

Space Highway

The Awakened

A18 ~ Cargo 55: The Voyager

“Good morning, Kira~”

“Good morning, Enya,” I yawn.

“Slept well?” she giggles.

“Yeah. You?”

“With you? Always,” she smirks coyly. “What’s your job today?”

“Hmm...” I reach for my terminal and check the ISTM cargo app. “I have to fetch a special cargo on a mixed scientific station, the SMS Oortia.”

“Special?”

“Yeah, no further indications...”

“Sounds great,” she giggles while she brushes a lock out of my face. “I’d love to come with you, but I’m going in just the right opposite direction...”

“Yeah, would be nice.” I smirk massaging her scalp through her short reddish blonde hair.

“Yeah,” she purrs.

Our lips meet for a kiss.

We make out until a soft growl wanders through her stomach and we break our kiss with giggles and chuckles.

“Time for breakfast?” I laugh.

“Yup! Time for breakfast. Have still some free time?”

“Some. I’ve to be on the *road* in two hours.”

“Me too...” Her ears fold down. “No time for a fuck.” She grins.

“No... no time...” I sigh.

We stand up and have a shower together, without our usual sexy play.

“This bread is delicious...”

“As is the paste, or jam, or whatever it is...”

Enya giggles at my confusion.

“It’s a paste, Kira, and made of lû’nê’x̄ meat. It’s a typical Felii paste.”

“Lú-nē-ks...” I try to copy her pronunciation, impossible...

She giggles, “Not bad, Kira. You’re getting better at it. At least you kept inside the animal kingdom.”

“Shit... It would be easier without the clicks...”

“Yeah...” she shrugs. “If I understood it right, it has to do with our fangs. At least, a major theory hints that way.”

“If I had fangs...”

“Perhaps, you’d have more success pronouncing feliiiti,” she giggles. “It’s a theory, anyway. Don’t push yourself, I’m thrilled enough for you trying.”

I sigh. “Anyway, what’s that meat? Or animal?”

“Actually, it’s a mixture of meat, herbs, vegetables and cereals. All of them from the traditional Felii cuisine. The meat content is, in fact, just about twenty percent of its content. The lû’nê’x̄ have to be kept, tended and butchered in a specific way. They have to be kept naturally, in the open field and looked out for, I don’t know the details... But I can assure you that it’s one of the best meat out there.”

“Wow... how do they look like?”

“Hmm... Comparing to the Gaian animals... like a mixture between an ostrich and a reptile, more like a dinosaur...” she giggles.

“Really?”

“Yup. Anyway, let’s eat, or we’ll be late...”

“Sure, lady SpeedKitty, the fastest of all, keeper of time records,” I grin.

She laughs heartily.

“So... that’s it for our *romantic sexcapade*...” Enya sighs.

“Yeah,” I sigh too as we watch ten cargo holds being attached to her Cheetah.

“Are you feeling better now?” she asks me with a hint of concern.

“Yeah, thanks, Enya.”

“You don’t sound too convincing, Kira.”

“Just the usual... don’t worry Enya.”

“If you say so...” she shrugs. “But remember, you can always talk to me, okay?”

“Thanks, Enya. I’m just lost.”

“Just? Kira...”

“It’s okay, Enya. I have time to get over it. I’m thankful to have you at my side —” I hesitate, “for *this*...”

“Uh-huh,” she giggles. “You can have me for more if you want, you know it. But I will never, ever, force you to anything. You are way to dear for me.”

“Thanks, Enya.”

“Hug?”

“Hug.”

We hug each other without showing hints of our intimate *skinship*. We only step back when the cargo dispatcher interrupts us.

She checks and signs the cargo *papers* on the DigiWaybill, and turns to me.

“Bye, Kira. Say hello to Aia when you meet her.”

“Bye, Enya. Will do.”

She enters her Cheetah and I watch her blast off.

With a long sigh I turn around and wander to my own truck.

No need to sign papers. I have a dry run to the SMS Oortia.

Inside the Jump, my mind wanders again... I have too much free time at hand which does not let me keep my mind fixed on the task at hand.

Enya... I enjoy being with her. But I'm still torn about what we're doing is right. Last afternoon and night we went to a movie and strolled around the station, as we're on a date. But the flirting and the caresses were hidden. We only made out when we were sure nobody could see us. This hiding is killing us, is it? Or is it rather exciting?

At the hotel, where nobody could see, we indulged ourselves in our *barely* sexual play. We tried new things and barely avoided breaking our promise to not have *real* intercourse.

I sigh. It's great with her, but... I slap my face. Why am I still that irresolute? Why can't I make my mind up? What's going on?

And Aia... I'm completely infatuated by her. Is it as brief as this word means? Or, is it rather something longstanding? Do I love her? I mean, do I *really* love her? I'm sexually attracted to her, that's for sure. Why all these doubts? I never had doubts regarding women and relationships. Why now? Why am I doubting? Why am I torn between Aia and Enya? What do both women represent in my life? I don't know...

Being mesmerized by these two alien women doesn't help me to regain my confidence. Confidence... Have I lost it? Not at the helm of my truck. Not when talking with the guys. Not even when I'm talking with the girls... Have I lost confidence in relationships? It can't be, right? Or, is it something completely different? I can't put the finger on it.

I feel somewhat lost, but I'm unsure where. It doesn't show but only with Aia and Enya, and other women I've met. Sex is not the problem, I haven't become impotent, rather the contrary. I don't know why, but I can do it for longer and

more times. The cryopreservation, perhaps? The food? The women? This place? This era? I don't know... But clearly not the main problem here.

Have I lost confidence because all the women I've met are all self-confident and independent? No... I always preferred such women. Thinking back... Maria was independent, even if her father never allowed her to be. Kitty... she was the most independent and the strongest women I've met in my *old* times. That's not the problem either.

This sense of feeling lost doesn't leave me. Is it the situation of the unknown? No, can't be... I'm here for four months now, the situation isn't so much unknown anymore.

“Aaargh~”

I mess my hear up. I should do something else. But, on the other hand, I have to sort this fucking stuff out, or I won't get out of it. Just for the sake of Aia and Enya, I have to get out of this. Why I'm unable to tell them what I really want from them? Just stating it. They don't have to correspond...

And these freakish dreams I have... They always come up when I cuddle with them and fall asleep. What do they mean? Why are both in there?

Am I afraid? Me? I... shit... yeah... I am. But from what? I can't pinpoint it... I'm just lost and afraid. This feeling is ominous without a clear origin.

Should I get a specialist? A psychologist? No way... if it spreads... Fuck! Why am I hesitating even to visit a specialist? Am I that frail? That...

I sigh again. I should stop...

Let's read the EG...

The SMS Oortia appears highlighted on the AR and, predictably, control chimes in. I'm given an entry vector and a docking bay number.

Just as I accept the vectors, a highlighted truck catches my eye, the Thunderbird...

I pick the mic and select Aia's truck's comm.

“Hey, Aia, here too?”

“Oh! Hi, Kira~ Just arriving. Got a huge cargo for ’em. You too?”

“No... I’ve got to fetch a cargo. I’m empty now.”

“Cool! Meet ya in the café?”

“Sure. See you there.”

“See ya!”

Nice to meet her on route. Shit... my *mind wandering* doesn’t help, not the slightest.

“Kira!” Aia runs towards me and jumps into my arms. “Good to meet you.”

“Ye—yeah,” I stutter overwhelmed by her greeting. I know I should be used to it already, but still overtakes me each time. If, at least, our relationship was clear...

“Do you have some time?” she asks me happily.

“Yeah. I was just told that I arrived too early, they don’t have my cargo ready yet. In fact, it hasn’t arrived yet.”

“Oh! Then let’s have a nice meal together, if you’re up to.”

“Sure, Aia. Of course.”

“Cool~” she sings.

Sitting at a table and waiting for the food, we chat about our day.

“How was the other route? The one you did yesterday and two days ago?”

“Quite well. Nothing much, actually.”

“Enya told me you’ve met yesterday and parted ways today.”

Shit... news travel too fast nowadays.

“Yeah, she sent greetings for you.”

“Thanks~” she giggles happily. “Did you do something nice together?”

Oh, fuck... Yeah, we almost fucked again... no, I cannot tell her that, not yet. I opt to tell her only the partial truth.

“We went to the gym, watched a movie, and had a nice night out.”

“Nice. Was it a problem to have to share a room with her?” What the actual fuck? “You know, she being so hyperactive and all that.” Quite right, the hyperactive part. “Well, surely not, as you have a *friend-skinship* with her.” What the hell? Better stop her now... “Enya told me...”

“Aia... Yeah, we shared a room. It was no problem at all.”

“I might overthink it...” she sighs.

“What do you mean?” I ask carefully.

“She confessed to you, didn’t she? The day you’ve got your Falcon...”

“Yeah.”

“And you refused her...”

“Yeah.”

“But you keep being friends...”

“Indeed. We are good friends.”

“Well, I have the feeling that Enya still loves you... and—”

“Yes...” I gently interrupt her while taking her hand lying on the table. “I know she still loves me.”

She blinks and looks at me astonished.

“But...”

“Aia, I’m telling you because I trust you. Please, don’t try to get us together. Enya and I have talked it through. I appreciate her feelings, and I accept them. It’s just that I need more time to accept my own feelings in this universe.”

“This universe?”

I sigh. “Yeah... I’m still coping with all this crazy stuff. Not the technological part, actually. But with myself—*Argh~*” I let her hand free and scratch the back

of my head. “I don’t know how to explain it... But I will tell you once I figure it out.”

“Thanks...” she says still wearing a hint of doubt.

“I have the feeling that I cannot have a proper relationship with anyone until I have sorted out some of my self-doubts.”

“I understand, I think.” She nods while taking my hand. “I don’t get much of what you’re going through, but tell me once you know, will you please, Kira.”

“You will be the first one, Aia.”

“Thanks. I... I’m still having my own doubts. But they seem to be so different from yours that it’s beyond me. I can’t imagine what you’re going through, even if I’m in a dilemma.” She sighs deeply. “I’d wish I could—” she bites her lip.

“Take your time, as I need mine, Aia,” I tell her holding her hand, this time firmly with a gentle gesture.

She blushes slightly.

“Thanks, Kira. I won’t push you, nor Enya. She told me something similar. But not that she still loves you...”

“I know. She told me.” She blinks thrice. “And it’s great that we can talk about it without making a huge fuss. I too have strong feelings... to both of you.”

“Both of us? You mean Enya and me?”

“Yeah.” I nod slowly. “But I cannot make my mind up about what I have to do. That’s something I still have to address too, but before that—”

“You need your time...” she interrupts me. I nod and she sighs. “I’ll try to make my mind up too.”

“I’ll wait for it, Aia. But don’t feel pressured, I don’t want a hasty decision of yours. As I said, I also need my time.”

“Thanks~”

The food is served and we eat in silence until the desserts arrive.

Aia sighs deeply.

“What is it, Aia?” I ask concerned.

“It’s just... well...” She sighs again. “I’m getting too used to the relationship we have right now, or rather, the lack of...”

“Huh? What do you mean?”

“I think my progress in sorting my stuff out has stalled...”

“In what way?”

“I... I think I’ve gotten too accustomed to our actual relationship. I know that we have no clear one... but I got almost comfortable the way we are... I can’t describe it properly, I fear. It’s as if I got used to the strange tension between us... I...”

“You too?”

“Huh?”

“I know what you mean... In some way, we’re getting used to having this strange relationship, but we also do not know how to go further, right?”

“Yeah.” She nods while sighing. “But, I think, each of us has to iron out our individual stuff first, right?”

“I think so too, Aia. I don’t want to throw my problems on you while you are coping with yours.”

“Neither do I...”

“Then, take your time, I’ll wait.”

“You too, I’ll wait too,” she smiles heartily.

This isn’t going to be easy... Better change subject.

“Do you have a haul tomorrow?”

“No,” she negates, “I have my obligatory resting day,” she giggles. “Why? Do you have some plans?”

“I was thinking... you mentioned the Lost Millennium disco months ago and we never went there. Wanna go tonight?”

“Oh! Sure!” She clasps her hands and her eyes sparkle. “I’d love to. I’ll put my Lolita dress on. Oh!” She looks straight at me. “What will you wear? You’ll need something vintage.”

“Am I not vintage enough already?” I laugh.

“You are,” Aia giggles, “but not your clothes. Let’s buy you something when we get back home. I will leave at the same time as you, we’ll be back roughly at the same time.”

“Sure. That’s per—” My words are interrupted by a message sound from my terminal. “Oh! My cargo is arriving.”

“Then we should have a look at it, right? My cargo is still being stowed into the holds.”

“Sure.”

“What is that?” Aia asks dumbfounded.

“Is it what I think it is?” I ask myself aloud.

“Huh? Do you know it, Kira?”

“It has to be...” I blurt out, “one of the Voyagers.”

“Voyagers?”

“Yeah... a space probe from the twentieth century... there were two of them...”

“Oh? You know?” We are interrupted by a higher pitched voice.

We turn around and an İiha wearing a lab coat approaches us.

“We found this ancient probe resting on an asteroid inside of what you Gaians call the Oort Cloud,” she tells. “After finding a kind of golden disk attached to the probe, we guessed that, according to its engravings, that it came from Gaia. After confirming with Gaian space exploration historians, we arranged a transport back home. It will be analyzed and then exhibited in the Gaian Space Exploration Museum in Huston.”

“Wow!” Aia’s eyes sparkle.

“You guessed?” I ask. “The Golden Record should have given clear indications to the origins of the probe. Even the instructions on how to read it should have been engraved on the same disk. Ugh~ if I remember well.”

“Wow!” Aia exclaims again. “You know that much?”

“I told you that I loved everything about space and sci-fi, Aia.” I smirk. “Anyway, you couldn’t decipher the disk?” I ask the scientist.

“Uh~ No...” she negates blushing slightly. “We don’t understand the engravings... We only guessed because of the diagram pinpointing the localization of Gaia by means of fourteen pulsars. The rest is really confusing.”

“Confusing?” I ask. “It should have been fool-proof... at least, that’s what the scientist from my times told.”

“Your times?” asks the Īiha with evident interest.

“Yeah, Kira is an Awakened,” giggles Aia.

“Oh! That makes sense! Cool!” She jumps up, but recomposes herself immediately. “Sorry for that. I’m not used to meeting Awakened.”

“None really is, not even me. And I’ve worked at a cryogenics lab,” giggles Aia.

“Ah, back to that disk...” the scientist says. “We got that some data is encoded in binary codes. It seems that your people did not yet develop quantum encoding yet...”

“Just the theory... Quantum mechanics, or what it was called then, was just a plausible theory,” I tell.

“Makes sense,” the woman says nodding. “But the outlining and the wave pattern don’t make sense to us... In certain parts, we understood that time is meant, but no indication to what relational and spatial time convention.”

I begin to laugh while both women look at me unsure why.

“Sorry, sorry...” I try to recover my breath. “It was just—I had to laugh because at that time, they thought that any intelligent life-form could decipher it. Seems they have missed out some stuff.”

“Oh!”

Both women laugh now too.

“Seems so,” giggles Aia catching her breath.

“Anyway,” the Īiha also tries to catch her breath. “We confirmed that the probe comes from Gaia, and now we’re returning it. Historians and other scientists will have to figure it out. Your job is to deliver it to the Gaian Space Exploration Museum in Huston.”

“No problem. But will it fit in a hold?” I ask.

“We are preparing a special hold, slightly wider than the usual ones. Actually, the probe fits nicely in a standard one, but we want to be extra careful with such a historical piece of Gaian space exploration.”

“Understandable,” I nod.

“But, out of curiosity, what do you know about this probe?” she asks me intrigued.

“Hmm... There were two probes, Voyager 1 and Voyager 2. They were launched in the seventies of the twentieth century, if I recall correctly. They were scientific probes sent to fly by several planets of the Sol System and adventure into the deep space. The last thing I remember was that the year I got cryopreserved, the Voyager 1 was to leave the heliopause.”

“Wow... that means, this probe is over a thousand forty-eight years old...” says Aia astonished. “Even older than you,” she adds giggling.

“Yeah,” I chuckle. “Quite older than me.”

“Incredible...” gasps the Īiha. “That is something remarkable. Ah, the hold is arriving...”

We watch as the special hold is brought into the sealed room where the Voyager floats. The ancient probe is carefully moved into the hold which is sealed afterward.

While we observe how the hold is coupled to my Falcon, a dispatcher, seemingly an Android, approaches us.

“Are you Mister Phoenix?” he asks.

“Yes, I am,” I say.

“Perfect, sir. May we proceed with the formalities?”

Yup, he is an android, at least class D. His speech patterns betray him.

“Of course.”

We go through the procedure and I get green light to leave.

“See you on Gaia, Aia,” I tell her.

She giggles at my improvised but dumb rhyme.

“Sure, see ya. Good luck!” she giggles and gives me a hug.

After a *short hop* through the Jump and entering the Gaian atmosphere, I reach the small spaceport near the Gaian Space Exploration Museum.

I call in to get the landing vectors and I’m told where to dock. No problem.

Leaving my truck, I’m received with elation. All seem really excited.

“Is this the probe?” a young looking Īiha scientist asks thrilled.

“Yeah,” I say before anyone else can answer her. “One of the Voyagers.”

“Voyagers?” she asks marveled. “You know?”

“The basics, at least...” I say and tell her and the others what I’ve already told the other Īiha on the SMS Oortia.

All are astonished and fired up by my brief sum-up of what I know about the Voyager space program.

After the paperwork, I’m told that they might ask me to help out with some basic twentieth-century stuff, to which I agree. It’s funny to think that these highly advanced scientists would ask a twentieth century trucker for help.

Time to fly home...

Landing on the CreativeTruck’s plot, I notice the Thunderbird crossing the threshold of the huge garage building. Aia’s arriving at the same time. Just perfect.

I send the signal to the door that I'm arriving and it keeps open but the red light is still on, I have to wait.

All green, now I can enter. Red flashing lights advise the people inside that a truck is entering. Surely Aia is already aware that I'm parking.

Once parked at the Thunderbird's side, I step out and find Aia at the steps of my Falcon.

"Hi, hi~" she sings. "Had a good delivery?"

"Yeah, easy..." I just say. "Yours?"

"Couldn't be easier. Ready to party?" she giggles.

"Yeah."

"Let's buy your stuff right now? I've got the Ferrari here..."

"Okay, let's buy something vintage," I confirm.

"Great!" giggles Aia. "Let's visit one of my favorite vintage shopping areas."

We reach the shopping street where Aia bought something she never showed me. I remember the day, it was the day I got my piloting license.

"In here..." Aia points at a shop. "This one is for guys."

"Okay."

We enter the Vintage Gentleman's Boutique, quite an imaginative name.

"Ma'am, sir, how may I help you?" asks us a clerk wearing a vintage tailor outfit.

"We're looking something for him," Aia points at me as if it is not obvious.

"But of course," he nods. "Any idea of what era or century?"

"Actually, no..." I shrug. "I haven't really thought of it, but surely from before of the twentieth century."

Aia giggles at my remark.

"That restricts already a lot, sir. This way, please."

The clerk ushers us to a small department of the rather huge store.

“It should be, if possible, something complementary to my blue Lolita dress,” tells Aia and shows him a picture of her dress on her terminal.

“Oh, good choice, ma’am. Then I would recommend something Victorian. Do you prefer something historically accurate or rather inspired by historical facts?” the clerk asks.

“No idea, honestly.” I shrug. “Victorian doesn’t sound bad. Let’s see what you have.”

“Sure, sir.”

He goes on showing full sets and I try many on, but none convinces me.

“No way, I look like Doctor Watson...” “Okay, no...” “Elementary, this suit does not suit me, Watson.” “What does a penguin say? ‘Here, have a pebble, now you’re my bride.’” “Nope, nope...” “Mr. Hyde, I presuppose.” “Ah... What a deformed thief this fashion is.”

Aia just giggles at my reactions while I dismiss one suit after another.

“Perhaps, another era would please you more, sir,” the clerk says.

“Maybe,” I sigh. “Oh!”

“What?” asks Aia intrigued. “Have you seen something?”

“That...” I point at a mannequin.

“Um~ Looking good, but—”

“Just the shirt...”

“Yeah.”

“This is a poet shirt inspired by Romanticism of the eighteenth century. Of course, you may combine styles and eras,” the clerk comments. “We just have to be careful that they complement each other perfectly.”

“Looks like from the Pirates of the Caribbean...” I blurt out.

“What do you mean, sir?”

“Ah, it’s a movie from the twenty-first century. Perhaps it’s the way to go... let’s see...”

After some time, I finally got the perfect combination. The ruffled white satin poet shirt, a formal black tailcoat, black highland pants, white braces, black lace-up boots, a dapper chap walking stick, and a black deluxe top hat. All’s set.

“Perfect!” Aia applauds.

“You look stunning, sir. There are some minor adjustments I have to make it fit you perfectly, if I may,” the clerk offers.

“Sure. I want this outfit to last long,” I say nodding at my own reflection.

After an hour of adjusting, I have a brand-new vintage outfit.

“Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy, But not express'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy; For the apparel oft proclaims the man....” I say pensive looking at my reflection in the mirror.

“Where’s that from?” asks Aia. “Seems like a quote and sounds familiar.”

“Ah, yeah. Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Actually, the only play I’ve ever read... Our class performed it in high school.”

“That’s why. Why didn’t I remember it?” giggles Aia. “Did you play Hamlet? I don’t see you as the typical choice...”

“I wasn’t...” I shrug. “Just the emergency stand-in, and I never stepped in.”

“Shame... You would have been a marvelous Hamlet,” she giggles again. “Remember more?”

I nod, take a deep breath and take a dramatic acting pose...

“To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take Arms against a Sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them: to die, to sleep
No more; and by a sleep, to say we end
the heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
that Flesh is heir to? ’Tis a consummation

devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep,
To sleep, perchance to Dream...

“Bravo!” Aia gives me a round applause followed by some customers and the clerks.

I bow to them, inspired by the moment. I never felt that good reciting something I was forced to learn by heart at school.

“Why didn’t you get that part? You’re excellent!” gleams Aia.

“I don’t know.” I shrug. “Anyway, that’s what I remember...”

“It’s really cool. And the suit, it’s perfect!”

“Yeah, I think so too. But it lacks something.”

“Huh?”

“Sir, do you have, perchance, a pocket-watch replica fitting to this outfit?”

“But of course, sir. This way.”

I ended up buying not only the full outfit, but also an expensive replica of a vintage wind-up pocket-watch. The price tag is hefty, but worth it. At least, I feel like it’s worth it.

Aia comes out of the bathroom after having a shower.

“Don’t take long,” she tells me wearing a cute smile, “I’ll need your help again.”

“Ye—yeah...” I simply tell heading into the bathroom.

Shit... Better defuse *my* situation before it gets worse...

Wearing just the new highland pants, I step out of the bathroom and I find Aia already waiting for me, in lingerie. Blue silken frill lingerie, complete with silken stockings and a sexy garter belt, a full set. That set must be what she bought that day. Really hot stuff! The bra hugging her perfect tits and the frill panties hiding just enough for my fantasies to run wild. Shit! And I thought I’ve had defused my situation in the shower...

“Can you tie the corset’s back again?” she coos. Damn, is she sexy!

“Sh—Sure...”

She puts the silken bustier on and presents me her strong yet delicate back. I swallow empty. I have to hold myself back and focus on the laces.

Carefully, I begin to tighten and fasten the black laces from the top downwards. Now I remember how erotic it was the last time... it’s fucking hot! and I thought I did cool down in the shower, for nothing...

“Is it okay, not too tight?” I ask as I am to reach her lower back.

“No, no... you’re perfect, Kira,” she giggles.

I kneel down to continue... shit... her perfect ass is just in front of my lusting eyes... Hold back, hold back. I move my eyes up to the laces and keep on.

I hold in a sigh and myself back to not feel her ass up while I stand up.

“Ready, Aia.”

“Thank you, Kira~” she sings happily and turns around. “You’re great doing this! Now you have to do it every time I want to wear this dress.”

“Ye—yeah...”

“I’ll finish in fifteen minutes,” she tells blushing as she looks down, then disappears in her bedroom.

Shit... These pants cannot hide my boner...

I finish putting my new outfit on. Looking great! I strike some poses in front of the huge mirror near the apartment’s door.

A giggle makes me turn left, Aia is ready.

“Really looking good,” she giggles and comes nearer.

“And you look fabulous, Aia.”

“Than you~” she sings again.

She truly looks spectacular, as usual. The Lolita dress just highlights her elegance.

“You too,” she purrs as she fixes some of the ruffles on my shirt. “I’ll call a taxi, so we won’t need to hold back, okay?”

“Ye—yeah, sure.”

This might become a crazy night out...

While Aia calls the taxi, I grab my walking stick and check the pocket watch, it’s on time. Perfect.

“The taxi will be here in five minutes,” she tells.

“Milady,” I bow to her, “may I accompany such an extraordinary lady to a delightful afternoon?”

“Oh, my, of course milord,” she giggles and accepts my hand and I kiss hers.

I straighten myself and offer her my arm. Happily, she hooks hers into mine.

“Let’s go, milord?” she giggles.

“Of course, milady,” I smile.

We leave her apartment. Now that I think of it, it’s the first time I offered her my arm, she always hooked into mine without asking...

The taxi arrives shortly after reaching the walkway and we dash towards the Lost Millennium.

“Woow...”

“Impressive, right?” giggles Aia.

“Indeed, milady...” I blurt out. What the hell? Has this outfit transposed me to the eighteenth or nineteenth century?

She just giggles and presses on to the entry.

We are received by several funny looking characters. Actually, they are from the staff, but each of them looks like from a different era, almost comical.

After paying a neglectable fee, we enter the crazy place.

Again, I’m dumbfounded... This place is huge! And filled with people wearing the most absurd outfits and costumes from any era not the actual one. Some

even wear what I could call retro-futuristic ones. Like those we imagined in the twentieth century. The Jetsons cartoons flash through my mind, yup, they are here too...

Aia giggles and shows me around.

We end settling in a round booth looking over the main dance floor. A swift Reaf wearing a carhop waitress outfit from the roaring thirties complete with rollers comes by and asks us what we want to drink.

Aia asks for some fancy cocktails I've never heard of and I just order the same. Swiftly, the waitress comes back with our drinks and some snacks.

"Amazing, isn't it?" Aia giggles.

"Yeah... you say it. How is it that we could get in that easily if it is an exclusive club?"

"Well, you need to wear exclusive retro-fashion." She giggles. "And, well... I'm actually a member."

"A member?"

"Yup, you too," she giggles again.

"Me too?"

"Um~ You are a celebrity, as I am..."

"A... celebrity?" I ask baffled.

"Of course!" she laughs. "We're Aces of Aces after all!"

"No shit... Now I'm a celebrity too, what else?"

"Don't worry, Kira. Just enjoy the moment."

"Right. Then, cheers! For hundreds of hauls!"

"Good one! For hundreds of hauls!"

After two cocktails, Aia pushes me to a dance. I leave my top hat and the walking stick in the booth.

«Well, you can tell by the way I use my walk...»

Don't say...

We begin to dance, me remembering Travolta's dancing while Aia tries to follow my crazy moves and giggles.

Flowing from one classic disco tune to another, we dance around the colorful dance floor. The fast ones, crazily. The slow ones, with body contact.

"Ufufu~" she giggles. "Let's rest a bit..."

"Sure..."

We abandon the dance floor and go back to the booth. The waitress already arriving as we sit down, we ask for more drinks.

"This is fun~" Aia giggles.

"Yeah, I'm feeling alive," I laugh.

"Um~" She nods. "Ah, thanks."

The waitress serves our cocktails and more snacks.

"What are you thinking?" Aia interrupts my thoughts.

"Huh? Ah... I'm just overwhelmed with memories from my past..."

"Good ones? I hope..." she says concerned.

"Yeah... Luckily, good memories are attached to these songs."

She sighs in relief.

"That's good. I feared that you could be swallowed by bad ones..."

"With you at my side? Never." Oh, shit... did I really say that?

"Oh, you..." She blushes deeply, then sighs. "It's hard for you, isn't it?"

"What do you mean, Aia?"

"Me being that provocative... flirting with you the whole time while stopping you in the worst time... I—"

"Don't, Aia. Not now, we're here to have fun."

"You're right, Kira. Sorry..." She looks down, into her cocktail.

“Don’t be, Aia. I know what you mean, but it’s not the right time...”

She sighs again, looks at me and draws a beautiful smile.

“Yeah... let’s have this drink and dance some more. It lets us become free...”

“Indeed... Cheers.”

“Cheers.”

“You’re the dancing queen...” I sing along already quite tipsy while Aia blushes deeply.

Still on our feet, we keep dancing. We only take brief pauses to recover and drink a round more.

“And so you’re back from outer space...” I sing unsteadily looking into Aia’s eyes.

She blushes and smiles heartily. Our lips almost touch but we, both of us, evade each other by a hair. We just giggle and keep on dancing.

Slow tunes signal that the night is coming to an end, but we keep on dancing. Holding each other steady.

Our bodies brush against each other. One of my hands rests on her butt, the other a bit higher. Hers around my neck. Her head resting on my shoulder. We just sway together and whisper nonsense to each other.

She looks at me, deep into my eyes. I get lost in her blue irises.

“I...” she whispers, “I lo—like you~”

“Me too...” I whisper back.

Again, our lips close in, but we stop yet again. Gently, she lies her index finger on my puckered up lips.

“Sorry... Lo—Kira~”

“It’s okay,” I tell her embracing her. “You mark the pace...” I whisper into her ear trying to persuade myself to keep my promise to wait for her.

The music comes to an end and we reach, unsteady, our booth and gather our stuff.

At the entry of the Lost Millennium, a long line of taxis await the leaving patrons. We get a taxi home.

Instead of going straight to her room, Aia drops on the sofa.

“Kira~”

“Yeah, Aia?”

“Sleep together?”

“Yeah...”

“Help me out?”

“Yeah...”

I help her out of her beautiful dress while she almost nods off. Careful... I loosen the knot of the laces and relive her from the tight corset.

Freed from her bulky dress, she suddenly stands up but fails. Luckily, I got her in time even if my reaction time is clearly hampered by the intoxication.

“Bathroom...” she just says.

“I’ll help you~” Did I really say that?

“Thank you~”

I help her to the bathroom.

“Wait! I turn around!” I shout while she already is pulling her panties down.

Don’t listen, don’t listen...

“Re—ready...” I hear her saying while she seems to put her panties back on.

“You can look now...” she giggles.

“Aia...”

I help her up again.

“Such a gentleman...” she coos.

I don't answer. I just try to calm down, not easy with her tit pressing against my side.

Back at the sofa, unsteadily, she converts the couch into a bed while I get the bed sheets and the pillows.

Stripped to the underwear, I lie down, Aia at my side.

She plays with a lock falling into my face, I turn towards her.

"It was a fun night out~" she tells intoxicated.

"It was, Aia," I say while brushing her hair out of her face.

"Cuddle?"

"Yeah."

She turns around and presses her back against my chest.

"Hmm~ Kira~" she sighs as I embrace her. "So good... Ah~ Take my bra off, please~"

"Okay..." I simply say and move a bit back to take her bra off.

"Better..." she sighs and takes my arm by the wrist. Slowly, so slowly she lays my hand on her lower chest, just below her tits.

I brush her beautiful hair out my face with my free hand and settle in for sleep.

"Kira?" she whispers.

"Hmm?"

"I'd wish~"

"Yeah?"

"ZZZZ~"

"Good night, Aia~" I whisper.

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and all the Instructors

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Chapter stats:

Words: 6,325

Version: 2

Compiled: Sunday, 30 September, 2018

This chapter forms part of the **SpaceHighway**: *The Awakened* series. For more free chapters visit <https://spacehighway.ms>

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