

# The Chosen One

Three months have passed since the last chapter. Professor Van den Brook is now relocated as head of the CERN's experimental laboratory in the Marianas sector, but things are not exactly going smoothly...

**\*Ring! Ring! [SECURE COMMUNICATION]** "Van den Brook!"

"Hello Anton, it's me!"

"Hello Sarah, Uh! I don't know exactly what day or time it is for you."

"We're still yesterday evening [amused laugh]. So, how are you doing at the lab?"

"Not too well. First, there is the hindrance of carrying out almost all the production operations by remote control, with the exception of the preparations that we make at the marine housing co-operative (the lab premises occupy only a very small part of it). Moreover, I am afraid that there is discontent among the staff. I presume that some people must consider that I was preselected into the senior position, *de facto* depriving some people of a promotion.

Moreover, I have some difficulty getting used to this environment, even if there are all the amenities required in the residential area (three major banks, various restaurants and services, cinemas, etc.). Whenever there is bad weather, they submerge the habitat, which isn't to my liking. In addition, I sometimes have nightmares involving this hologram I told you about, at the origin of my troubles with *Tsien*. I intend to take advantage of the weekend to go for a walk on land in the island of Guam. It is not far by chopper and this should help me to steer out of this bad mood ..."

"Oh! I see. As far as the disgruntled are concerned, just go, and tell them from me that there will be promotions for everyone with reassignment possibilities once we get results (especially if they are good). I am convinced that we will get there, the theory is very well substantiated."

"With regard to your adjustment problems, it's a good idea to get a bit of fresh air, but don't go away for more than a day or two, given the possible negative effect on staff morale. As for the rest, I'm not going to Sigmund you. Take care of yourself and let me know you when you get back or earlier if there's any news."

"Thanks Sarah! We'll talk again soon." [SECURE SESSION END]

[A few days later the professor, having duly whipped his troops according to Sarah's suggestion, takes advantage of the weekend to escape two days in Guam where he plans to play tourist on dry land, hoping this will dispel his discomfort as a stranger to life in an underwater settlement.]

"Well, he says to himself, I must obviously admit that I don't have sea legs..." Shortly after leaving the helipad, he goes for a walk in a coastal town and soon notices a tourist information kiosk extolling the benefits of a moderate ascent crowned by the magnificent view that one has from *Puntan Dos Amantes* where, according to legend, a young couple trapped in an impossible love situation due to class differences had committed suicide rather than giving up their mutual feeling.



There, he thought, a physical effort should put me in a better shape, while oxygenating my lungs. In addition, there will probably be the usual tourist trap where I can have a drink and buy some souvenirs. Let's go!

About 40 minutes later, he arrives at the indicated spot and, catching his breath, leans on a railing and lets his gaze wander over the tropical vegetation and the seashore below, while meditating vaguely on his own situation. Still slightly lost in his thoughts, he sees from afar what he takes initially for yet another tourist in tropical clothing; he completely ignores him until the latter, coming closer, suddenly says:

"Good morning professor, I hope you are enjoying the romantic quality of this place!"

Taken aback, the professor suddenly recognizes the bearded, leering face of Mr. Singh, the head of the Special Security Services who had interviewed him before he left headquarters.

"Why, it's you, he said, what the hell are you doing on this lost piece of land in the middle of nowhere? I thought you were still at headquarters."

"I do my job, of course," he replied. It just so happens that the new president is a *Chamorro* (native inhabitants of Guam). He comes here from time to time to immerse himself in his beloved homeland. Funny, isn't it how small the world is. He calls himself Inayik by his first name, which roughly translates as The Chosen One. Surprisingly, he wants to see you: so, I was asked to invite you to come and meet him. What's more, I didn't even have to go to the Underwater Housing Cooperative... Impressive! I must admit that I underestimated you upon our initial interview."

"You're on the wrong track, if you think I've planned this whole thing, says the professor. I had no way of knowing that the Eleven were going to choose him for the job, nor his identity or place of birth. I presume that he took the trouble to read his files and that his interest in me is mere curiosity. But let's go, since I obviously have no choice..."

"We shall see, professor, we shall see..."

A little annoyed, but stung by curiosity due to this unexpected turn of events, the professor follows Mr. Singh who takes him back to the helipad in an old poorly looking convertible car, but under the hood of which one feels a powerful and well-honed engine purring like a satisfied cat.

Entering a shabby hangar, the vehicle comes to a halt near a military helicopter that has obviously had better days but seems ready to take off. the hangar door closes automatically, and Singh gestures the professor aboard, then activates the remote opening of the roof and starts the engine.

"This type of craft will not attract any attention at all, he says, it is rather commonplace on this island. The president's residence is not too far away, so fasten your seatbelt and enjoy the aerial view..."

[TAKEOFF]

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