

Chapter 6 Plans are Made

Parsley Plinkoff was ushered into the Minister's office.

"Minister," he said, "I have the evidence we need. Even as we speak, small intelligent beings are here from another planet: Exotron Five. A planet with four moons!"

"Are the number of moons relevant Plinkoff? I think not. Show me this so called alien evidence."

"It should be on your computer by now."

"Let's have a look. Ah, here it is." The minister watched for a couple of minutes, then looked up.

"It looks like a bunch of kids playing a trick on you."

"No Minister, I beg to differ. They're small intelligent beings. They are expecting their great leader's daughter to visit soon. They have been told to make her welcome. If we act now..."

"Plinkoff. Wake up. They are not aliens!"

"One of them could even be descended from Napoleon and ..."

"Napoleon?"

"Yes, I have the DNA test results to prove it."

"Plinkoff. What was Napoleon doing associating with aliens?"

"I don't know, but ..."

"So, let me get this straight. Aliens, descended from Napoleon, have sat in a garden in ..."

"In Wood Tofton."

"Wood Tofton. How did they get there?"

"I saw two of them arrive. They must have been beamed down from a mother ship."

"You actually saw them being beamed down?"

“Yes. They just appeared in front of me. Speaking French. Then they switched to English. Very good English too. It’s all in my report.”

“So you seriously expect me to believe that a group of children in Wood Tofton are really aliens when anyone can see they’re having a laugh at your expense?”

“Yes Minister. They’re using code words and alien names and....”

“Do you have your report with you?”

“Yes. Here it is, Minister.”

She took the report and said, “I have just one thing to say to you Plinkoff. You’re fired!” With that she dropped it in the bin.

Trebiana Tipperley was in her room and her grandmother was wondering why she wasn’t going out to practise with Eustace. “Trebi,” she asked, “isn’t it time for your rehearsal?”

“I’m not going.”

“Why not?”

“I don’t like him.”

“What did he do?”

“All I did was make some suggestions and he got annoyed.”

“Oh well, you’ll find someone else I’m sure.”

“That’s just it. I won’t. I’m not entering.”

“But everyone’s looking forward to hearing you sing again.”

“Well, they’ll have to be content with Antoinette from France.”

“Who?”

“She’s Eustace’s favourite. He wanted to play for her all along. I never should have come here.”

Tansie reflected on why her granddaughter was staying with her. Her parents were having problems with their marriage and Wood Tofton was seen as a stable environment. The Music Festival was to keep her mind off things and give her something to focus on but now that might not happen.

She really wanted to help her. Soon she was marching off down the road to see Eustace only to find that he was at the Wagley's house. She went and knocked on their door and asked to see him.

“Come in Mrs Tipperley,” said Popster. “He’s looking at some music with Kick and our friend Antoinette.”

She was taken into the lounge and introduced.

“I am very pleased to meet you Mrs Tipperley,” said Antoinette. “I have heard a lot about your granddaughter and have been trying to persuade Eustace to get back in touch with her.”

“Well, that’s very kind of you, Antoinette,” she said as she tried to size up this new arrival. How good was she? She certainly had a nice speaking voice.

“So, you will be singing in the Music Festival?” she asked.

“Yes, they have persuaded me to enter.”

“Have you done much singing?”

“Well, I ...”

Kick could not pass up an opportunity like this. “She’s sung before royalty.”

“Really! Who was that?”

“You know, of course,” added Popster, “one can’t say too much.”

“But we were there,” added Kick. “It was truly memorable.”

“Was it when you were all in France?”

“We can say that much,” replied Popster.

“Well, Antoinette, I do hope to hear you soon,” said Tansie with increased respect.

“And I would like to hear your granddaughter singing as well,” replied Antoinette.
“Eustace, why do you not you go back with Mrs Tipperley? I am sure you can work something out.”

“Well, I don’t know ...,” said Eustace who was evidently reluctant.

“Eustace, you gave her your word. It is important that you help, if she needs it.”

“Oh, alright,” he said grudgingly as he left with Tansie Tipperley.

As they walked up the drive Tansie heard someone singing. It wasn’t just any singing. It was easily up there with the best she’d ever heard. So, this was what Antoinette could do. Trebiana now had some serious competition.

Cheddar Cheasley had become obsessed with Meldy’s medal and just had to get his hands on it. Now, he had a plan. Previously, he had noticed some of their windows were not double-glazed so he assumed a false name and put on a wig and glasses. That should fool them, he thought.

Meldy was in the shrubbery with Daniel and Sophie when this strange-looking man appeared. They watched him pause at the gate then stride up the drive to the front door.

“I bet I could hit him with my catapult,” said Daniel. “He looks like a crook!”

“A crook? What is a crook?” enquired Sophie.

“Like he’s coming to steal something.”

“Well shoot him,” she replied.

Daniel took careful aim but his pellet missed. He was re-loading when the door opened and Mrs Wagley appeared. They could hear most of the conversation that followed.

“Good morning Madam, let me introduce myself. I am, er....”

“I don’t answer the door to people who don’t know their own name.”

“I’m Eddie Eduardo! Yes, I am Eddie Eduardo and I’ve come to sell double glazing.”

“Thank you but we don’t want any. Goodbye!” With that she closed the door.

While the visitor had been standing in the sun his head was getting hot under the wig. Then it started to itch. He just had to do something but he forgot about the wig which moved around as he scratched.

The three friends hiding in the bushes burst out laughing and Eddie, whatever his name was, turned to go. He slunk back up the drive and glowered at the bushes. His reward? A pellet from Daniel's catapult hit him on his chest. The three friends erupted with laughter and scampered away.

Inside the house Mrs Wagley was puzzled. Popster asked about the visitor.

"Very odd. He had a wig and he couldn't even decide what his name was."

"Mum," said Popster, "I saw him coming up the drive and I think I saw him in the lane a couple of days ago."

"You did? I wonder what he wants?"

Eustace Berrington walked back to see Trebiana with Tansie Tipperley. He had heard Antoinette singing as they left the Wagley's house and knew Tansie had heard it as well. What did she think?

"That was very impressive."

"She certainly is," replied Eustace.

"So, she's sung for royalty?" Tansie had to know more. If anything was sure to impress, royalty would do it.

"I don't know anything about that but if Kick and Popster said they were there then I believe them."

Tansie took Eustace in to see Trebiana. She didn't seem very pleased to see him.

"What do you want?" she asked.

"We have a rehearsal, don't we?"

"I'm not entering."

"Yes, you are and you're going to give a great performance. We don't have much time so jump to it!" Much to his surprise she followed him back to his house. The piano was waiting.

Parsley Plinkoff was on his couch. Mounds of empty crisp packets, half-eaten biscuits and dirty plates were scattered around. His eyes had been glued to a screen for hours watching episode after episode of Trekstar. Eventually his attention started to wander. His job had been taken away and now he knew he had to do something else with his life.

Some of his friends had watched the footage from the Wagley family's garden and they all reluctantly agreed the subjects were not aliens. Just some kids having fun like kids have always done. But, he thought, he had definitely seen the girl called Sophie arrive and it still looked to him very much like she had been beamed down. Where else could she have come from? And what about the DNA test results? She was most probably a descendant of Napoleon. That had to mean something.

The girl called Meldy said she had been to another world and had received a medal from an Emperor Napoleon. What if she had been telling the truth? If she had, there was a valuable medal in that house and he would really like to see it.

Another episode of Trekstar showed the crew visiting a parallel world. Suddenly he was convinced that Meldy had been telling the truth about the Departement de Londres. In that case, there were no aliens and there definitely was a medal somewhere in her house. Why not break in and steal it? That would teach the kids not to play tricks on him.

Half an hour later, he was on the phone to his friend Cheddar Cheasley. He wanted to find out what he knew about the medal. Not just any medal but one complete with laurel leaves no less.