

**The five minutes man and the girl who  
fell in love with mint**

A novel

Life traveller series

Book 2

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Cover photos: Zsa Zsa Tudos

## 1.

The endless Caribbean Sea stretched out in front of them, offering the most amazing silvery mirror for the full moon. It was the night of Mabon, the autumn equinox, the day of the traditional thanksgiving of nature-loving people.

They checked into the seaside hotel and the luggage was safely in the room. The time when it is customary to enjoy the comfort of a bed long passed even there, let alone the country of origin where the Sun's daily reigning period started a few hours earlier.

The usual travel drinking started early, at London Gatwick, while the small group of women was waiting for boarding the Ilyushin plane. Cuba's government had particular ideas about airplanes and companies allowed into their country, therefore the British travel agency had to commission a Russian plane with the crew to carry their holidaymakers to the Caribbean country. The IL aircrafts were strong and well-built however flying them, needed continuous qualified human attention. Autopilot was non-existent. Good navigation

skills and alertness were basic requirements of the pilot. Therefore it came as a great shock to all involved that the long delay of departure was caused by the whole crew being stoned on vodka and special agents had been working on the sobering mission for the last five hours.

When spending substantial time in transit without a clear plan for departure, the duty-free bottles start to come alive and boundaries ease up between fellow travellers. Their relation to the destination and the purpose of their trip turn into know facts. They learned that apart from a few curious Spanish, most of the Latino looking fellow passengers were ex-pats or had family in Cuba. The granddaughter to visit her ancestors, a young family travelling to show their offspring to relatives they'd never met, a group of researchers flying for work and a smiling guy, who was fascinated by the country and was making yet another trip to add to his admiration. There were also few, particularly good looking men, scattered around. The purpose of their travel stayed a mystery. However, when the ad-lib two-man salsa band geared up and began to exhibit their talents, these guys were the first to get up and

commence dancing. Another group of young people was standing in the further corner of the gate, quietly singing at first, then organised themselves into a circle and moved their feet to follow the rhythm.

The atmosphere was elevated but without stepping out of the enjoyment category or slipping into an unconscious state. There was no airline stuff to interfere or demand quiet. When three hours later, the boarding started, there was a little sorrow mixed with joy.

After sleepless travelling time, the excitement of being in Cuba took over and like fire within, produced everlasting energy to carry on with the exploring walk that started around the pool area of the Russian military base turned hotel. The lush garden radiated fresh oxygen, filled their half-asleep lungs with new life and the fragrance of the abundant nature oozed hope for the future of humanity.

Sitting there, under the garden lights, the nearby water was scintillating, inviting them to unveil the many thousands of years of secrets it guarded.

The whitish sand of Guardalavaca beach was warm under Zeta's bare feet, enjoying the close encounter with nature in every possible way. She glanced at her companions to gauge their expression. They walked just one step behind her, three of them making a close group. The fourth kept her distance however the connection was obvious. The darkness and the uncertainty of the place kept their eyes fixed on the ground, showing only slight body language of overwhelmed tiredness and thousands of crossing thoughts. It was about 4 o'clock in the morning, local time. All the bars on the seaside were closed already, showing the carcasses of a very busy night. "*Palmares*," Zeta read the sign on a white canvass covered place with few tables and chairs piled up in the front. There were few customer-like people sipping drinks. "*I wonder if it is the part of our all-inclusive treat*," she continued the train of thoughts.

As they walked she had the strange feeling that the great silver ball in the sky was moving nearer with every step. As if she was about to land and join into their conversation. Venus, the ethereal hetaerae followed her from a respectful distance watching her every move eager to

learn. "There is a competition between those two," stated Zeta frowning. The Moon, the ultimate symbol for womanhood carried the wisdom of the experiences she encountered throughout the countless ages, giving her the confidence to continue. She was the woman, who understood earthly existence, the bumpy pathways of the tender age, the emotional turmoil of puberty, the pitfalls of the teen phase, the excitement of ripening, the heart-throbbing sexual expectations and fatal disappointments that make the vagus nerve jump out of the body. Yes, she did experience everything possible. She was also the dutiful daughter, with a deep understanding of the importance of rules and regulations; the rebellious daughter with thirsty curiosity and an impulse to break these rules. She was the lover, the gentle, the caring and the understanding; the type of girl, everybody wants to marry. And she was the whore, the wild, fiery and teasing, the woman that every man desired and died for. Beautiful, proud and glowing. The great and mysterious mother of all the stars in the sky.

On the other hand, there was Venus, the five-pointed star, the symbol of the occult, the

hidden knowledge with her young playfulness and dangerous power. She is The Peace, The Salem, or Salim, as the ancient Egyptians named her. She was “born” at the end of the last Sun Age, in b.c.e. 3114 and instantly became the symbol of the Hope of understanding, the Hope of arriving and the Hope of the perfect blend for the two worlds; the above and the below. She had been in the lives of earthlings ever since. Showing them the path, reminding them day and night that they have a duty to live up to and it is their choice, but also their responsibility to keep her in the mind and the heart. These two are always there, testing and tasting each other, until their embrace in the perfect blend of the majestic Shekina.

"It is funny how we look at the sky as a two-dimensional colouring book," started Zeta a conversation with the girls.

They all looked up on the sky but didn't utter a word. Zeta didn't push. They continued in silence. The white sand caressed their feet, giving a slight creaking sound as they stepped. The moonshine patterned the water and drew a close silhouette of the cliff at the end of the beach.



As they turned, the picture changed in front of them. There were patches of lights on the beach, transformed the sea into a mysterious abyss. *"The road on the way back is always different,"* ran through Zeta's mind. *"It is to do with angles, shapes and the light in basics."* With the change on the ground, the starlit sky disappeared, but the Moon was hanging on as the lampion of the Universe. *"Only one of our eye focuses at a time. How do we choose which eye to use? I am sure it doesn't happen at random. The left eye searches for emotions while the right looks for the so-called realities of the situation. I suppose the one we use at a certain time depends on our momentary state of mind. Everything is interrelated,"* she smiled happily as they arrived back at the bar.

"Let us have a mojito, girls! We are in Cuba aren't we?"

"Yes, let's," shouted Lucy straight away with high excitement in her voice. The others followed smiling.

"Hola, cuatro mojitos por favor, señor. No, hace cinco", ordered the drinks Zeta.

The place was almost full, already. There were smiling Cuban faces, tipsy on the sexually

charged, caressing Caribbean air.

In the background music started. Softly first, as if coming out of the waves and arrived at full blast a minute later. It was the good Cuban salsa at its best, with the familiar faces at Gatwick airport. The rhythm reorganized the place. White plastic tables lost their legs while pushed or pulled in the deep, soft sand to make space for the moving bodies.

“Vale señoritas, cinco minutos” replied the waiter and disappeared behind the bar.

“What is this green in the drinks?” asked Clarisse.

“I think it is mint”, replied Zeta. “If it is a mojito that is.”

“Phooey”, pronounced Clarisse with an undeniable dislike on her face. “I hate mint. I definitely don’t drink mojito. Get me something else.”

“Sure, when the waiter comes back.”

As they turned back from the bar they saw smiling faces pointing at a table already organised for them in a nice corner of the limited space. Plastic chairs arrived one by one from behind the bushes until there were

enough to accommodate the small party of five girls, Clarisse, Zhina, Lucy, Zeta and Ketu.

## 2.

Clarisse was the youngest of the three children to John and Mary, an insurance salesman and a homemaker. John came from the North-West of the country however he moved to the South for the sake of Mary who wanted to be near her homeland.

Few years prior to this event, on a certain day, Mary met her favourite cousin Panna for a walk in the small town. The place was buzzing with nervous excitement. It was two years into the Second World War that nobody really understood. The country hadn't fully recovered from the first one, they considered just as purposeless and with an uncertain future hanging over them, the attitude towards life changed drastically. Both girls came from a large family with a string of male siblings, some of whom were summoned into the combat. Nevertheless, enough remained to overload the girls with everyday chores around the

household. They cooked, cleaned, did the shopping and sewed the families' clothes supply, used for maintaining the garden and working on the field. Sometimes even produced certain items for the soldiers to keep them warm or just provide them with clean underwear. They didn't really have the time for walks however managed to pinch a half hour here and there between jobs. It became their only entertainment and opportunity when they could exchange thoughts on important matters, such as eligible gentlemen, who is engaged to whom and who has been missing at war. Telecommunication hadn't been introduced yet, so there was a lot to catch up with at their weekly meeting.

Panna had a crush on a real grownup, as she understood the situation. The tall, dark-haired and blue-eyed heartthrob was just released into the world of eager, willing and fun-loving young girls, who were still under-aged for matrimonial purposes but old enough to understand a smile of a male. And Andras liked to play the field. Freshly out of college, where he spent four years with 200 males he made sure, he was in the mind of at least one female in each household.

As he lived in the close vicinity of Mary's family and was the best friend of her eldest brother, she had a lot to report on. Panna demanded very detailed descriptions of events and conversations conducted. And Mary was dutiful and thorough.

One day Andras happened to be at their house around dinner time and her brother asked him to stay. The event wasn't anything special, only living up to the custom of sharing with friends and relatives. As always they all set around the long table in silence, as a respect for the food. It was also customary to praise the food. Follow the tradition Andras turned to the chief home-maker. "The food is very delicious Mrs. Paulin." "Thanks, Andras", said the mother smiling. "Mary cooked it!" "Oh!" voiced Andras and turned searching for Mary. Suddenly he realised that she was sitting straight opposite him. He looked at her stunned. As far as he remembered, she had always been around, the baby sister of his best friend. She was this awkward little girl when he left for college, four years ago. And look at her now! A young lady with enormous deep blue eyes, long blond hair held together in a ponytail, turning red when

her name was mentioned. He looked at her as if it happened for the first time. “The food is very delicious, Mary”, addressed her with a smile. “Only a simple dish”, replied the girl when managed to stop blushing. After that, they continued in silence focusing on the distance between the plate and their mouth.

The innocent dinner started a chain of strange events. Andras spent more and more time in the Paulin household. Nothing seemed to interest him anymore. When his friend, Geddy suggested to go for a walk around the Main Square and watch the gentler sex parade around nicely dressed up, he declined. The desire to be set up a permanent presence in the mind of every young woman, vanished. His favourite pastime was to sit around the kitchen table with others and play a card game while he could see Mary from the corner of his eyes, doing chores with her mother, quietly talking.

Mary didn't pay much attention to what the boys were doing, for in her mind female and male activities were separated. However, reporting about Andras' moves was much simpler this way for nothing is left to the

imagination. One day, Mary went out into the courtyard to fetch a jug that was drying on the top of the wooden fence. As she was about to reach for it, she heard a voice nearby and felt a hand brushing hers. "Let me help with it!" As she followed the direction of the words she saw Andras' smiling face. Mary blushed from confusion. Turned back to the task and said: "it is not that high, I can reach it, thank you" and rushed back to the house.

Mary didn't make much of the event however from this time on she paid extra attention to the happenings surrounding him. However the harder she focused the more she realised that there was less and less to report back to Panna. Although Andras spent all his spare time with them, the endless stories about the members of the female clan stopped. First, she was kind of crossed with the boys for keeping their mouth shut in front of her but later it became apparent that they just do not have anything on the matter to discuss. His first full employment at the food processing company took over as the main conversation subject.

After the leftover from the sumptuous dinner

was safely preserved for the next day, Mary washed the dishes and took the rubbish out. It was a warm summer evening so on the way back from the bin, she decided to sit down on the bench in front of the house. She liked to clear her lungs and inhale the fragrance of abundance that came from the direction of the vegetable garden. It was also the best time to think about the future. She wasn't much of a dreamer, a prince on a white horse had never stayed in her mind long enough to erect a tent there. She put a lot of effort into learning from her mother, the ways of caring for the family, managing the household, deciding upon the food that reaches the table and growing the ingredients in the garden. Her father sat at the family table each evening next to his wife nevertheless, they rarely talked and didn't show many emotions towards each other. Mary took it for harmony and adored it. She wanted something like that one day. When words are not needed to exchange the thoughts of the mind. She closed her eyes and allowed her nostrils to sample a deep sniff of the intoxicating fragrance of evening jasmine. When she finally opened her eyes she saw Andras leaning on a column nearby and looking in her direction, smiling.



“Do I disturb you?” he asked. “You look very beautiful from here.”

She didn’t know what to say. Only one thing was clear. He was not supposed to look at her. Why is he doing that?

“Panna is in love with you”, she blurted out without further ado.

“What?” asked the young man, while stepping nearer to the girl. “What do you mean? Who is Panna?”

“My cousin, you know, long dark brown hair, brown eyes and tall.”

“Oh, that one!” said Andras. “I didn’t know. Anyhow, I only have eyes for one girl, she is blond, blue-eyed and sitting on the bench in front of her house.”

The initial confusion lifted in Mary’s mind. She didn’t say anything. Stood up and slowly walked into the house.

A few weeks later she brought a man home. After a talk with her father, the family decided upon the wedding date and the two of them got married in a quiet ceremony a month before Christmas.

John was a tall, well-built guy, with brown hair and eyes. He wasn’t a particularly good-looking

man however he had a presence. His forehead was a bit deformed from an event in the war. The damage was quite noticeable but his charisma usually kept people from looking above his eyes.

They moved into a small house with a little garden in a nearby village.

Apart from the sexual intercourse, she was introduced to, Mary's life didn't change at all. As her chores were reduced she had enough time to also care for the garden. John left the house Monday early morning and returned Friday evening for Mary's delight. Even though they didn't have much verbal exchange during their initial married years, she did like his presence. Occasionally he praised the food on the table and Mary thanked him for his substantial contribution to running a flawless household.

Besides the essential trips to the store, Mary didn't mix with fellow villagers. She was always kind and polite but had never entered into a conversation where it was acceptable to ask questions and rude not address them. The events of the world passed her by and there was not much to say about herself.

In the second year of their marriage, for her greatest delight, Mary became pregnant and nine months later gave birth to a healthy baby girl. They named her Marie, after her mother. And life continued.

One day, a stranger arrived at the village. He stopped at the local pub for a pint of beer. It was early evening when the majority of the grownup male population was there to wash off the work of the day.

The next morning, on the way to the bakery, Mary was stopped by a lady, with whom she briefly talked a few times. She was hesitant for a moment but finally blurted it out that there was a story going around in the village about John. It seemed that he was living a double life. There was a woman in a certain town he befriended and they spent a lot of time together. At first, Mary was shocked and when she recomposed herself she asked the only question felt logical in this situation. She wanted to know the origin of the news. The lady complied with her curiosity and added that her husband heard it in the pub from a stranger the night before. The stranger was the befriended

woman's husband.

Mary thanked the lady and bid farewell. She didn't mention the event to John. Next weekend at lunch, he announced that he was looking for a new target city. Mary was happy.

Another two years into their delightfully eventless marriage Mary gave birth to a boy. They named him Johnny, after his father.

It happened around this time when the eventless harmony turned upside down. As they grew, the children became more competitive and fought a lot. The only weapon in Mary's hand was her husband. She disciplined them with a promised punishment from their father, on his arrival home Friday evening. Step by step he became such a threat that when Friday arrived, Johnny and Marie didn't wish for his return. And the punishment was promptly delivered. John's guilt of not being around and his desire to keep Mary's little harmonious world intact, came down hard on the siblings. His leather belt was detached from his trousers the same moment he entered the house, as if he wanted to have it over with and free himself for the rest of the weekend.

In the fourth year into this routine, quite unexpectedly Mary became pregnant again, nine months later the family had a new addition in the form of a baby girl, named Clarisse. She was blond-haired and blue-eyed, like her mother. Small, lively and beautiful Clarisse gradually changed the Friday routine. Marie and Johnny fought less, their father eased up on them and their mother became far too occupied to complain about the children. By the time, Clarisse gained priority in her father's heart. This power shifting didn't go well with Mary, for she lost the weekend admiration of her husband, her housewife capabilities gone unnoticed and special moments between the couple faded away. To keep her authority, she started to pay closer attention to Clarisse. There were always chores in the garden or kitchen Mary wanted her to accomplish. The girl rebelled however the more she hated her assignments the harder her mother was pushing them down on her throat.

As she turned out to be a very attractive young lady, Mary became furiously jealous of her looks and her youth. Even at the age of sixteen, she chose the clothing for her daughter, to keep her safe and away from men. And John approved.

This agreement brought the two of them together yet again. Mary was content. As far as she could see, life arrived back to the harmonious state. John put more than sufficient money on the table to pay for the family's living expenses and the education of his children, also due to the newly developed conspiracy, he spent more time with his wife.

Clarisse realised that although she remained his favourite, her father will not side with her when the time comes. She decided to get out of the house as soon as possible. By the time she finished college, her eighteenth birthday celebration was imminent. She found an administrative job in a tobacco firm and moved to the capital.

Even though they still lived in the family abode, the two older children were already self-sufficient.

By Clarisse leaving the family nest, their life turned upside down. Without the essence of their being, there was not much to aim for. When John looked at her, he saw the young Mary, beautiful and fresh and his wife noticed

an opportunity to extend herself in her. As she lost the purpose of being, Mary started to withdraw from it and a few months later she fell into depression. Clarisse visited them from time to time however her occasional presence couldn't fill the widening gap. Mary slowly deteriorated into a permanent illness that kept her bed-bound for the last two years of her life. John was there till the end to take care of her.

Clarisse didn't nurture bonds to the past. After her mother's departure, she went on with life. Her ambitions couldn't be achieved alone. She needed a strong male to father her children.

Shortly after the plan was drawn Clarisse befriended a presentable-looking man, few years her senior, with high life elixir and charming personality. He was a car mechanic. A highly sought after profession, with excellent money-making opportunities, Bela seemed to be a good choice. They got married two months later. Clarisse was 21 years of age at the time.

The couple rented a small apartment in one of the cheaper districts of the city. Since Clarisse didn't inherit any of her mother's excellent

housekeeping capabilities and refused any type of housework involvement, frictions started early in the kingdom of matrimony. Bela demanded cooked dinner on the table that Clarisse didn't even consider to be a fair request. She considered affection a weakness and the foreplay a waste of time. Anyhow, a year later they welcomed their firstborn son, Peter.

It happened during the last months of the pregnancy that Bela started to look for a playmate to ease his tension and to receive some affection. There was a fiery girl at his workplace he quite liked. One evening, after work, they decided to go for a bite. It marked the beginning of a lifetime affair.

In the meantime, Clarisse enrolled herself in an accountancy and finance, distant learning university course and asked her father, who was a pensioner by that time, to help with the baby. He liked the opportunity to be around his favourite daughter, therefore he agreed. At this point, Clarisse didn't know about her husband's affair, not because it would have made a big difference.



The second year into parenthood became easier for everybody involved. Peter was taken to the nursery in the morning, was fed and looked after all day and taken home by his mother in the evening. Bela only appeared when it was expected of him to do a chore involving his son. Otherwise, he excused himself, attributing his absence to the lot of work he happened to have. The truth of the matter was that his lover, Mona turned out to be everything he wanted in a woman. She was pretty, sweet, affectionate and a very good cook. She knew about Bela's family and although they mentioned divorce on one occasion, he dismissed the idea out of guilt he felt towards his wife and son.

So life went on, until one day a new colleague came to the office, where Clarisse worked. Bola was witty, extremely good-looking, with deep blue impish eyes and dark brown curly hair. Despite the missing higher education, Bola oozed confidence and was capable of assuring people of his unique skills. He was a couple of years her junior and single. With Clarisse, the man was an instant winner. Both young and ambitious, they figured out a way to power up for the fast track to the top, within the

company. The conspiracy demanded extra hours and alone time at work, creating a fertile ground for an affair. They were passionate and controlling. Divorce for Clarisse appeared on the table for a very short moment however soon disappeared, due to fear of transformation and uncertainty. Smelling the terror of changes, Clarisse decided on having another baby. She ignored her husband's disapproval and purposefully tricked him into intercourse without protection. Nine months later she gave birth to another baby boy. They named him Zalak.

After this event Bela felt totally betrayed and spent even more time with his mistress, introducing sleepovers into the routine. Clarisse didn't mind. She was satisfied sexually and emotionally, more than she could ever hope for and her ladder-climbing at work showed real promise.

Bola took the realisation on board that their cooperation doomed to remain in the affair category. He wanted a family at one point, so started to court a school teacher. Kate was a well-proportioned, smart young woman who was eager to be invited into the sorority of

matrimony. After a year of courtship, the two of them pledged their *“until death do us part.”* It was the only time, when Clarisse and Bola stayed away from each other for longer than 3 months.

A year later the newlyweds had a baby boy. He inherited his father’s name and appearance.

Clarisse and Bela bought a spacious two bedroomed apartment to accommodate the family. The boys attended school, left in the morning and came home around dinner time. None of them liked studying very much and neither their mother nor their father pushed them towards a better living promised through education. Both ended up becoming chefs, probably to make up for the so many lost dinners during their childhood.

Bela worked less and his share of money for the family provisions gradually diminished to the minimum. He bought a small pre-constructed house that he modified to withstand the harsh winter months. Mona was still with him on and off however she realised that if she wanted a real family she needed to look for another

specimen, for Bela wasn't a good father and didn't want children. She found a quiet and docile man to marry. He was a good provider to her and their two offspring.

Bola and Kate with their newly born, also bought a house in a posh district of the capital. Kate was confined to the baby however Bola led a free life, in and out of the house as he pleased. He was a proud man with a strong desire to meet the requirement of elite membership. To pursue this aim he dressed accordingly, talked accordingly and befriended people who were already members. Kate was equally ambitious, therefore she rather closed her eyes than to address Bola's continuous infidelity.

After the birth of their second son, Ivan, she gave up teaching altogether. Not only because she wanted to spend her time with the boys but because she honestly believed that teaching ordinary people's children was really beneath her.

Clarisse and Bola managed to end up in the Head Office of the company, side by side, assisting each other towards advances within.

Apart from that, they grabbed every opportunity to make passionate love to each other and talk about future business cooperation. Living together had never revisited the table. They understood that their individual self-centredness would sooner or later kill the relationship.

Life went on for a while. The children grew up. Although Bola pushed his sons towards higher education, they ended up spending their father's money rather than looking for some kind of solution to enter into independence. Their parents became bitter with the union and started working against each other until finally decided upon ending the marriage. In desperation, Kate was hanging onto her sons, especially the firstborn, who eventually broke under the pressure and spent most of his money on drugs. He didn't recover. The younger was a bit cleverer. He managed to stay sober most of the time and when his parents eventually divorced and his father's alcoholism dropped out of the closet, Ivan was the one who took care of his interests. Kate and Bola Jr remained in the huge family compound. Bola had a luxury house built for himself in a sought after area and

Ivan usually stayed with his father, helping him with the business.

Clarisse and Bela also divorced around the same time. Their eldest son, Peter married a sweet girl however he couldn't get over his insecurity issues and turned to alcohol eventually. Zalak worked in a prominent restaurant as a chef. Later he also got married and immigrated to a faraway land with his new family.

After becoming prominent members of the singles society, Clarisse and Bola decided to give another try to deepen their romance. By this time Bola was mentally scattered and Clarisse had the signs of a rare type of leukaemia. In the search for solutions, Clarisse came across an interview with Zeta in a magazine and they approached her for help. She signed up for years of studies, while Bola refused treatments.

For the romance, it was another failure. Clarisse retired and lived alone in a cosy apartment while travelling the world. She occasionally met up with Bola for old time's sake.

### 3.

The place started to heat up to the occasion. People arrived from every angle. Even the four handsome dancing men from Gatwick airport found their ways to Palmares. After swiftly looking around, they made their position at a table next to the girls. The chairs were arranged in a half-circle to provide ample possibility for verbal interactions. Lucy turned out to be the chattiest. Also, she was determined to enjoy every single minute of the trip. This effort often put her into awkward situations and almost irreversible positions however, at the last moment somebody always turned up to bail her out. Now it was Zeta who paid extra attention to her friend's moves.

The conversation between Lucy and Pablo, as it turned out to be his name, started up quite innocently. Nevertheless, he made sure to send a panorama smile after each question to display his impeccably white and healthy-looking teeth to her direction. After a giggle here and there, suddenly Lucy stopped answering. When Zeta looked, she saw confusion on Lucy's face.

"Can you believe it, he wants to be with me! He said if I buy him the all-inclusive and give him

some money, he would entertain me every way possible. More importantly sexually.”

“Really?” asked Zeta with an emotionless face.

“And what did you say?”

“I said nothing. He is good looking and seems fun. But he could be my son!”

“Sure, but he is not. What bothers you in this deal?”

“Honestly, I don’t know. I am not particularly taken by age, I consider myself young. So who understands it?”

“Do you think you feel guilty or ashamed?”

“Of what?”

“Having sex with a total stranger, having sex with a man half your age, having sex at all, or having paid for it. I think they are valid questions”, argued Zeta.

“Now, that you are mentioning them!”

“Do you think it is all right to pay for sex? The sheer idea gives me shiver”, added Lucy.

“I understand it. I can relate to it”, replied Zeta.

“However I also understand that it is the conviction chiselled into our mind through media, society, religions and upbringing. Think about it! I am certain you had times in your life when you paid for a boyfriend, you might have even fed him for a while because he had no



money. Do you think it is different?”

“Yes, I think it is”, argued Lucy.

“Why is that?”

“Because it is. When you have a boyfriend you are together. It means that you help each other whenever needed.”

“You are doing the same here. Help him out. You pay for food and accommodation, just as you would for your so-called boyfriend.”

“Yes, but it doesn’t lead anywhere. There is no future in it.”

“Darling, how many of your boyfriends you had a future with?”

“You are right, not many.”

“You see? Anybody can get up and walk away, anytime. At least in this case you know exactly when it would happen. You also know that he will entertain you day and night and his objective will be to please you in every way possible. When would a boyfriend do that?”

“You are right again, Zeta! Look at my life. I do not have a boyfriend and I might never have one. It means sex is off the table. It makes sense to grab the opportunity while lasts.”

“So, are you going for it?”

“Oh, no!”

“Well, so much for the conversation!”

#### 4.

Lucy was the youngest and the only child of Ron, a navy officer and Anette, a divorcee with two children: a boy called Nick and a girl by the name of Sally. Ron was a short and stocky person with a smile on his face. One day he was walking in the city centre with his mates, when he noticed a pretty blonde, drinking coffee in front of a charity shop. They started talking. By the end of the lengthy conversation, he promised to look her up when in town again. And he did. And he did again after. And again, until they got married.

Entering into the stability of marriage opened avenues for Ron to pursue his navy carrier. He was promoted and given a station in a country on a strange continent. As the master of the household and the member of the occupying nation, he enjoyed quite a lot of privileges. They had servants, a cook and private tuition for Anette's children. Ron was very good with the youngsters. He considered them his own in every way possible. Consequently, he was over the moon when his wife became pregnant.

The latest addition to the family, a baby girl was born in foreign land. She was exceptionally pretty with big blue eyes and curly blond hair. A chatty little girl, who developed an interest in the etiquette created for ladies, rather than merging into any kind of academic studying. She was a kind-hearted and charitable person nevertheless, she made one feel foreign and underprivileged when an opportunity was given. Her knowledge of the worlds' affairs, politics or financial dealings was non-existent, all that palaver lived in a different dimension, as far as she was concerned. Luckily Lucy was quite receptive to her mother's teachings. Anette taught her children the art of looking after themselves and creating a security blanket.

Especially that of the girls. They learned to cook, to bake, to sew, to manage the household and the husband within. They were also advised to pinch some money from the grocery budget and save it for rainy days. It was also taught that in no circumstances one should spend the cab fare and control ought to be kept over events.

By the time of sweet sixteen, Lucy became rebellious and uncontrollable. The two elders

flew the nest and she wanted to copy their actions. Ron was in a rage but Anette, as the wiser of the two, calmed him down with a convincing argument. They agreed to find accommodation for her, pay the deposit, one month rent and give her enough money to get by until her first paycheque. Since she didn't want to study, working was the only option for spending time beneficially.

Lucy found a job in a café where she served beverages and light meals in a town nearby. She was small, chatty and beautiful therefore, finding a beau wasn't extremely hard for her. The choice fell on Pete, a good looking and cheerful electrical engineer, a few years her senior. After a couple of months of dating, they decided to move in together. This event was followed by a swift wedding ceremony shortly, due to their careless sexual encounters.

Linda, an equally blonde and blue-eyed sweet girl was born and firmly put Pete and Lucy on the map of parenthood. The first two years of which passed really nicely however the baby's gradual independence gave Lucy a tickle and the desire to get on the road. And she did. Pete was

far more homely, so Lucy picked Linda up and promised to return whenever she'd feel fit. Her knowledge of the world was very limited. As a citizen of a certain country, she had this quaint idea that she could expect privileges from others and the world is there to look out for her. This false belief made her trustworthy and vulnerable.

The twenty-six hours journey with an overnight train took the pair to the country where Sally established residence with her husband. Although they were on good terms, Lucy wasn't keen on visiting her sister at all, only used her existence as a security blanket in case something went wrong.

She found a room to rent and the place to work straight away. There was an old lady in the house who was happy to look after little Linda, while her mother was away making a living. There was always some food accompanying her from the restaurant where she worked, enough for the two of them and sometimes even the old lady got lucky.

One day, Lucy met a cute guy. Chuck was her

countryman, who was aimlessly drifting from place to place, nurturing a similar attitude about them and the world. Although she was married and she had no intention of dissolving the union, in her mind matrimony didn't mean the end of the fun but the beginning of countless adventures. They talked and talked and one day she took him home.

The problem started the next morning, when Rosa, the old lady, saw Chuck being comfortable around the accommodation. She was in a frenzy. Lucy had to come to terms with the fact that Rosa didn't share her fun-loving ideas, especially within the holy bond. They were given a week to move out and Chuck was forbidden to enter the premises.

Lucy's rebellion against Rosa's authority took them on the road yet again. Luckily Linda was a quiet girl, happy to entertain herself and curious about the world around her. Chuck collected some money from friends who were willing to part from some of their hard-earned cash, Lucy picked up her last paycheque and the three of them hopped on a bus, headed towards the exotic South. Although she was adventurous,

wasn't brave enough to disappear into the unknown, therefore she put a break on the journey and proposed to spend a few days at Sally's place.

Her sister was happy and shocked to see the little group. She got especially alarmed when Lucy introduced Chuck as her boyfriend. Nobody asked questions in fear of triggering her rebellion further. However, Sally made her sister promise to come back a month later, regardless of the circumstances. She obliged.

Now that they were fed and groomed properly, a bold destination formed in Lucy's mind and Chuck agreed. She had everything she needed for the continent-hopping journey. A man beside her and the little girl who would charm a smile on anybody's face.

The excitement of crossing every possible boundary turned into amazement and frustration. Ladies wore scarves and covered their faces, men and children were dressed in long shirts. At the frontier, she was forced to change into a pair of jeans and long sleeves to live up to the law concerning entering into the country. She was a bit disappointed. Although

she understood the requirements, Lucy enjoyed the sexually charged glances and flirting from the stronger gender. She also noticed that the scolding wasn't aiming at her but directed towards Chuck. As the male, he was taken for the leader of the group that put the responsibility of controlling situations on his shoulders. However, he was far from capable of being in charge. The realisation came as a shock to Lucy. She searched her mind for teachings to fit this situation however they all answered problems in normal circumstances, where a permanent home, husband and children were the setting.

Luckily she was adaptable. Learned to deal with grocery shopkeepers without the knowledge of the languages they spoke, discovered exotic spices and acquired tasty recipes from neighbours.

All in one, she grew up on this trip. The world around became a playground with possibilities created and nurtured by the self. The weights on the shoulder made her feel more precious.

They had few stops on the way back to have a shower, food and a good night's sleep in cheap motels.



Two days prior to the month passing, they were walking towards Sally's house again.

As they pass through the gate, they saw Pete making his way towards them. Linda ran to her father happily, Lucy froze and Chuck didn't notice anything. Apparently, Sally sent a message to Pete, explaining the situation and encouraged him to do something about it. And Pete came.

Lunch and the afternoon rest went quietly. When Lucy didn't show up next to him, Chuck suspected some changes in their relationship. Just before dinner, Lucy and Pete went for a walk around the area. By the time they arrived back, the decision was made and Chuck was launched on the road by himself, with his tail between his legs.

A week later Pete took his family home.

On the surface, life went back to normal, as far as the general idea was concerned. Lucy found a job in an eatery and Pete continued to bring joy to urban households by repairing their televisions. When arrived at the age Linda started to attend school. She was a bright but naughty little girl. However, her pure heart and loyalty always helped her out of the mess she

fell into.

Within the household, life was slowly changing. Pete's depressive mood slid him into a subdued and insecure individual, who often turned to light drugs for help. Lucy didn't like confrontations and couldn't bear seeing issues that could change the colour of her pink cloud surrounding the family and life. She thought that her beliefs would force the facts to change. In her mind the image of the perfect little home with a perfectly good looking husband and a dolly-like pretty little daughter summed up life's gifts given to privileged people, like herself.

The first big shock arrived when her perfect father died. Ron, a retired navy officer, always looked healthy. The facts about his illness were shared only with Anette, who shielded the children as she always did.

The fact that her father was mortal, shook Lucy to the core. Apart from becoming sort of human-like, she lost the best safety blanket there was. Even though she did not rely upon her father financially and rarely took time to go see him, he was always there, in the background, keeping his watchful eyes on his precious child.

After the funeral, life took a slight turn towards darker colours. The grey of the rat-race, the black of the pitfall Pete fell into occasionally, the basement filled with television and video carcasses and the unattended little garden became the reality hit Lucy's mind. And running away from it all wasn't an option any longer. Anette taught her well to take the responsibilities given, for nobody received more than was capable to manage. Therefore she buckled up and carried on as usual.

Pete wasn't that sensible. He didn't like his life but had no courage or willpower to change it. Gradually he lost contact with reality and turned to the helping hand of marijuana more often. Lucy was helpless. The problem was that although she took on most of the responsibilities occurring in a family, she still couldn't admit to their or Pete's problems.

Linda was left to make up her mind as she felt fit. It is quite a dangerous path for an inexperienced being. However nobody could really help. Her mother survived by the principles she learned from hers. Apparently, besides the everyday struggle to keep up with appearances and solve little challenges, Lucy

had no energy left to teach her daughter anything. Without realising it then, Linda similarly to her mother, built an understanding of her own, of a world only existed in her mind. Unfortunately, the two worlds, reality and illusion, did not match.

The salvation arrived when Linda finished secondary school and decided to take a job. She found a favourable accommodation with one of Lucy's friend in a big house, Pete was settled in the old family compound by himself and Lucy, assuming that she was free now that Linda started looking after herself, hit the road once again.

By this time, apart from her sister Sally, she had few friends from a similar background in the country of her desired destination. Therefore it seemed a natural choice to put herself out there and work on setting up a new existence.

Lucy first settled in a small village near everybody but not too close to anybody. She was very cautious of people's thoughts on her and her lifestyle. Unfortunately, due to the lack of languages and also that of working

possibilities, she had to relocate to a bigger place. Here the rent was higher however she found a job as a cook in an eatery. She liked it there. When she was asked about her marital status, she stated that she was divorced, only to kill any gossip or opinion regarding her movements.

This place was full of entertainment possibilities. There were open places day and night and plenty of desperate friends to accompany.

A year or two later, their mother died and the three siblings received their equal inheritance from her estate. It wasn't a lot but enough for Lucy to buy a little apartment in the old town. She furnished the three-bedroom place with second-hand furniture and set up quite a cosy existence there. The place was near her work and also for friends to pop by.

From time to time Pete went to pay a visit to her wife, although sometimes years passed by without his appearance. As seldom as it was, when it happened, Lucy put all her entertainments on hold and attended to her husband. Once, they even arrived at the stage when Pete played with the idea of moving there. Although, he was lonely at home however he

wasn't able to get used to the foreign land either. Therefore his idea of moving was permanently dismissed.

After one of his visits, Lucy realised in shock that she was pregnant. Nine months later she gave birth to a baby boy, named Roby.

The chubby little thing turned the already unsettled household further into turmoil. Although Lucy was longing for male energy, she became picky and couldn't make up her mind when a potential substance bearer turned up. Pete was on the road of totally losing himself in the darkness and holding onto a job proved immensely difficult for him. His life was solved by the arrival of the new addition; he packed up and travelled home to seek medical help for his illness. Lucy was relieved to see Pete go. Finally, she could devote all her time to the new male, the king, and mould him as she decided to fit. The guilt of not being an attentive and caring mother for Linda started to visit her mind and pushed her even closer to Roby. The boy was blond and blue-eyed, sort of stocky built, carrying the features of his grandpa Ron. Lucy was mesmerised. Her whole life revolved around her son. She also loved the idea that

being a mum in her age made her younger in the eyes of many. Consequently, on rear occasions, when Linda came to visit, she was introduced as Lucy's younger sister.

As time went by Roby grew into a well-mannered but utterly spoiled little boy. When he set his mind on it, he did well at school. He was allowed to visit friends however they did not like visitors in their house.

Apart from being more than a doting mother, Lucy worked hard and saved money as it came. So when the opportunity to buy a bigger, nicer and near-water flat in a newly built block presented itself, she jumped and secured the deal. Luckily, her sensible financial situation allowed her to keep her original apartment also. As a rented accommodation it added further value to the household budget.

Eventually, Linda found a place of her own and started to look for a prospective partner on the permanent level. Quite a few males ventured to take and failed the test, until finally a tall, good-looking and smiling face caught her eyes and didn't let go. Rick, eight years her junior, came

from a wealthy family, held a university degree and a well-paid job. At first, his family wasn't keen on the union but Rick was adamant.

Soon after giving his daughter away, Pete's health fast deteriorated. Being his only relative nearby, Linda regularly paid him a visit, cooked food for him and cleaned his apartment. Most of these motions went unnoticed by her father, who confined himself to his bedroom and only opened the door when his bodily functions required it.

Rick's family gifted the newlyweds a sizeable house, where the two of them settled down.

They were over the moon. Enjoyed life and each other to the fullest.

A few months later Linda got pregnant with their first child, a baby boy named William.

The change in the relationship became apparent when Linda couldn't accompany her husband to the club or the golf course. On one hand there he was, the little bundle of joy and good life entertainment on the other. Rather than choosing between them, she would've liked to take both. She knew her body changed during pregnancy. This observation launched a feeling of insecurity. She started to develop thoughts



and visions about Rick flirting and cheating on her with almost every female available. Rick vehemently denied the accusations however these events kept coming alive in his wife's mind. The daytime depression turned into some form of argument on a daily basis that pushed Rick further away from the family nest. By the time William reached age two, alcohol was established as a major stress release in his mother's life. His father was helpless. He lacked strength and vision therefore, he followed the easiest path and joined in the evening drinking.

Rick managed to hang onto his job and Linda attended her son the best she could however every evening delirium set in. The alcohol cured depression, kept Rick at home and stopped the fighting. Their lifestyle became a standard normal for them. It provided a ground they both understood. By cautious planning, Linda became pregnant once again.

The baby girl called Bella joined the family of three on an autumn afternoon. She was a happy little creature for the joy of William, who found a good friend and an accomplice in mischiefs. A few months later, not far from his daughter's

family home, Pete permanently gave into darkness.

Lucy was happy with her life in the southern country, far away from the events circling her daughter's existence. She wasn't very much a grandmother. In her mind grannies were old and frail and she considered herself everything but. Her grandchildren were lucky if granted a visit however Linda had to accompany them to be there and look after them.

At the age of sixteen, to follow his mother's dream, Roby gain entrance to the navy of the home country.

Lucy enjoyed her newly found freedom. Although she missed her son, the pride was greater. She secured a nice and easy job for herself, enjoyed Saturday evening's gatherings with friends and foes, chatting about trivial matters. She also liked to read. She was a sucker for romantic stories, where the man had to work through obstacles to gain the heart of a delightful female. She preferred well-mannered characters from a wealthy background. Poverty didn't do for her at all. As far as she was

concerned people get what they deserve at birth and throughout their lives. She preferred to surround herself with pretty people to provide a favourable background to her life story.

She was a bit disappointed when two years later, Roby left the army. She'd never talked about the circumstances however the theory was that Roby was dismissed. His stocky posture gained measurable muscles and although he didn't get taller, the little boy grew into a man while away.

Now, back with his mother he re-established old behaviour patterns of not doing anything around the house. His bed laid unmade day after day, his bathroom wasn't cleaned, his clothes were scattered all over his room and he didn't want to see visitors in the house. He started ordering his mother around and she obliged. In return, she made it clear that girls shouldn't be considered good companions. And when people asked Lucy about him dating, she was shocked and replied that he was too young to date. By the time he reached the age of twenty-two, every girl in the vicinity understood that he is not there to be grabbed. This unsettled behaviour made Roby really

undesirable. He was well-mannered and smiling in one minute and frustratingly tyrannical in the next one. He refused to eat his mother's healthy, home-cooked meals, stuffed himself with takeaway pizza and coke. Since he had no income, naturally Lucy had to pay for his indulges.

One day, it became understood that Roby travelled back to the home country and decided to take on a job. He was well-spoken, fluent in two languages therefore, it wasn't a big surprise that he landed one quite fast. It was unknown, who was the mastermind behind his moving. One thing was certain, it wasn't Lucy. She kept moaning and complaining about her loneliness and the absence of her beautiful son.

In the meanwhile, Roby stayed with his sister Linda and her family. This arrangement brought Linda back into Lucy's life and the drinking problem couldn't be ignored any longer. Nevertheless, she felt that she was somewhat tarnished by her daughter's marital problems and drinking difficulties.

Rick decided to sober up, for he thought at least one of them should understand what was going

on. It produced a trigger for Linda to plunge into alcohol even deeper. Soon, the situation hit rock bottom and the social services were called on her. Assessing the situation they gave her an ultimatum: she either quits drinking or the children would be taken away from her. Rick threatened to seek a divorce. A few months later he did.

Even though she wanted, she was not strong enough to go through the required changes. Her self-esteem was nowhere to be seen and with Rick's leaving, not even her beautiful children could keep her hurt ego above water. She slipped into self-indulgent suffering, where only she and her pain existed.

Their divorce was finalised, the children were put into their father's care and Linda was assigned to a two years program kick her habit and rebuild her life.

Due to the circumstances, Roby looked for alternative living accommodation that he soon found with the same lady her sister stayed with at the beginning of her adult life. Lucy was happy, for she knew that girls were not allowed to visit there. It was also the time when she

started her nagging expedition and tried to entice her son to return, even if it meant to lose a well-paid work with good prospects. When it came to her son, she lost all her reasons. She understood the health benefits of sexual encounters and she also knew that Roby long passed the introductory age. However, the thought of him having a girl at his side infuriated his mother.

Well, persistence provides benefits. After two years of subconscious self-searching, Roby moved back with his mother. And as it happened, he picked everything up where he left it. He fell back into the lazy, pizza eating, coke drinking bully. All his childhood friends either got married or entered into a serious relationship. Most of them also worked full-time, having no desire for idle chit-chats. He entered into this place, where he honestly thought that the only person puts up with him, is his mother.

When she was away from Roby, Lucy was quite realistic about life's events. She was free, she looked at eligible gentlemen and created colourful pictures concerning the future.

## 5.

As the waiter disappeared, the possibility of acquiring a drink left with him. The girls quietened down. The excitement of travel, the sleepless night and the alcohol diminished their natural enthusiasm. They were parched from the alcohol and lack of liquid, their eyes were red and sour. However, the idea of leaving and remedy the situation didn't occur to any of them.

Zeta got up and decided to find solutions. Walked to the empty bar and looked behind the counter. There were clean glasses there waiting to be filled with nature's gifts. She picked up five and carried them to the table. Then walked to the hardly noticeable enormous fridge behind the bush. Opened it, picked up five large bottles of local beers and presented them to her companions. The ice-cold sparkling liquid rejuvenated their body, mind and spirit. The pleasure of being alive enveloped the group and spread the feeling slowly to other tables. Suddenly a guy walked to the bar and started distributing the content of the refrigerator while noting his moves carefully on paper.

The music just got livelier. Zhina got up, looked around, walked to the strongest pole of the canopy and slowly started to dance around it. The rhythm of the music became the heartbeat of the Universe that launched her into an erotic frenzy of sway and turn in an embrace with the world. Her shyness and insecurity gave way to the soul, breaking the piles of layers placed on it by upbringing, education, society and media, searching for the ultimate freedom.

First, they watched her with delight and then gradually joined in and turned the movement into a powerful group cleansing exercise.

## **6.**

Zhina was the firstborn to Tsila and Yotsy, both from the capital.

Tsila was orphaned during the war when she was eleven years old. Miraculously her life was spared by a fallen wardrobe. After this event, she was transported to her aunt's house where she remained until she reached the working age of sixteen.



Yotsy's family was a bit more entangled. Both his parents came from a large family. His mother Irene, was the first on the string of eight out of her father's two marriages, for Irene's mother died when her daughter was at a tender age.

His father Les, was the only son of a divorced couple. After the separation, Les stayed with his father, who soon found a new wife and the mother of their seven future siblings.

In large families, such as these, the eldest children turned their earning back into the family until they set up their own household. Irene moved to the capital and worked as a house servant with a prominent aristocratic family. Les was restless. He also travelled to the capital, acquired a driving licence and found a job as a personal driver for the director of a large factory. He was quite a ladies' boy, a characteristic he hung onto until the end.

The union of Irene and Les was arranged through a matchmaker. As they started their married lives, Irene left her job and became a caretaker of a block of flats in a prominent district in the capital. The job was accompanied by sizeable accommodation and a decent salary.

It came to light quite early on, that Les didn't think much of fidelity in the sanctity of marriage. He only had occasional lovers, never a long term affair however, the queue for his favours got longer by time. Since he believed in gentlemanly behaviour of satisfying ladies, he obliged without exception. Irene took it with a pinch of salt. As long as she was pleased, the leftover was for grabs, she said.

Due to related factors, they only had one son from their union. It was Yotsy. As the only child, he was idolised by his mother and taught all the mischiefs by his father. He was a bright-minded young man with physical strength and quite a prominent sportsman of his time. However, he didn't have the stamina and the dedication to see his aims through. He preferred fun over studying or improving his result in the swimming pool.

Tsila and Yotsy met at the telephone factory where they both worked. She was a sweet sixteen and he was a heartthrob.

With them, it was an instant click. They wanted to get married straight away but Yotsy's parents thought Tsila was too young and also they

demanded a university degree from their son before matrimonial changes. Five years later Yotsy met their request and became a civil engineer.

With the education out of the way, it was time for the couple to tie the knot. They were planning on having children straight away however the two abortions Tsila was forced to have due to not being in matrimony, put a strain on their result. However six years later, when they already resigned to the thought of not being able to reproduce, she became pregnant for the great pleasure of all concerned. The picture of a little boy started to gain shape in their minds. The disappointment was clearly noticeable on their faces when Tsila gave birth to a baby girl. After much consideration, they named her Zhina. The only family member regarded her as a blessing, was grandpa Les. The first time he laid an eye on the little girl, a special bond formed and held them together until he bid farewell to earthly existence.

As a grownup, Zhina talked a lot about their quaint connection. She had the feeling that she belonged to his grandfather somehow. There were warmth and tenderness in their

relationship. During her esoteric studies, she often asked the question about soul connections and the answer usually referred to her being reincarnated to come back into the life of her grandfather. However, her memories didn't show anybody, who left him untimely. Until one day she was going through old documents and came across her grandparents' marriage certificate. The document clearly stated that Les was a widower at the time of tying the knot with Irene. Zhina didn't remember it being mentioned ever before.

Her parents, especially Tsila, had never forgiven her for not being a male. Their expectation of their firstborn was so high that it stayed in their minds and was repeated whenever the opportunity arrived. Like a stuck gramophone needle. Even when a couple of years later they managed to produce a male sibling, the unfortunate outcome of the first event lingered on and never disappeared.

Leo, the baby boy was impatient, needy and loved to listen to his own voice. Especially on high volume. Yotsy wasn't particularly taken by him and for Les only Zhina existed. However the

females, Irene and Tsila adored the newcomer.

After Irene's departure from the planet, Tsila made sure to pamper Leo for the two of them. This habit had never left her. Les enjoyed the presence of his granddaughter and Yotsy, very much like his father at the time, was busy satisfying needy females.

Few years after the birth of their son, they bought a spacious apartment in a very posh district of the capital.

Due to the emotional entanglements, Zhina was brought up in a household without much attention wasted on her. Like everything, it was good and bad. Good, because she was left alone to do what she desired and bad because she was left alone to form false ideas about her family and life itself. In her mind, she piled up imaginary demands the family placed on her. These created responsibilities stripped Zhina of her innocent childhood, for due to their reality, a confrontation wasn't her strong suit. Therefore she tried to live up to the expectations of all parties concerned.

After the final departure of Les, she found a made-up ally in Yotsy. Not because he paid any attention to her, but for the reason that she needed a male on her side.

This self-created loneliness developed a basic bitterness in her against life and everybody in it. She didn't learn to trust and to be joyous without suspicion. On top of it, the lessons on communication skills totally escaped their house.

On the road to growing into adulthood, Zhina didn't have many friends. She was an exceptionally bright student, excelled in mathematics and sports.

By the end of her secondary education she turned into a tall, nicely shaped, dark-haired and eyed young woman with a beautiful smile on occasions she forgot the control. In the college she attended, there was an equally bright, tall, dark-haired and eyed young man, who was persistent enough to break her shield. He came from a military family and decided to pursue the same path.

Zhina and Victor got married a year into their courting adventure. The bride was nineteen and the groom twenty years old.

The arrival of their son put an end to Zhina's education. She took it up again as a correspondence course when David was old enough to be despatched to a nursery. She also started working in a bank. This line of money earning became her career. Victor wasn't a very domesticated man and Zhina didn't succeed with turning him into one. He stayed out a lot from their rented apartment and when he finally arrived home, he put some kind of explanation on the table as an excuse for his absence.

By the time Zhina finished her studies, the marriage was on the rocks. When one day she found signs of Victor's indiscrete infidelity in their own matrimonial bed, she decided to end the union.

She had a prominent job to fulfil, a young child to take care of and fast returning insecurity to deal with. Victor left and later married his cheating companion. He also conveniently figured that since Zhina made enough money, he shouldn't chip into David's upbringing. On the other hand, he demanded to see his son and fill his brain with complaints against his mother

when an opportunity presented itself.

As her confrontation skills were not showing any improvement, Zhina started to look for a male replacement. She figured that if there was a male in her life, she was safe and secure, also gain some kind of prominence in society. She dreaded leaving her comfort zone and as a result, the choice fell on a co-worker.

Eric was a recently widowed father of three. The ages of the two boys and a girl ran between ten and two, fitting David in somewhere between.

After a few months of courting, they tied the knot in front of their children.

The two newcomers, Zhina and David, moved in with the bigger nucleus to start the blending procedure. All concerned entered into this relationship in good faith however their approach to success turned out to be totally different. Since Eric's previous partner was the housewife, in his mind there was a desperate need for someone with good cooking and cleaning skills, great patience towards children, on the top of the frisky bed manners required to



make the union work. In Zhina's head, there was no question about giving up her career. She wasn't a great cook and cleaning bored her however she made a tremendous effort towards harmonious living. After the tiresome daily work in the bank's back office, for her, the second shift started at home. Eric didn't help into the housework and the older children followed suit. However, the demand for better quality was rising. Often Zhina's patience ran thin. Nevertheless, her fear of disappointing lent her the strength needed and pulled her through.

The big family house they lived in, was in the vicinity of Eric's parents' resident. To ease the tension, created by the pile of responsibility, his mother Ella, graciously agreed to make the Saturday lunch a permanent event, when all children, David included, had the opportunity to be grateful for Grandma Ella's efforts, while the parents completed their shopping spree for the coming week.

Unlike his mother, David managed to fit in effortlessly. He learned the love of books from her that helped him escape situations and

provided endless entertainment when needed. He didn't enter into arguments with the others and his sense of humour eased up tensions.

The only unsettled person in the family was the girl, Riza. She couldn't bear her stepmother. Every day learned a new trick to sabotage Zhina's work in the house and later teamed up with grandma to further her mischievous behaviour. Ella was happy to oblige.

Despite the destructive efforts, the house and family functioned for quite many years. Until one day Riza crossed the very thin line keeping Zhina's patience intact and made her shout. Her voice triggered the unsettled thoughts in the girl's mind and she burst out:

“Shut up! You are not my mother!”

That was the moment when Zhina lost it and slapped Riza.

By the time Eric came home that evening, Zhina was packed and moved back with her mother. The divorce was finalised a few months later.

After the traumatic encounter Zhina found it hard to restore her inner peace and the balance

she desperately needed. It was the time when she joined Zeta's group of students in search of help to open up, learn, to heal and understand human behaviours.

In the meantime, David grew into a good looking and charming young man. Zhina liked to accompany him to cinema and theatre while imagining that she was his long lost sister. Her fight with time and ageing strengthened due to the lack of a prominent male in her life. Furthering this idea, she developed eyes only for young celebrities, probably for security reasons, thinking that if she cannot get them, cannot fail them either.

Her juvenile behaviour didn't help David, who was lost in the maze of life. He enrolled in university to study mathematics. A semester later dropped out and went on learning to drum and formed a pop band. While keeping it up, enrolled in a course to become a librarian. It was the only course he finished. Two years later with a fresh diploma, David took his first job in a prominent bookstore. His music group managed to produce two hit songs, therefore he gave up his job. However, he didn't gain the satisfaction

from the music he was looking for. He left the band and enrolled on a cinematography course that he, again left after the first semester. He desperately needed consistency he couldn't get. Zhina wasn't a talker. She helped her son the only way she understood, by paying for his searching mission.

Without an internal source, David's constructive energy dried out and he gave himself to the pink promises of depression. He stayed in bed till noon, didn't care about his looks and clothing and neglected his friends. Zhina was worried. She decided that it was time to consult Zeta for she would say things Zhina was reluctant to do. The result of the conversation noted that David had no tangible life experience whatsoever. He was shielded and provided for in every way, including financing the direction of his constantly changing mind. It was a classic case of negligent upbringing, although according to fashionable opinions it was the right way to deal with children. Zeta taught him an exercise to raise his energy level and instructed him to take on a job. She argued that he was a healthy, grown man and had to start looking after himself. David understood. Packed his bags,

moved countries and started earning his up-keeping. A few years later he became successful in his chosen trade and his life was freed.

Apart from that all, living with Tsila wasn't a holiday camp either. Losing Yotsy was quite a trauma for her, from which she'd never recovered. A domineering and bitter woman in the vast apartment, with a lot of time at hand, she usually chewed on past issues, still focusing on Zhina's female status and favoured Leo before anybody else. He, on the other hand, grew into a good looking young man and married an overbearing tiny creature, with whom he had produced two children. By the time the smaller reached the kindergarten age, Leo became aware of the fact that he teamed up with the wrong gender and declared his new status as a gay man. He left his utterly shocked wife with the children and moved in with a man he happened to know for quite some times.

This event turned into a satisfactory conclusion for Tsila and an explanation for her daughter when her favours towards Leo was noted.

The financial arrangements became the weak

spots of the rare family conversations. For Tsila, it was axiomatic to help Leo. Apart from her own support, she often instructed her daughter to help him in solving his financial mess, in which he often stranded. To keep the peace and avoid confrontations she obeyed. As Zhina inherited the quarter of the accommodation after their father, she agreed to buy her brother's share of the other 25%, entitling her to 50% of the apartment. However Leo's life turned into a bottomless well that no amount of money could have filled. He was whiny and complaining constantly, mostly about things he didn't have, while drawing a colourful picture of his happiness of welcoming them into his household. In their co-existence, most of the accommodation and living expenses were paid by Zhina, freeing Tsila's substantial pension that was secretly donated to Leo's household every month. The mother and son duo had a quiet conspiracy in the background, in which the first was giving and the latter was receiving.

One day, as Zhina was returning home from work, she found a letter in the post box. It was addressed to her mother. As she was in charge of official issues around the household, she

opened it. By the time the lift reached the fifth floor, she could barely stand on her feet. It was an official letter stating that Tsila signed her 50% of the apartment over to Leo, dispossessing her daughter of her right to half of it.

The relationship between the two reached the almost unbearable. Tsila was adamant announcing that Leo needed it and Zhina had always been taking advantage of the family anyway.

Running away from confrontations yet again, Zhina started to drink heavily. Her life was reduced to the office and her tiny bedroom, filled with bottles of vodka and gin. She didn't help in the kitchen and stopped doing household chores. The childhood inflicted wound opened up again, pushing her deeper into the abyss of depression.

Zhina understood that the only way to get out of the pit hole was finding a male energy to shift her thoughts. It wasn't an easy task, for she indulged in self-pity and took her great struggle to leave the comfort zone. And as she was crying for her lost childhood she only found a substantial younger generation attractive enough to make an effort.

One day, Zeta had a beginners' course for four persons: three young men and a woman and she decided to invite Zhina, to take her mind off the situation. Although reluctantly but she agreed. They had fun and learned a lot.

The following day Zeta received a telephone call from Pishty, one of the young attendees, enquiring about Zhina's marital status. He apologised deeply however as he explained, he could turn to anybody else for help in the matter. Zeta smiled and promised to come back to him after talking to the lady in question. And she did. A day later, she was happy to report back that his interest was welcomed and Zhina was willing to set up a rendezvous.

Both Zhina and Pishty, eighteen years her junior, were very excited about the new development and managed to pick a date two weeks into the future. Although they both wanted the relationship, the meeting didn't live up to their expectations and Pishty decided to slow it down. This attitude frustrated Zhina further and pushed her back into the hole. When a few weeks later Pishty restarted communications, she ignored the call. However thanks to his



persistence, the new union was launched.

Pishty was a bright but lazy kind of a guy from a village. He lived almost all his life there, except for two years when he ventured abroad to try his fortune. The house, he lived in with his parents and younger brother, provided accommodation for his father's family for generations. They had a sizeable vegetable garden, raised chicken and other kinds of poultry, to feed the family. He hated school and everything that was, in his mind, associated with big cities. His mother Bella worked shifts in a nearby factory and his father Toby looked after the field. Toby had a somewhat strange but widely accepted idea of family settings, according to which the entire housework belonged to the women. Since Bella was the only member of the frailer gender, she had to cook, clean, do the laundry and finish the endless chores associated with the family's accommodation, on top of her factory work. None of the boys objected and Bella didn't complain. When Toby was occasionally approached by a question about their idle sons, he dismissed it with a self-related law that stated, if a woman spreads her legs she has to

bear the consequences. This Virgin Mary approach was repeated by Pishty on occasions.

Due to the distance and Zhina's fulltime job, the two love birds could only meet at weekends. Then, Pishty came to the city and bossed Zhina around in the kitchen, making her prepare elaborate dishes from scratch. However, Zhina was content. At last, there was a male connected to her therefore, she made sure to fortify the bond with every one of her moves. Tsila wasn't happy with her daughter's newly found joy. To ease her feelings, she entered into the custom of inviting Leo's young children over the weekends, to feel the place with audible presence.

Pishty didn't have a steady job. He learned the clay-oven building trade and accepted occasional work to feed his drinking habits when he joined his childhood pals in the only local of the village for evenings of total ruin.

In the meantime, Zhina ranged with jealousy, demanded more time on long-distance conversation and total fidelity. These overwhelming feelings didn't allow her to ease up on drinking, so she argued. However, Pishty's

long and tiresome persuasion produced a favourable result: Zhina gave up the friendship of alcohol.

With this newly gained power, Pishty enrolled in a university course, mainly for the sake of it and to prove himself worthy.

Zhina's life with her mother and the family turned sourer each day. She loved the countryside, dreamed of a little cottage with a garden, fresh air, clean water from the well and good living for house animals, such as a dog and a cat she always wanted.

The two of them finally moved in together in a little cottage with a garden, fresh air, clean water from the well and a cheeky black cat to complete the family. Pishty assigned himself to a permanent job nearby and Zhina made the tiresome journey for work to the capital each day. Since they were away a lot, the dog had been pushed into the future. Although the power struggle didn't stop, they arrived at a better place in life, with a clearer understanding of values and challenges.

## 7.

The dance floor gradually emptied. The strength and will power to carry on, arrived in waves. Occasionally, some rest was needed. Long enough to allow for recuperation but shorter than drowning into the disaster of shameless surrender. As the stamina lessened, the action required more power and desperate focus.

*“They shoot horses, don’t they?”* remembered the great book and film Zeta. *“This scenario is very similar, although there is no cash price, only the frantic attempt of reaching the unreachable. The ultimate dancing experience, the ultimate holiday, the ultimate drink and the ultimate anything. We don’t realise that the ultimate is in another dimension, not accessible to us. We need to work with our boundaries created by the physical body. When should we stop taking it a bit further? Where is the breaking point? How do we know the time when the heart, lung or kidney cannot take more? Without reaching this point, we don’t have answers to these questions. And when we finally do, they lose importance, for the damage is irreversible”*, concluded her thoughts.

The music followed the mood of the people listening to it. At least it was the illusion. It appeared to come from a faraway place, where the sun was shining and people were dancing in colourful clothing, joyously. The place and the music were fading...

*“No, no, no! We shouldn’t give up! I shouldn’t give up”,* ran through Zeta’s mind! *“I cannot give up! What will happen to the others if I do?”* As she looked around, saw tired faces and tired bodies on the verge of giving in to exhaustion.

“No, it is not right!” she shouted. “Wakey, wakey!”

She got up, walked to the bar and fetched a jug of cold water with glasses. Poured some water into each and handed over to the girls. The elixir rejuvenated their body and mind.

The newly found energy reached the music also and pushed it forward, gearing up for the last attempt to wake the desire in the people.

“Come on girls, show them what we can do with this rhythm! Shake it babes!” said Zeta and pulled the girls up one by one. They obeyed smiling. And a new wave of partying began.

## 8.

Zeta was the only child from the marriage of Joseph and Margit. It was a union of ill-fate from the very beginning, forced by an untimely pregnancy. Joseph, eleven years her senior, was an army officer on a nearby station and Margit was one of the daughters in a densely populated farming family. He was careless and irresponsible, while she was wild, full of dreams and ambitions.

Zeta came to light at dawn on an early summer morning. Her curiosity and the thirst for experience, couldn't keep her longer than seven months in her mother's womb.

Joseph was transferred to a military compound where he was in charge of training the nearly 200 newcomers, who started their two years of compulsory military service. Their initial one room in a village was exchanged for large family accommodation in the middle of a forest, near the Northern border. All three of them found great joy in the place. For Joseph, it was a big step forward on the path of his military carrier, Zeta loved the freedom of nature and Margit, with her long blond hair, green eyes and a slim

figure was surrounded by young and hungry males, eager to please the only female they were privileged to see during their three months on the compound. She enjoyed the sexually charged looks and the many inappropriate compliments she was always keen to hear.

It didn't take long for Margit to make her choice. There was a dark-haired and eyed, tall and well-structured officer she picked out of the crowd and started to reward every now and then when an opportunity knocked. Joseph was kept busy with work while his officer often entertained his young wife and daughter with long walks in the forest or simply playing balls in the courtyard. This behaviour was quite unprecedented within military circles, it was the main reason Joseph didn't suspect any foul play. However, Margit didn't stop there. Once she sampled the sweet-bitter taste of the forbidden, developed quite a liking for it. She found another muse in the form of a draftee, a year her junior. Frank, was a smiling-faced average looking guy. It might have been the result of youth or carelessness nevertheless this affair couldn't avoid Joseph's attention. The fact that his wife started to neglect their daughter, added some weight to

the already heavy anti-marital element, even though, Joseph wasn't a decisive man when his private affairs were concerned. He learned that Margit left Zeta alone sometimes for the whole day and overnight when her husband was sent to clear up some messy job in other military stations and stayed away for days. On the day, when he heard that Zeta was taken to hospital with an emergency ambulance, then he decided to file for divorce.

Zeta was gravely ill. She was left alone in a cold house while having rubella, turned into meningitis spiced up with tuberculosis. There was not much hope in the eyes of the doctors dealing with her case. However, ten months later she emerged almost as new. During this time Margit and Joseph divorced and both remarried. To lend emphasis to their newly found attempt to happy existing, both unions were joined by a permanent amalgamation of their DNA properties, one boy each. After the neglect of Margit, Zeta was assigned to her father however he didn't take this opportunity to bring her daughter up. In fact, his new bride Kato, only learned about Zeta's existence six years later, when Margit wrote a letter to her ex



and demanded to take Zeta off her hands. The letter ended up on Kato's table where it was duly read by the middle class nursery director, who was filled with bliss as far as her marriage was concerned. As the pink cloud was melting into the background while acknowledging the letter's content, she confronted her husband, who at first, vehemently denied Zeta's existence. However by the time he arrived at the end of the letter, where Margit threatened to show up with the girl at Joseph's doorstep, he changed attitude and confessed.

In the meantime, Zeta grew into an awkward thirteen years old teenager. She was bright but untamed, charged with all the instincts and feelings without understanding their consequences. Her unworldliness didn't go down well with her step-mother, to say the least. Kato was pretentious, a snob and a great advocate of formalities. Needless to say that by the end of the school year Zeta found herself back with her mother, brother and stepfather. None of them found the slightest delight in this turn of events.

Soon after Joseph and Kato divorced and she

moved abroad with their son.

A year later Zeta was sent away to a secondary school to study general knowledge. Out of the ten subjects she favoured the logical ones, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and also literature. She was a noted consumer of the world classics and reference books related to ancient knowledge, exotic places, the mind and philosophies.

It happened during the first year of college when she decided to consciously working towards the entertainment industry and become a theatrical actor. Hundreds of poems, short stories, drama roles and monologues were engraved into the hard drive of her brain for practice and be ready for big events in life. She created a one-woman show and a literary circle, where members argued their cases with poems. She was constantly looking for the rhythm of the Universe in everything.

One day, she received a letter from a lady called Mira. She claimed that she was Joseph's third wife and after four years of marriage she came across Zeta's name on Joseph's payslip, related to a certain amount of money deducted from his

salary. She was asking for a visit from Zeta. The girl obliged.

When she graduated from college, her father stopped the meagre allowance he paid towards her upbringing. Her mother developed into a vicious and spiteful destroyer as if it was her biggest aim to stop Zeta from getting anywhere. The war between the two of them was so tense that Zeta decided to ban Margit from coming into her vicinity. She stopped communication with all the members of her mother's family and at the age of eighteen, set out to conquer the world.

Although she wanted to study, due to the lack of money, she had to find solutions favourable to rent payments, everyday food and the minimal clothing needed.

The answer to all these questions presented itself in a package deal from the University of Circus and Performing Art. It offered fulltime studying and work. During the day Zeta took on acrobatics, juggling, magic, mime, various types of dancing, music, acting singing, psychology and teaching, while every evening she stepped

into a costume on the round stage. She studied singing and became a professional in the field. Took roles in films and theatrical works. She loved the challenges the field presented. However, Zeta felt that something was missing. Although it was great fun, by the end of the fourth year she knew she didn't want to be an entertainer. In the search for new ideas and inspiration Zeta decided to change countries.

After the preliminary official paperwork, she used her teaching qualifications gained in the subject she studied and found work in an acting school, teaching classical ballet, Commedia dell'Arte, African dances and clowning. Unfortunately, the part-time work didn't bring in enough money for survival and restricted movements to find an additional source of income. As a result, a school term later she had to leave the work.

A few days later she found a job in a pub and enrolled herself in a fashion designing course. She always adored textiles, had done quite a lot of sewing when couldn't afford to buy the ready product, therefore learning it for real seemed a good idea. By the end of the second year, she put a collection together with the aim of

exhibiting her line of clothing in the prominent annual February Spring-Summer wear fashion show. The ideas were picked up by the international media and two clothing factories expressed interest to produce the garments. Her initial joy was cut short when she realised that the chosen factory wanted to change every elaborate detail on her garments to save money. By the end of the negotiation meeting, Zeta didn't recognise her own creations therefore she declined the offer for cooperation.

The love for textiles, pure and natural fibres, didn't vanish nevertheless, Zeta packed up the fashion designing aim and switched to accountancy and management. She was always good with numbers and also wanted to understand the secrets of leading a company. Although she had never worked or intended to find a job in the field of accounting, these studies, like all of them, came very handy later on in life.

During the first year in the new country, Zeta met a medical doctor, called Sam, from an exotic land. Their relationship was passionate and mysterious, the latter leading to secret

affairs and lies. However, against all odds, she declared the relationship a success. She learned new ways of looking at life, fascinating dishes with strangely fragrant spices and colours she had never seen before. Zeta wasn't a togetherness type. For her, every interaction was a learning ground with new experiences. She knew that the only person she could rely upon was herself and her own achievements would mark life's successes.

The next on her education list was another exciting individual from a different direction. This liaison held its ground for three years when it reached its doom and faded into boredom.

Zeta didn't cry for relationships and had never initiated one. There were no principles behind this behaviour but she had great fun on her own, finding roads leading into the unknown, meeting people from different corners of the planet, discuss interesting matters with them and trying out new jobs all the time. For her, work was a money-making scheme that paid for the essentials. Nevertheless, she liked to enjoy her time spent with it, even if it was the result of some self-convincing argument. She stayed in a job until she perfected it. This attitude didn't allow the idea of a career entering her mind.

There was a moment though when she decided to master a profession that could act as a security job to rely upon. This idea took her to an English Language Teaching Course, with the understanding that the whole world wants to learn English, so this diploma could save her life anywhere. And she was right. The other decision about studying was rather instinctive. She enrolled in a REIKI 1 course. And this was the course that put her on the infinite road of learning, thinking and understanding.

Relationships also came and went. Regardless of their length, Zeta put 98% into them from the very beginning. The remaining 2% was for the control, to keep her above water when the emotion flood arrived. As far as she was concerned gaining needed giving, even if the event ended in tears and suffering.

Men considered her pretty, sexy, wild, sometimes naïve and other times inaccessible. Most of them wanted her, usually for shorter encounters, although sometimes she came across men who were willing to invest in the long term version of togetherness. Like hunters, they wanted to tame her, push to lose herself in

them, before gobbling her up and spitting out the carcasses. The 2% consciousness allowed Zeta to experience, live through these emotional entanglements and gave her enough courage to break free before the chewing started.

The non-stop learning mission took her to many foreign lands, some of them chosen consciously others were destinations she connected subconsciously. The aim was to observe and understand people, religions and esoteric teachings, find connections between them and discard all the manmade additional fillings. She finished the REIKI education only for the sake of it. The course made her realise that she didn't only know about healing energies and used them but she understood the whole concept. Her interest lied in the metaphysical structure rather than the man-made, conveniently invented stories of power-thirsty and floating people. She believed that everything is something and nothing didn't exist. She also understood that numbers and physical structures kept the Universe together and that is what she wanted to figure out. The great matrix.



It was the time when she set out to register a philosophy she decided to name AKIA and call it the philosophy of the unseen soul and cosmic knowledge.

After this milestone Zeta's life changed. It became conscious. She looked at life as the perfect place of researching, learning and sharpening the senses to the point of their interrelated greatness.

Through her intuition, she could usually see the result of events. This ability proved priceless at times but in her relationships, it was a nag.

One day Zeta met an interesting man, eighteen years her senior. Itran, a dark-haired dark-eyed businessman from an exotic land fascinated Zeta by his cultural background. As a child, she listened to and read many stories with this particular setting. In her unique philosophy, she connected the essential history of mankind to those places. With two grownup children from his freshly ended marriage, Itran needed to be careful with his romantic connections. He was a kind man with a high appreciation for females. However, he had set ideas of the world and didn't pay attention to events he

considered not to be his business. For him, the world was purely black and white and often scolded Zeta for her open-mindedness, different views and whimsical aims.

Apart from these conversational tiebreakers, they had a really good run with their union. However after eight years together, Zeta felt suffocated. She wanted greater freedom to learn, to teach and to write, therefore she was looking for an opportunity to break away. It was hard, for she couldn't find feasible reasons for leaving him. Therefore, Zeta decided to sabotage the relationship. When one of his employees and friend started to pursue her, she agreed and as a consequence stood in front of Itran the next morning and told him that the relationship was over. Zeta didn't want the new relationship, only wanted to break away from the previous one.

She was happy with her newly found freedom. She could say what she wanted, do what she liked and meet people of her choice. For a few years, she was alone travelling the world. Then she met Tamas. He was a fascinating person. He also had set ideas about the world especially about himself and his life. He didn't have a

steady job when they met. However, he loved money and figured out dubious schemes to obtain it.

Zeta knew that the relationship was doomed from the beginning. She also understood that it was meant to be for learning purposes, especially for Tamas' sake and she was curious about the experience it promised. The sex was wonderful, they laughed a lot and enjoyed each other's company. The only problem presented to Zeta was his addiction to the mood-altering medical substance, called Xanax.

Sometimes, when he was with his nothing-to-do friends, he also entered into the habit of drinking. Alcohol and the medication made him very strong and he had the illusion that the whole world was under his feet. Zeta was caught in this aggressive phase a few times, but one day, Tamas came home absolutely stoned and started to punch Zeta in the face for no reason at all. She was absolutely mortified. Tamas was so gone that he didn't even hear Zeta's pleadings and begging. She was certain of finishing her life on the bathroom floor. Then with her last bit of dignity, she stood up, looked him in the eye and told him, that it was the very

last time he had ever laid hands on her. Tamas was so surprised that his hand stopped in the air and let her go.

Later on the night Zeta took her car key and her handbag with the essentials and stepped out of her bedroom's window and left the apartment.

The next day she filed for divorce. When Tamas was looking for her the next morning and couldn't find Zeta, he went on a rampage and destroyed all her valuables. Computer CDs, everything connected to her work and ten years of her life.

Zeta understood that there were reasons behind everything. She rewrote her materials. And never looked back. All her experiences became very valuable with her teaching and coaching business.

Throughout her youth, Margit didn't fail telling Zeta, not even once, that she would not be loved by anyone, she would become ugly and probably a prostitute. It took her quite the courage to break free from this strong spell and prove her wrong. However, these unworthy predictions swayed her into dangerous

situations with dubious characters that she narrowly escaped.

The much wiser and a few years older Zeta devoted all her time to teaching and writing.

She established a school for esoteric teachings, named HOPE-2012. The acronym carried Holistic and Parapsychological Education and 2012 was for the imminent Quantum Leap. The main stem of the curriculum was AKIA-Reiki that went far beyond the known Japanese healing method with the added philosophy and understanding of energies. Zeta rejected the money making-schemes surrounded the subject and brought thousands of her students up to the level of master-teacher, for a basic course fee.

The essence of her teaching lied in the understanding that everything in the Universe is interrelated, hence in a matrix. This thought cleared many of the misconceptions connected to life and belief systems, for it became axiomatic that everything and everybody is equal and comes from the same source.

Her first book came out just before the Galactic Quantum Leap, explaining its importance and the changes brought with it. This book was

followed by many, all of which circled the main objective of explaining, educating and clearing false ideas, lifting earthlings out of the swamp of depression and ill health.

Guys came and went. However, she continued to spread the word about the beauty of life, the wonders of living and the cosmic knowledge.

## 9.

The dawn was already cracking. From the eastern corner of the sea, behind the rocks, the sun was making its way to bring changes, new beginnings, warmth, knowledge, hope and salvation. The music tirelessly conveyed the enthusiasm of the hosts and conversations still cracked healthy laughter here and there. Apart from the itchy eyes, they felt good. The effect of the alcohol was gone and they saw life from a new perspective. Plans for the day began to form. They agreed that this place would be their favourite even if it cost extra money.

“Where is Ketu?” Zeta asked when she failed to find the fifth of the group.

“She went for a walk on the beach“, someone

answered.

“Very good. Was she all right?” she continued the inquiry.

“Yes. You know she doesn’t drink”, answered Clarisse.

“Yes, I know. That is why I am asking. Today she did.”

“What do you mean by today? Where we came from is already tomorrow. And here, wow, we have been sitting here for more than three hours!” added Zhina.

“There she is!” announced Lucy.

“Who?”

“Ketu! She carries something.”

“It’s a coconut!” added Zeta. “Where have you been girl?” turned towards Ketu.

“I went for a walk”, she started with excitement in her voice. “Over there, there is a beautiful park, full of coconut trees. There was a guy, working on one of them, collecting the coconuts and he gave me one. And a security guard cracked it open. It was full of water. Really good. Very refreshing.”

“Great! Well done Ketu!” said Zeta. “I love them too!”

## 10.

Ketu came from the union of Ana and Fero. Ana was the only child of a working class couple. Her father left when she was at a tender age and she was brought up by her mother. Teri worked as a post office clerk. She was a bitter woman, always moaning and complaining about everything. She thought that life was a chain of suffering, which was inflicted on her by the Universe and every living creature copied the attitude. She had never remarried and banned men from her life. She was convinced that they were evil and conspired against women, especially against her. This unease and spiteful bitterness were released into Ana's life as the basic behaviour to apply and stand by.

She went through childhood without much ado. When her mother didn't look, she was smiling and grabbing the opportunity to have fun however the influence caught up eventually, placing a heavy guilt-bag on her shoulders.

Straight after secondary school, she started working at the office of a furniture factory, in an attempt of moving to the capital.



Fero had one older sister, called Gabi. Their father died early in their lives and they were orphaned when he was twelve and she was around sixteen years of age.

After this sad event, the youngsters were taken to relatives temporarily until Gabi felt strong enough to move back to the family abode. Soon after she found office work in a furniture factory and Fero continued his secondary education. Playing house in real-time was bestowed upon Gabi at an early stage of her life and without much upheaval, she had to take on certain duties she had never even heard about before.

The nice little house became the absolute territory of Gabi's willpower. She had the feeling that without the iron-fist control, things would fall apart beyond repair. Since Fero wasn't a person with strong initiatives, their relationship worked out well. She cooked and looked after their wardrobes, while he attended to the small garden.

After finishing the basic education required by the state, Fero found a job at the same office his sister worked. They left the house together and

returned the same way.

One day, there was a little after-work birthday party thrown for a colleague and all of them were requested to stay. Gabi assessed the idea as a waste of time however Fero was looking forward to having casual chat with people. He was a twenty years old, decent looking young chap, who secretly had eyes on one of the girls. As he was shy and uncertain of himself, he welcomed the given opportunity.

The girl in question, Clara was a pretty girl with long dark hair, dark eyes and a pleasant smile. Fero thought she was mysterious. He imagined her knowing about fascinating places and ideas he would be interested in.

After the toast when Fero looked around, he realised that Clara was standing next to him. As he turned towards her, she smiled and said:

“It about time!”

“What do you mean?” he asked puzzled.

“That you ask me out”, she replied with certainty.

“I didn’t”, he answered. “At least not yet.”

“I hope you will”, she added.

Fero was a bit confused. He planned it in his head that he would woo her off her feet. There was no story in his head about happening it so

easily. And now, all this careful planning was gone. However, he was happy to see Clara giving up some of her mysteries for a moment.

“Sure”, he looked at her and confirmed the wish.

“All right then”, she stated. “See you Saturday at five!” Then she turned around and left the party.

Fero didn't mention the happening to anybody, not even his sister. However, his heartbeat matched up with the movement of the days in the calendar.

After a few Saturdays into the courtship, the decision was made. Gabi was speechless. Not only from the surprise but because there was no other choice presented to her. Fero and Clara declared their love for each other during a tiny ceremony on a Saturday afternoon.

Initially, the couple settled into Fero's bedroom in the family house with the strong desire to move their union out there at the first opportunity presented. After six months of saving they were ready to conquer the world by themselves.

Fero visited his sister at least three times a week and shared the dinner with her that she cooked, to ease her solitude. Deep down he hoped a partner for her. Now that he was out of the house and didn't need any kind of looking after, it would have been a well-desired event however against all logics Gabi only wanted Fero's presence, as if they were destined to be together forever. Fero's trick, to gradually reduce his visits, didn't work at all, for Gabi switched her pleading to blackmail that her brother couldn't take.

On the other hand at home, Clara felt more and more lonely. Fero was caught between the two most important women in his life. Gabi cooked his favourite dishes and offered a bit of consistency. Nevertheless, she kept on talking against Clara, trying to convince Fero that life was much better while they were taking it together. And there was his wife he loved and who was carrying their promise of future, the fruit of their relationship. Their son, Peter was born on an autumn afternoon.

The welcomed addition to the family didn't ease the situation within the emotional triangle. Clara kept busy looking after the new-born

however Fero was struggling to keep up with events.

After much consideration, one day he came up with the best solution, as far as he was concerned and moved back to the family house with his wife and Peter, with a secret hope that Gabi would get fed up with the crowd and release them. Although Clara did like the idea she understood that the situation needed drastic changes. From this moment on, Clara was a free target, for Gabi was competing for Fero's attention all the time. She was strong, Clara was weak. Two years later the latter developed breast cancer pushed by the subconscious attention-seeking. The event managed to override Fero's guilt towards his sister. It was a temporary victory for Clara however a year later she gave up the fight and succumbed to the illness leaving Fero at Gabi's mercy.

The sad event of Clara's departure brought the three of them even closer. There it was, the family Gabi secretly longed for but had never taken steps to achieve. Her brother, as the prominent male, herself as the prominent female and the boy. Fero totally succumbed to

the will-power of his sister, while Peter was growing up almost unnoticed and mostly unattended.

The year into this idyllic picture, the convenience of living with his sister faded. Fero became restless and he decided to look for a new partner. He didn't need to look far, he found one at his workplace in the form of Ana. She wasn't an amazingly attractive woman but sweet and emotional with a melancholic side effect of the relationship with her mother.

It was enough for Fero to fall in love again. The story continued from the beginning.

The new couple started their married life in a small apartment not very far away from the house, leaving Peter in Gabi's care. The boy became the substitution of his father. In the beginning, it seemed that everything was well. Gabi loosened her grip on her brother and Fero chose to go home to Ana after work. Unfortunately, harmony wasn't Gabi's strong suit. Now that the male energy was there to care for, she missed the everyday excitement of battling and the overwhelming victory of winning. In one word, she longed for events happening to her.

In Peter's case, his only somewhat acting parent was his aunt. Fero tried to spend most of his free time with his new family, feeling guilty about his last attempt and neglected his son in the process. Without real male guidance Peter grew up being obstinate but lazy, without aim and purpose, as if the world should pay for his up-keeping. He was not shy to manipulate his father into paying for his changing entertainment habits.

It wasn't long when life caught up with the entangled family once again. Ana became pregnant and nine months later there was Ketu, the baby girl she so much longed for.

Ketu was a blond and blue-eyed joyous baby, clever and curious, eager to learn.

Fero was content. He had a nice little home with a caring wife and a daughter.

Now that Ketu, the addition to the extended family became a fulltime member, Gabi seized the opportunity to place demands on her brother yet again. Her excuse was the boy, Peter most of the time and Fero's guilt was an easy target. Being a man he couldn't focus on two shells at the same time. Ana loved Fero,

supported his relationship with Peter and consequently with his sister. However her own grab on life was loose. She stayed at home with Ketu all day, cooked dinner for the family that more often than not, was consumed without Fero. She felt neglected and insecure. Since she didn't want to appear needy and felt remorseful about Peter growing up without his father, she kept her feeling to herself.

Seemingly not having any competition, Gabi launched into a blast again. Ana sensed the change in Fero's attitude and demands for her husband took a more aggressive turn. Replying to it, Gabi's blackmailing tactics changed to bring in more results. As a real master of manipulation, she offered refuge to her brother from the chaotic family life and desperate pleas of his wife.

As years passed, the heat of the two fire grew unbearable for Fero. Although it was equally burning, he chose Gabi's doting attitude and filed for divorce. What he assumed to be a solution became his greatest nightmare. In one nest there was his enticing sister and his son, while in the other one, there was his ex-wife with his daughter. His strength wasn't enough



to keep up with both. Ana felt lonely and betrayed all the time, while Ketu tried to live up to all the imagined expectations to generate some attention for herself. In this desperate situation, Ana gave in to the end's calling. After a few unsuccessful suicide attempts, Fero put his feet down and took Ketu under his wings. However, these wings grew from Gabi's shoulders and fuelled Ana's desperation. After two years of struggling, Ana finally had enough courage to say farewell to earthly existence.

The balance in the family nucleus altered drastically. Now, there were Gabi and Fero, representing the so-called grownups and Peter with Ketu completing the children's camp.

Ketu had this lonely feeling with her all the time. Peter resented her for being the newcomer, taking the attention of his father, Gabi saw the female competition in her and Fero didn't really know what to do with his daughter. She had a strong thought that everybody was abandoning her for not being worthy of living.

Peter grew up fast. He found a girl he married and had a male offspring, who proudly

continued with the family tradition of not having a profession and a steady work. The concept was helped by his parents' untimely divorce, when Peter brunched back to the old family compound, yet again.

The house became crowded by the four single inhabitants. Peter needed a bachelor's corner, therefore they converted one room into an ensuite with private entrance and the three of them ended up with two rooms; one of which was occupied by Fero and the other one served as the sleeping quarter for Gabi and Ketu.

Ketu was an insecure girl with a lot of issues in her mind. Since there was nobody to help, she spent most of her time in the small garden, planting flowers and taking care of bushes and trees. Vegetation became her loyal friend who showed appreciation for her work. The love of plants stayed with her and when the time arrived she took up the subject in her studies and became a professional gardener.

Ketu didn't have the courage to leave the house. Although she inherited the small apartment they lived with Ana, the idea of moving over there totally escaped her.

The household, as always, was run by Gabi, keeping everything under her willpower. She had never entered into any kind of relationship with a man. As she explained, she devoted herself to her brother and his failing attempts to find happiness, although Fero quietened down by time. Peter, without having a steady income, he relied upon the support of his father and aunt.

For Ketu, apart from the garden, there was not much to do around the house. She grew into a hardworking, witty and fun person, with many friends however seldom left the house. The idea of a relationship entered her mind but she had hardship with the materialisation process. The idea of being abandoned was chiselled into her mind and always burst into tears when her mother was mentioned.

## **11.**

“Lo siento mucho, aquí señoritas cinco mojitos!” announced the waiter smiling.

“At last!” said Zhina.

“I’ve totally forgotten about them”, laughed

Lucy. "Let's see, if they can make a good mojito!"

"Well, they should, it comes from here!" added Zhina.

"Ask him to bring me something else please Zeta!" interrupted Clarisse.

"Sure? The sun is almost up! We've waited for hours to have this drink. Would you just try it?"

"All right, what can I do?" Clarisse said and took a big sip of the drink. All eyes were on her face. She swallowed it slowly and went for another one.

"Absolutely divine!" she announced smiling. "I am in love with mint!"

At the far end of the long beach, the Sun entered the Caribbean country. He emerged from the sea, like Aphrodite, majestically showing every possible hue of red and orange. With the illumination, the mystery of the night disappeared and only the carcasses showed the evidence of a great time. The heat and light forced people to give up and get on with life.

"Wow, we are in Cuba! Cheers!" announced Zeta with great enthusiasm.

They emptied their glass and started walking towards their quarters in silence.

### **Other books from the author:**

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- **Emotion the Machinery of Life** – The Missing Factors of Happy Relationships
- **Heavenly nourishment** – Conscious eating in 7 steps
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