet, Nini. What's wrong?

NINI: Nothing, really.

LIZZ: You are lying to me, tell me the truth.

NINI: I feel sick, sick to my stomach.

LIZZ: Is it because of yesterday?

NINI: Yes ...

LIZZ: You are not going to say something, are you?

NINI: Yes, I am.

LIZZ: Are you off your rocker? Do you have Abzullian fever or what?

NINI: Lizz, I can't live with myself if I don't say something.

LIZZ: You are going to regret it!

NINI: No, I am ...

LIZZ: Shush, here comes the principal.

(The principal enters the staff room.)

PRINCIPAL: Good morning

(The staff responds in muffled tones)

PRINCIPAL: First of all, before we discuss the business of the day, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those teachers who supported me yesterday. Thank you, you are the cornerstones of this institution. In particular I would like to thank Mrs. Matthews and Mr. Fox, for without them there would be no discipline at the school.

NINI: Sir?

PRINCIPAL: Yes.

NINI: I would like to say something in response.

PRINCIPAL: What is it? We don't have all day.

NINI: It pains me to have to say this, but to clear my own conscience I have to speak. Yesterday might have been a triumph for discipline but at what cost? Humiliation? Pain? (Tears start to run down her cheeks). That is what I felt yesterday - an overwhelming sorrow. I have the ability - some people say it's a gift, but I see it as a curse - to see past the outer shell of a person to look deeper seeing the person's inner being, his true self, his soul.

Nini remembers the first day she became aware of this ability to sense the inner feelings of people. She was eight years old growing up in a 'pure' Human settlement elevated from the planet's surface. This was an artificial, secluded and protected world, far from the ugly realities it was hiding. She was sent on an errand which changed her life.

Nini had to exchange a faulty replicator at a repair store near the settlement on the planet surface in the so-called "Grey Zone". There she was faced with two doors. She could not remember which one her mother had said she

should enter and opened the door on the right. Five pairs of very expressive eyes in the dark blue faces were turned towards her as the dable flowers turn their faces to the Abzullian sun. She felt the shock and surprise of these Abzullians and could not move, not understanding what was happening to her. The shopkeeper's fierce command to enter the 'other' door shocked her back into action ...

NINI: Who gives us the right to violate them so?

PRINCIPAL: Violate? What are you talking about, girl? These children did not abide by the rules. Therefore they were punished.

NINI: It was unfair to punish them without giving them a warning. It isn't really winter. It was a freak weather occurrence in a very hot summer. Who would have guessed that it would suddenly turn so horribly cold?

PRINCIPAL: If you are not satisfied with this school, you should go and find yourself another job.

NINI: Sir, I don't know if I expressed myself clearly or not. It is not that I am dissatisfied with my job, but I see myself as the mother of these children and you as the principal as the father, if I think that you are too strict or unfair it is my duty to comment on it. You, on the other hand, have the right to agree or disagree with me. But I must feel free to express myself and face the consequences.

PRINCIPAL: This is a matter for you and me in my office. This is not a matter for the whole staff. Come and see me in my office.

Nini 'knew' that she would keep her job, but that from this day forward her relationship with him would never be the same again. She had also caused pain and has hurt him deeply in her efforts to alleviate the pain of the Abzullians.

CHAPTER 3

I, Nini of Abzullia, stare out of the shuttle's window down at the Abzullian landscape fast-forwarding underneath me. Suddenly, a cold shiver gives me goose bumps all over and then ...

... the airbus hisseszzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz, spur..ts

and

loses

altitude!

What an end to a disastrous day? After such an emotionally tiring day, all I want to do is to get home and to indulge myself by getting into a revitalizing bath of blue, healing liquid. I really don't have the strength to wait for hours until Sonny has repaired the airbus or until an empty children's bus arrives to take us home.

I look around the bus to see if my bottled-up feelings are mirrored by any of the others. I glance at Lizz and she looks at me knowingly. Irritation and reproach in her eyes reveal her thoughts. She must be thinking she should have stayed at the school and completed some of her many managerial tasks. Then she could have gone home as she came to school this morning - IN STYLE - in the small shuttle kept at school for the managing staff's convenience who go to school "earlier" and stay "later".

Zeli interrupts my stream of thoughts, “Oh no!! I don’t BELIEVVEE this. Now I will be late for my date with Zakes!”

"Don't worry, he'll wait for a hot babe like you. Sometimes you must play hard to get", says Smurf.

Alfha places her hand on Zeli's shoulder, "Don't pay attention to Smurf he just wants to be funny."

Innes quickly moves forward to help Gorgi to control the airbus and to manoeuvre it for a safe landing. The airbus flops down in a clearing. The walls of the airbus seem to squeeze the air from my lungs. I have to get out! Gorgi opens the door to assess the damage in order to relay his observations to Sonny.

The Abzullian air feels cold and refreshing on my face. I look at the purple horizon. What dark speck is that? It might be the school's shuttle - no it has government markings on it. If it stops I am going to hitch a ride, I don't care - like the others do - even if it is only manned by Aliens. The shuttle passes over my head and my hopes for escape are instantly destroyed, but then it turns round and hovers above our ship.

The calm, deep manly voice from the space craft mesmerizes me and before I know what has hit me, I am sitting in the shuttle with Zeli next to me. I look up and ... I don't believe my eyes. In front of me is the vision of my dreams. In my dreams he was human, but now he is an alien reality. We stare at each other transfixed as if suspended in time, unable to move a muscle. His friend's interference breaks the intensity of the spell. He turns to the controls and the shuttle starts moving. I have difficulty to breathe and swallow, very aware of the electricity between us. I am just aware of Zeli's communication with the companion of my dream apparition.

Standing next to my mofu and waving at the disappearing shuttle, I feel in control of myself for the first time, again. What has happened to me?

At home I grab my diary to try and make sense of today. "ASTRO!"

Friday, 11 Hamat 2999

Dear Diary

I can't make sense of what has happened to me ...

Conflicting emotions have dropped me in an infinite labyrinth of chaos. Will I ever understand what has happened to me today? It is scary to lose control like that!

What am I going to do about it?

Maybe I should attribute this to an unexplained occurrence which will never happen again. It might be better to forget it, to preserve my own sanity.

Bauk, the cause of Nini's distress sits with his friends in the "Thasmee", a traditional watering hole of the Abzullians. Varush, his lifelong friend, teases him, "Guys, you should have seen Bauk a puppy in the hands of that Human bitch."

"Varush, you are just jealous that she didn't look at you the way she looked at me. You all know who really runs after the human women and who wants to marry one?" Bauk and his friends laugh out loud.

Tonight Bauk drinks more than usual for he has found his soul mate. He tries to drink away this knowledge and its inevitable end. He hated begin psychic and remembers his rebellion when his mother told him that it was his legacy and his gift - a "gift" he has always fought against and carefully hidden from his friends. However, it seems that it has caught up with him and that he will not be able to escape it now, for he has found her. His mother explained that if this should happen there would be no turning back. How he wishes now that she was still alive to help him, but he knows that she had trained him for this and that he should follow his destiny. The only real obstacle is the fact that she was human and that may ruin all his plans for the future. He voices his anger and frustration in a tense and explosive, "Damn!"

"And now, my friend?" Varush responds.

"It's nothing. I'm just tired of canvassing votes for the party. I think I am going home now. Are you coming?" asks Bauk.

"No I'll ride home with Xab", answers Varush.

That night Nini and Bauk both lie awake thinking of what has happened today. An event of cosmic impact which will certainly have an effect on their lives.

CHAPTER 4

Nini stares at the letter on the screen. She reads ...

Dear Nini

You don't really know me, but I'm the guy who gave you a lift when your airbus broke down. You must be wondering why you have received this letter. The thing is I felt something incredible and I think you also felt it.

What we have felt is called "labieng" which means bonding. This usually happens when two psychic soulmates meet. After our experience I have done some research and this is the first occurrence involving a human, so I presume you must be confused and scared.

I wrote you this letter so that you will not be frightened, when I start to contact you telepathically.

Your soulmate

Bauk

Nini reads the letter again and voices her disbelief and despair, "Oh, NO! I can't stay here. I have to get out, NOW!"

She runs out of the house and the house computer locks the house automatically. She jumps on her mofu and drives away, trying to escape, - but escape what?

Bauk felt her disbelief and despair as she read his letter. The pain and confusion she was feeling wanted him to reach out to her and comfort her, but he knew that would only confuse her more and intensify the pain she is feeling.

After driving around aimlessly for about half an hour, Nini knows exactly where to go to help her to think clearly. She turns her mofu away from the settlement and towards the hills. She parks the mofu in front of the Hall of Memories. The caretaker greets the familiar face when Nini slips past him.

She walks over to the place which always brings calm and acceptance. Her fingers trace the letters:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER.

YOU ARE NOW ONE OF THE BRIGHT STARS IN THE UNIVERSE.

BAMI, YOU WILL BE SORELY MISSED BY ALL WHO HAVE LOVED YOU IN
THIS DIMENSION.

THIS UNIVERSE IS A LABYRINTH -

A LABYRINTH OF INTERLACING AND INTERSECTING PATHS WHICH LINKS
EVERY PATH WITH EVERY OTHER.

IT HAS NO PERIPHERY,

NO EXIT

IT IS INFINITE ...

"Twinkle, twinkle little star ..." is the password to activate the holographic memory program. As if by magic, Nini is transported back in time.

She sees Bami sitting at her kitchen table as she knocks at the kitchen door.

BAMI: Is that you, Nini, my darling?

NINI: Yes, it's me, Bami.

BAMI (commanding the house computer): Open!

Nini finds herself inside Bami's kitchen once more, with the old fashioned appliances, utensils and in the corner a mural of Earth.

BAMI: Nini, what a surprise to see you. You look so upset ... What is wrong, my darling?

Tears stream down Nini's face as she realizes that this holographically projected image of this computer program would never ever be able to deal with the complex nature of the situation at hand.

NINI: Nothing is wrong, Bami. I just wanted to know how you were doing.

BAMI: That is so sweet of you, my girly. Would you like some tea?

NINI: That would be lovely, thank you.

Sitting with the holographic image of a dearly-loved grandmother brings back so many bitter-sweet memories. These memories fill Nini's conscious mind and act as a healing balm.

As she says goodbye to Bami, ending the computer program, Nini feels relaxed and ready to face the challenges the future might hold.

A sigh of relief is the physical manifestation of Bauk's gratitude, after the inner havoc Nini has caused by her emotional reaction to his letter. He mutters to himself, "I'll give her time, time to adjust."

CHAPTER 5

FIGHT BACK:
WE HAVE THE POWER!

LEDWIN
FOR
PRESIDENT!

UNITY
IS THE
ANSWER!

Slogans flash in the air, holographic images, propagating different political perspectives. Bauk manoeuvres his shuttle through the traffic. Today is a very important day and he has rehearsed his speech well. "I can't let anything interfere", he mumbles to himself. His party's slogan declares to the whole planet that they are positive that the election will keep them in power.

He parks the shuttle and enters the hall ...

She is here, it flashes through his brain. Iron self-discipline and self-control keep him on his feet.

Officials usher him to the front and show him his chair. The chairperson introduces the other officials. When it is his turn to stand, he is nearly knocked down by Nini's intense attention. He smiles politely to the head of education to mask his shock and delight. Bauk does not have a choice - he has to make contact.

"You know I am here, I can feel it. Please don't be scared. I didn't want your first telepathic experience to be in public. However, I need your help I can't make this speech if you focus on me. Please think of something completely different. Please!

Nini knows it is him when Bauk is introduced. Shock and bewilderment register on her face which she quickly masks with indifference. Suddenly, she feels his presence in her mind - a heavy feeling at the back of her head. She feels dizzy, but instinctively knows that she cannot refuse him access and that scares her the most. Nini feigns a stomach cramp as reason for her dizziness and excuses herself from the meeting.

Bauk sees her leave and two conflicting emotions run riot in his head, relief and resentment. "How am I going to handle this? Politics and romance do not mix!"

Outside the conference centre, Nini is faced with conflicting emotions. Her inner turmoil is centred around flight and fight. "Should I just stay or should I leave? If I try to run away, how far should I have to go to escape this situation. I can't stop him contacting me, if I try to run away. The only solution is to confront him face to face, but will I be able to stand my ground in his presence or ...

Bauk's speech is a tremendous success. The crowd gives him a standing ovation. After the meeting his friends, party officials and even an odd Human or two come to congratulate him. Zeneth, his mentor and an important party man, expresses his delight and promises that the Party Leader will be informed of his eloquence and the carrot of promotion is dangled in front of his

nose. Bauk waits until everybody has left, making the excuse that he has some papers to attend to. "Where is Nini? I can't let them see my reaction to her. This was too close for comfort! Why do I have to be psychic?"

As he walks to the door he feels her presence very strongly. They meet at the door.

NINI: How dare ...

Her anger fades when she sees the appeal in his expressive eyes. At that moment she realizes that he finds himself in the same predicament.

BAUK: We have to talk ...

NINI: Face to face.

BAUK: I know a place, a neutral place, an old-fashioned coffee-shop.

NINI: Lead the way, I will follow.

Bauk gets into his shuttle and Nini on her mofu. He drives slowly to accommodate her, something which makes her resentful. He waits for her and they enter together. Humans as well as Abzullians look at them apprehensively for a man-woman relationship between different planetary origins is still frowned at, five years after segregation has been abolished. Abzullia was one of the last planets in the federation who gave up Human Rule after increased pressure from the other federation members.

They find a table and order a Latvia coffee from the replicator next to the table. He stares at her unusual, blue eyes in her light brown face. She is beautiful in her own special way - which is emphasized by her brilliant aura. Her aura indicates that she is a sensitive, caring person who is hurt very easily, emotionally. She meets his enquiring gaze with puzzlement, but turns away from the questioning, expressive green eyes in the dark blue face.

BAUK: What do you want to know?

NINI: In your letter you spoke of "labee ..."

BAUK: You mean "labieng", I suppose?

(She nods)

BAUK: It is the bonding between psychic soulmates.

NINI: But I'm not psychic.

BAUK: You are a very strong power, but untrained. That makes you very dangerous to me.

NINI: Dangerous, how can that be? I don't WANT to hurt you.

BAUK: You are a diamond in the rough, but with training you will be very powerful in a controlled way. You were so powerful in the meeting that I could not focus. Thank you for leaving, although if you were trained you could have just altered your focus on something else as I suggested, which would also have worked.

NINI: How can this bonding happen without my free will?

BAUK: This has been a question for many years among my race. It is suggested that this is ordained before our births. We were chosen to be soulmates by the SUPER BEING and linked to one another which no logic can explain. You are what we call a latent power who was awakened by our contact.

NINI: Do you have more than one soulmate?

BAUK: I know what you're getting at. You wonder if you or I could have a soul mate in our own race, so that we could escape this bonding. Unfortunately, if bonding has taken place nothing can be done about it. We cannot escape our destiny, because we will always be drawn to one another and feel the other ones presence very intensely.

NINI: It is not so bad now. I can talk to you without being spellbound as before.

BAUK: It is because of my training in mind control, but I can't keep it up for much longer. See, I'm starting to tremble. It could have lasted a little longer if you could also control your mind and feelings.

NINI: If I could learn to control this, then we could break this bonding.

BAUK: Unfortunately not. This bonding will lead to becoming one, what you call marriage.

NINI: No!

BAUK: My sentiments exactly, this could not have come at a worst time than now. The politics are so volatile. My party would not tolerate any cohesion of their "Sunshine Boy" with the enemy, a human female.

NINI: Let's try and fight it for both our sakes and our families.

BAUK: We could try. Maybe until after the elections or maybe even longer. Our race difference might be the key. I'll send you information about mind power.

NINI: That would be fine. We should at least try to fight it first, before we just give in. I see you are sweating a lot. I have to go.

BAUK: You are very considerate. I'll also send you notes on communicating through telepathy. It's much better than physical contact - that is, if the pair is fighting their bonding.

NINI: What happens if we accept it?

BAUK: We mate for life ...

NINI: What? I have to go, I feel you are losing control. Bye.

Nini rushes from the coffee shop. Abzullians and Humans smile slyly, because of the "illicit pair's quarrel". Bauk sits a while longer. He orders another drink, finishes it and leaves the shop.

CHAPTER 6

Nini sits on the floor of her house doing the meditation exercises to help her focus and control her mind. "This is not working! I'm feeling everything more intense now."

Bauk, the patient teacher, interrupts her thoughts. "Nini, you are developing. It will take time."

Nini recites the words on her grandmother's memorial plate, the words which describes the inner chaos and turmoil she is experiencing.

This universe is a labyrinth -
a labyrinth of interlacing and intersecting paths
which links every path with every other.
It has no periphery,
no exit
it is infinite ...

"A labyrinth, I find myself in a labyrinth. It is infinite ...

No, there must be a way out an exit! I MUST find it!"

Nini tries desperately to control her mind, every free moment is used for mind control. Slowly but surely Nini gains control over this strange "power" by placing herself in a shell and hardening the shell wall to drown out all the emotions of the people around her. However, Bauk's presence is a constant reminder that she might be fighting a losing battle.

"Bauk, please don't bother me. I have a deadline! I have to punch in the content marks for these creative writing questions."

"Nini, I sensed that you were very tired. You should take a break."

"You also seem tired. How is it going with your election campaign?"

"There is a lot of tension around, but I'll cope. I leave you now to work ..."

The "telepathic relationship" between Nini and Bauk develops day by day as they start to get to know each other. This makes their "bonding" less volatile and more accommodating for both. The outside distractions of work also in some way help to alleviate the terrible yearning they both feel.

Nini sits in her little recreational den, when the Planetary INFO screen automatically switches on. It announces that a government shuttle has crashed, while on a canvassing mission and that the names of the deceased would be released as soon as the next of kin have been informed.

A shock wave hits Nini. Could it be Bauk? If he was involved she would have known, or would she? Without thinking Nini cries out telepathically ...

"Bauk! Bauk!"

Sitting in a meeting, Bauk is deafened by her mental outcry.

"Nini, softer darling. My head's going to explode."

"Thank goodness you are all right. I thought it was you who were involved in the accident."

"Are you disappointed? You could have been free from me!"

"How could you say such a thing? You ... you are a friend."

"A friend, you say?"

"Yes, I have to go. Sorry for interrupting you."

"Nothing to feel sorry about. You know now how to contact me. Surprise me again, but you don't need to shout next time."

"Bauk!"

CHAPTER 7

Nini closes her eyes and moves to the calming music. She feels the vibrations on her skin. Whenever she feels depressed or sad, the soothing tones of the HI-FI-VIBRA always makes her feel composed and tranquil.

Then she feels him make contact. At first this had been obtrusive, but now it was so familiar and pleasant that it did not bother her anymore.

"Nini, Nini", his voice whispers seductively in her head.

"Bauk?"

"I'm here." He stands on the balcony, while staring at her moving shadow reflected on the blinds.

"Here?"

He opens the balcony's sliding door, enters and touches her shoulder. She turns slowly, feeling the warm touch of his hand on her shoulder and how it reverberates through her entire body. His touch feels so titillating, so right. He takes her in his arms and they start to move rhythmically to the music. Bauk and Nini realizes that this is what they have longed for all their lives.

He caresses her lovely blond hair and lets his fingers linger on the sensitive parts of her ear. Nini wonders why he knows exactly how to please her. Instinctively, she opens her mind and pries into his. His lips searches for hers and as their lips meet, two souls united. At that moment both of them feel complete. Never will they ever feel at odds again.

A power greater than their own takes hold of them and sweeps them away to a place none of them have ever been. A place of ecstasy ...

After the storm, they lie contented in each others arms. Nini airs their thoughts, "Why did we ever try to fight this?"

Bauk feels the sun on his face. He realizes that he is late for work. He kisses Nini on the forehead, her eyes flutter open. She knows that he has to go, but is thankful she does not have to spoil this feeling of contentedness by rushing off to work for it is the Lada school holidays.

NINI: Would you like something from the ...

BAUK: No, thank you, darling. I have to go. I'll contact you again.

NINI: Please don't risk it. You know how your party feels about us, Humans. Don't jeopardize your future. I love you too much to be the cause of ...

BAUK: What's the use? Without you there is no life.

NINI: I don't want to see you unhappy ...

BAUK: You make me happy.

Nini puts on a robe as Bauk gets dressed. She walks him out and turns her head so that their lips could meet one more time. A Human passing by frowns at this indiscretion.

Bauk gets into his shuttle and disappears from sight. Nini sends him a telepathic message, **"I love you and I always will."**

He responds with only one word, **"Ditto!"**

CHAPTER 8

Nini is worried, she has missed her period again. Something is definitely wrong. Could it be?

The only way to find out is to take a home pregnancy test. Nini places her request and the replicator obliges. This simple urine test is very accurate, it can determine pregnancy directly after conception. Nini wonders why she has not thought of it earlier.

Maybe I'm worrying needlessly, but I have to be sure. Would a human pregnancy test show a half-breed pregnancy? I don't want to see ...

Monday, 31 Zadat 2999

I don't know what to do!

One night of passion ...

How stupid I have been! If only I had used my head for it sounded out the warnings. I know the rules - I'm a fool! What must I do?

My parents must never know, it will hurt them so. What am I supposed to do? I can't involve him, I can't make him a victim of my fate. What must I do?

I wish I had seen that my sweet surrender, has left me without a friend!

WHAT MUST I DO!

Bauk senses that something has upset Nini. However, her newly-acquired mind control makes it impossible to fathom her distress. He tries to contact her telepathically, but she has shut him out of her thoughts. This disturbs him greatly for he has found his soulmate. He has tried contacting her through e-mail, but has had no response.

It is the week of the election and it is impossible for him to go to her house and to confront her face to face. There is so much to be done and so little time. After several rebuffs from his superiors, Bauk decides to block out his awareness of Nini. He promises himself that after the votes have been counted that he will then get to the bottom of this.

CHAPTER 9

As the Abzulians and Humans go to the polling stations to cast their votes in the second democratic election of this planet, Nini also has to cast a very private vote. She is faced with her own personal choices to make. What she decides will change the course of her life forever, just as the votes of those of this planet will change the course of the history of the planet forever.

The choices she is facing will not only change her life, but also those she loves the most. The rest of the planet has to decide between political parties, Nini has to decide on abortion, adoption or keeping the baby.

It is the day after the elections. According to the latest results from the different voting stations around the planet, it seems that the Abzullians will govern for a second term. Nini sees the despondency in the faces of the Humans she passes in the street. She has also been defeated by the Aliens, by one in particular. However, she still has some power - the power to make choices about her own body.

The clinic is a cold, grey building looming in front of her. Nini looks around her to see the world one more time as the person she is today. Then the door opens and she steps inside.

After registering, she is ushered into a windowless room. The doctor enters and the termination apparatus is put to use. Only fifteen minutes later, Nini walks out of the building. She feels as cold, grey and lifeless as the building she has just left.

Bauk finds Nini huddled on a chair staring at the sunset. He approaches her carefully and places his hand on her shoulder. Nini has to incorporate all the mind power she has obtained of late to

steel herself against his touch. His touch which has changed her life so dramatically and which has brought so much sorrow to her life.

BAUK: What's wrong Nini? I feel that something is upsetting you. Tell me, what it is.

NINI: Bauk ... you have a right to know ...

BAUK: To know what?

Nini opens her mind. She registers his utter disbelief and pain. He rushes from the murderer of his first child without uttering a word.. He gets into his shuttle and drives recklessly. What has he done wrong? Why would his soulmate commit such an atrocity?

He must be rid of her! Bauk sees death mountain in front of him, without consciously knowing it he had set out for the mountain which has claimed wuch a lot of Abzullians who could not face their reality. He crashes his shuttle.

Nini has completed what she set out to do. After Bauk has left she stumbles to the bottle of sleeping pills she has slowly but surely collected for today. She takes a handful of pills and swallows them to drown out everything, forever ...

The Abzullians are in power once more. All reports on the information highway shout out this message to the inhabitants of Abzullia.

Bauk finds Nini in her house. He can sense her nervousness. Seeing her confirms his suspicions that something is very wrong. He tries to probe her mind, but cannot break through her defences.

BAUK: Nini, let me in! What is bothering you?

NINI: Bauk, I don't know how to say it.

BAUK: Just say it!

NINI: Bauk, you'll never guess ...

She opens her mind to him. All her hopes and dreams also spill out. She watches his face change to - horror!

BAUK: What?

NINI: Yes, we are going to have a baby.

BAUK: I knew our meeting was a curse. How could you?

NINI: I'm not the only one to blame!

BAUK: But what about my political career? No Abzulian in his right mind would want me in government.

NINI: If politics is more important than me and your child, then just leave! I said leave! Never come near me again and never ever contact me. It is a curse for I'll have to live with the knowledge of your presence at the back of my head each and every day. It's punishment enough! Just leave!

Bauk leaves without another word. His life has changed now forever. Why did she have to fall pregnant? Why did everything have to change.

NINI: What must I do? I can't keep the baby. I am alone and my parents will never help raise an Alien. They still see them as their inferiors. How will I explain an Alien child to the

people at work? Those people have still so much prejudice to deal with, I might lose my job! The best thing could be to let the child be adopted. If it has predominant Alien features, then Aliens could adopt it. On the other hand if it has predominant Human features, then Humans could adopt it.

The following eight and a half months (Aliens take eight months / Humans take nine months) are utter hell for Nini. She has Human as well as Alien complications ranging from vomiting to vibrating!

Bauk's unfeeling actions with "others" hurt her even more. How could her soulmate abandon her so? How can he live with himself? Easily it seems for he uses drink and drugs to shut her out.

In hospital the baby is extracted from her womb. Nini sees the little Alien face with her blue eyes and cannot stop the tears from streaming down her face. He will be raised as an Alien.

Nini walks out of the hospital empty-handed. Her father's words echo through her head, "You have done the right thing."

If it is so Nini wonders why she feels so empty inside. Nini makes contact with Bauk one last time, *"How can you live with yourself - I can't!"*

She steps in front of the fast moving mole-train ...

The day after the elections, the Abzullians are announced the winners. They are in power for the second term running. Opposition parties consisting of Humans and Aliens from other planets start to form a coalition in order to present the ruling party with a strong opposition.

Bauk finds Nini sitting on the floor grading papers. He places his hands over her eyes. She teases him by naming fictional lovers. He kisses her so as to “help” her identify him.

BAUK: I missed you so!

NINI: Me too.

BAUK: Nini, what is wrong? You are masking it, but I still feel your unease. Please, tell me.

NINI: Bauk, the thing is I don't want to make you a victim of my fate.

BAUK: Open your mind if it's so difficult for you to say what's bothering you.

NINI: Bauk, I don't ...

Nini feels how Bauk intensifies his focus and how he employs his psychic and telepathic abilities to grasp at the truth. He is so very strong. Nini gives up and opens her mind, because he has a right to know.

His lips form an engaging smile which brings stars to his eyes. With one big swoop of his muscular arms, Nini finds herself in his arms twirling round the room.

NINI: Bauk, I am glad you're so happy, but what about your political aspirations? Won't a half Human child from a Human mistress make ...

BAUK: It's just a job. If they don't want me in office, I can find another job. A job is easy to find, but to find another you would be impossible.

NINI: Bauk, I love you.

BAUK: Ditto.

As Nini walks down the aisle of the old traditional wedding chapel alone (her father has refused to be part of this “spectacle”, she knows that she has never been as happy as she feels today. When Bauk winks at her, she also knows that together they could conquer the world. Together they will turn the antagonism, adversity, criticism and disgust of others into love.

She places a loving hand on her stomach, knowing that she is carrying a very special person inside her, a person who will bring reconciliation and peace.

CHAPTER 10

I am Neo, the son of Bauk the Abzullian, and Nini, the Human. I am twelve years old. I came into existence in this physical dimension by their psychic bonding. They were explicitly chosen in order for me to come to being. My parents' psychic abilities have made it possible for me to be a channel. I am guided by my spirit friend, Diza. This was decided before I took my physical form. I represent hope - new beginnings. I was sent to fulfil a guiding role in difficult times. I'll let Diza talk now.

Neo calls out to Diza. His posture changes and his voice becomes deeper. White light becomes noticeable around Neo's body - Diza.

DIZA: This is a time of great unfolding upon you planet, a time when old forms will rip open so that new life can present itself. This is a critical point in the planet's development. There is an implied destruction of old forms as well as an implied bursting forth of new energies! In order for you to reach a stage of greater maturity, you will need to undergo a major purification of existing values and social organization. These major changes might be accompanied by changes in the planet itself - such as earthquakes and volcanic activity. Political structures and religions come and go, but you continue to violate the planet and each other. The change must occur in you, in your essential being in order to survive. As your sense of unity and identification develops through different intuitive practices, it will become more harmful to harm another. For you will truly know that in wounding another you wound yourself and in exploiting the planet you exploit yourself. So stop raping the planet and killing one another. My connection to Neo and this planet is to serve at a time of great transition. I am here to guide and to help you, through Neo, so that you might experience enlightened living.

QUEST FOR LIGHT EPILOGUE

Reader, you have created your own individual story by figuring out your own ending.

You have revealed something about yourself!

If you chose ending two, you are a left brain person who believes in realistic stories.

A left brain person:

- Likes to read a realistic story.

- Likes to write non-fiction.

- Is rational.

- Prefers verbal instruction.

- Prefers individuals.

- Copies pictures in detail.

- Is almost never absent minded.

- Solves problems logically.

- Prefers to learn by structured assignments.

- Is attentive during long verbal explanations.

- Reads for specific details and facts.

- Is good at maths.

- Remembers things specifically studied.

- Cannot be hypnotized.

- Needs total quiet to study.

- Thinks better sitting down.

- Is a dog lover.

If you chose ending three, you are a right brain person who believes in fantasy.

A right brain person:

- Likes to read fantasy.
- Likes to write fiction.
- Is philosophical.
- Prefers visual instruction.
- Prefers groups.
- Makes up own drawings.
- Is almost always absent minded.
- Solves problems intuitively.
- Prefers to learn by free exploration.
- Is restless during long verbal explanations.
- Reads for main ideas.
- Is good at art.
- Dreams about that which never happens.
- Can be hypnotized.
- Can listen to music when studying.
- Thinks better lying down.
- Is a cat lover.

(Adapted from TRAMPE, K. 1999. Left or Right Brain? That is the question. [Web:] <http://www.anglefire.com/wi/2brains/images/rstlne.gi> [Date of access: 3 July 2000].