

Star Child

by Kacy Gilbert

“Are you ever gonna jump in or just gonna play with that thing all evening?”, Rosy has been shooting complaints at Gil for the last half hour. She knew they only had so many baby-free minutes left before her twin sister, Violet got tired of babysitting and would go home.

Gil on the other hand, the two-week experienced Father of triplet daughters knew he only had so many minutes left to practice his guitar before the bottle and diaper juggling fiasco began once more. His fingertips were on fire, as he was only a two-week old guitarist as well. “Give me a sec, hun...”, he was already on his third request for a second. “I’ve almost got this down...”. He did not almost have it down.

“And that clicking noise is so annoying...please Gil, just get in the pool!”, Rosy whined before tossing back onto the pool surface, floating lazily. After a few more annoying metronome-filled minutes passed by, she sat up briskly and swam to the edge of the pool once more. “Gil...Gil...”, she raised her voice, “Gil!”.

Enlivened from a frustrated stupor, Gil shouted back, “What?! What hun??”

“Really?”, upset that he had yelled, Rosy responded ornately, “...nothing.”

“Come on...”, Gil pleaded, “What is it, Rosy?”

She gave him a slightly snobbish eye and then continued to back stroke.

“Look I’m putting it away...”, Gil said setting the guitar down lightly. “...okay...okay. I’m getting in—“

“Hey sis!”, Violet called out from the back door, “We gotta run! The twins have school tomorrow. Babies are all asleep.”

Rosy looked at Gil — who’d just gotten his feet wet — and laughed out maniacally, rich with sarcasm. “Okay, look.”, she pointed up towards the young night sky, “I thought you said the meteor shower was next week?”

“That’s because it is...”, his words trailed off as he snapped up his collar hung glasses and gazed up at the streaking lights across the dark sky. Gil was an astrologist and saw to it that his career would not pause just because he was on paternal leave. He’d done a marvelous job of recording and predicting all astronomical events of the past three weeks from the comfort of his in-home, attic-filling observatory.

Gil rushed inside, brushing shoulders with his sister-in-law who stood in the doorway bewildered. “Wow, okay...”, she retorted, “See you next time too!”

“Don’t mind him, you know how he gets about this kinda stuff...”, Rosy said. “Thanks again! I definitely needed a break.”

“Oh no worries, sis, I totally understand.”, Violet handed her sister a towel as they stepped inside, “I thought the twins were rough, It’s whole nother ball game with three...”



“No way...”, Gil chuckled to himself as he swiveled the massive telescope around. He began noting that the meteor storm was originating from the constellation Perseus the Hero, when a loud BANG broke his train of thought. The explosion seemed to suck the air out of the attic.

Glass shattered, car alarms blared, the security system and fire alarm began to sound off; in addition the triplets erupted into a crying frenzy, right along with Rosy's scream. He instinctively bolted down the attic stairs to the nursery — luckily the gaping hole in the side of their house sat opposite to the babies' room.

Rosy was doing her best to console the infants when he arrived, tears of confusion in her eyes as well. "What was that Gil?"

"I don't know, I'll be right back!! Don't move!", They were all safe, only afraid and confused. So was he. Gil dashed through the house back to the large hole that was now in place of one of their walls. The backyard was a literal ground zero, for what Gil imagined a bomb site looked like. What used to be the pool was nothing more than a few pieces of wet rubble, mud and fire. He could feel the heat coming from the large space rock even as he was still about 15-feet from it. "Oh. My. God.". Gil felt an odd combination of excitement, fear, confusion and intrigue. He couldn't quite place the smell either; outside of the burning debris, there was a strange odor that dominated his nostrils, over the charred remains of his pool yard.

The heat was becoming unbearable as he approached, about five-feet away from the asteroid he had to stop and just circle the gift from space for a full view.

Had it not been for the incessant buzz murmuring from the cosmic boulder; or the chaotic, blares of houses and cars in distress surrounding him, Gil may've heard the neighbors asking if he was okay.

As he made a full lap of observing the asteroid it dawned on him that he needed to not only grab his phone to record this, but also the Geiger counter he kept in the "in case of asteroid"-drawer of his office. Suddenly, as he turned away and back towards the house a wave of energy pulsed from the asteroid knocking him to the ground; in addition to knocking out all of the lights, alarms, cellphones and any other electronic equipment in a ten-mile radius.

Gil couldn't believe his eyes when he looked up from the ground. Everything he saw was frozen, the dust and rocks that'd flung up when he was tossed to the ground were suspended mid-air. His neighbor, Mr. Larry, was defying gravity — remaining about three feet from the ground after leaping the fence to help. The entire world around him seemed to have just paused. Well everything from his world had, at least.

A loud hissing started up from the asteroid. Gil scrambled to his feet to investigate. The heat from the rock had miraculously all but dissipated as he closed in on it. Gil was just barely able to place one foot in front of the other as he rounded the sphere to get a view of whatever was causing the pressurizing hiss.

"Gil Anderson...", a robotic voice called out his name. The holographic projection appeared as it repeated, "Gil Anderson..."

Gil hesitated, looking around for the joke to be over. Nothing moved except the sliding face of the asteroid and the holographic image of a floating head. The being in the hologram had two rows of three eyes, that ran horizontally across its forehead. It had what Gil would describe later in his journal as, "tentacles coming from its mouthless chin". Its ears were larger than its head and flowered.

"Gil Anderson?...", the floating head called again, this time turning to face him with its six eyes.

Fear-stricken, Gil answered, "Yes....?"

“Fear not...”, the head replied, “You have been chosen for a task of galactic importance...”

Gil was at a loss for words, he would later write that he responded with, “Okay.” But in reality his mouth merely gaped open, allowing a drip of drool to escape it even.

“Please listen closely...”

Gil nodded absent mindedly.

“My name is ____”. Gil would not be able to repeat or transcribe the sounds that escaped the holographic creatures mouth when it told him it’s name. But it was from that point forever etched into his mind. “I am from the planet your people call Mars. We have remained hidden and concealed, but are very aware of the efforts you are making to study and eventually inhabit our home...”

Gil was utterly dumbfounded.

“That cannot be accepted, until we understand the nature and intentions of your kind.”

“Woow...”, Gil replied with what in his journal would be the only accurate recording of his dialogue with the Martian.

“You Mr. Anderson have been chosen to raise my son, I too am a scientist. We have been watching you and feel that if my child were to be safely protected and cared for by yourself and family we will reveal ourselves to Earthlings in due time. Given the other chosen humans are also able to pass their test.”

With that the asteroid opened to reveal a small infant; the child was not crying — as Gil would later note how he, “...would assume any infant who was inside of an asteroid would be crying.” — and to his surprise only had two eyes, a tentacleless mouth, regular baby ears, a nose, ten fingers and ten toes. It appeared to be a human baby.

“We have encoded a human camouflage into my child’s tracking chip; we will constantly monitor his mood and health over the next 16 years. Given your and your counterparts successes we will then return and reveal our existence to your planet. Do you have any questions?”

Gil had plenty of questions that went unsaid but would later appear in his journal entry. He responded with a still open mouthed gaze and head nod.

As if by some form of magic the physical world outside of Mr. Larry— who still remained three feet above Gil’s yard — began to reassemble itself.



Gil walked slowly with the Martian baby in his arms, towards his daughters’ nursery.

“Will you give me a hand?!”, he heard Rosy yell out as he approached the door of the nursery. “I’m out numbered here! Three to one!!”

“Make that four.”