Disbelief - Angel Colony

Recollections of the reaction to the disclosures on Earth.

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Is it just human nature, that every discovery has to be questioned and subjected to demands for proof? In particular, why is it that the first reaction to the revelation of power, such as realized psionic potential, is the suspicion of fraud? My gut feeling is that people are generally afraid of such potential. That is what I felt when I was stood up alone in front of the world to make a claim that sounds impossible to a latent mind. On the spot, I was asked for proof. I had to establish some credentials with the public, so I had to demonstrate and define some of my abilities. Thus, my carefully guarded existence was traded to win support for an accelerated space colonization and militarization effort. I know *why* they did it. One, they *needed* to disclose the existence of active psionics to the public; our population was growing too fast for the government to hide. Two, the threat of alien invasion, while providing the people something to think about *besides* us, was something the government discovered it could not hide as other exploratory missions went missing. Three, I *was* the closest thing to an eye-witness available to offer testimonial support for that government announcement.

Those are facts and I cannot dispute them.

When these facts combined to make me a public figure, I found I could not simply walk away once the bomb had been dropped. I don’t think a day passed before the first person screamed “hoax!”. What the government wanted was unbelievably expensive, and they had needed popular support. So, proving my veracity had quickly become an occupation. There was only one way to erase all doubt in the public mind in a time when everyone knew that nothing one saw on television could be taken for granted. No, to allay the doubts and suspicions of unbelievers I had to go out and demonstrate my abilities live, and these demonstrations had to hit people in the gut.

I went on a lecture circuit, but the crowds I spoke to rivaled the audiences of the most popular rock stars. Word went out and my fame grew. I am sure that some bloody opportunist made a fortune managing my tours. I flew for them, I teleported among them in the crowd and dragged some of them up on stage in the same way. I whispered the name of each person in the crowd in their own ear. I lifted them up out of their seats, tons of people hovering twenty feet in the air without being dropped. I even healed the crippled and cured the ill. I scared the hell out of people and they loved it. I had fans. I had worshippers! I was called a goddess and I was damned as a demon. But without a doubt, I was believed. No one who felt my touch would disbelieve me if I said I witnessed the death of my mother at some alien’s hands in the unimaginable depths of space.

I knew from the beginning that I was doing untold damage with these demonstrations, and it came home hard when I was asked to prove too much. I stood before a crowd in an ampitheatre in the San Francisco East Bay when I heard that particular challenge amidst a sea of clamoring voices. I stopped, and when I spoke everyone heard me.

“No,” I declared, “I will *not* read your mind.” At the tone in my voice, the audience fell eerily silent. I had not refused a request, and in their minds I had answered a million times to the quesiton *what am I thinking?*  As they stared at me in confusion I suddenly realized that it was not enough for them to *belive*. I wanted them to *understand.* “Telepathy is more intimate than sex,” I proclaimed. “I *am* a minor, thank you.” That caught their attention. A few of them even laughed at my weak joke. But they were still confused, so I explained, “There is a difference between *reading* a mind and simply *overlapping* it.

“When minds overlap they can see, hear and feel each other. It is no more obscene or intimate than staring at a peron in public. Surface thoughts are usually clothed in a person’s illusions—the way a person consciously perceives himself or herself. But reading a person’s mind against their will is nothing less than *rape*,” I paused for emphasis, staring several of them in the eyes, “and the victim is as much a participant in that act as they would be in any *physical* rape. Mind rape is usually only committed by a *latent* psionic, and usually the victim is an active. Helpless as they are invaded,” I pressed the point, “*penetrated* painfully and humiliatingly. Once you have been a victim of that kind of abuse, or had a loved one torn open and mutilated, I assure you that you are appalled at the very thought of committing such an act yourself. In general, actives are far less tolerant of mind rapists than society at large is of body rapists.”

I was poised above them, right at the edge of the stage. I realized that I had crossed the line between lecturing and preaching. My words had gained a divine fury as I drove my point home. I saw myself through the eyes of the crowd and what I saw scared me. I have an inborn power which enables me to shift a star in its course. The power that I was acquiring through my fame frightened me more, as I realized that, instead of enlightening the crowd, my words had been heard as *gospel*. I held out my mind and sipped their adulation, their awe, and I tasted ecstacy, love, terror, devotion.

I recoiled. I did not want this! I could not control this! I stared back at the mob wondering if there was anyway to abort what had already been fertilized. What had I done wrong? I composed myself and addressed the crowd, “Uh, look, hey people this is getting way too serious. I’m going to take a short break. When I get back, I’m not going to do any more stunts. I’m just going to try to answer some of your quesitons. What good does it do you to believe in psionics if you don't understand it, eh?” I smiled.

Then I beat a hasty retreat. This was the first time I had confronted it, but now that I’d seen it for myself, I realized many things. I had to stop and examine it. I had asked myself why it was so hard for people to believe. Was it really possible that I had it wrong? I thought it over and took it a bit further. I realzed that it really wasn’t all that hard for people to believe. The real quesiton was: Why do people need proof? I reflected on some of the many individuals I had touched. They do believe, I realized. They believe so much that they don’t know what to *really* believe in. I almost had it. I thought about what I had just retreated from. They want to belive, but the fact is that they don’t understand. “Oh, my god!” I gasped as it hit me. I knew what I had done wrong. I looked back at the crowd from off-stage and whispered.

“People want proof so they can be free to believe without having to understand what they believe in!” I was simply freeing people from the need to think for themselves! As I realized it I felt sick. I felt damned.

As our ships fell into orbit around Ajea, ironically the third world from the blue-white sun Ao, a dialogue began between the Ajean and myself, as I was stuck as the principal of contact. I tried to convey the desperation of our situation to the Ajean.

Expressing sympathy for our plight, the Ajeans quickly negotiated a quarantined settlement on their world. We were invited to settle the achingly beautiful world in a carefully arranged isolation from the native establishments. We were told to expect an odd number of years of strictly limited contact between our two cultures. We were also warned against penetrating the deep lush wilds bordering our reservation, which had a disturbing, perhaps even threatening sound to the majority of the colonists. As we settled in we were joined by natives who come to attend to the colony.

A distressing number of questions had to go unanswered as a frantic effort was made to accommodate an exodus from our dying ships to the haven of angel colony

Over the next few Ajean years, a cautious and curious Ajean population attends to and communicates solely through fifty-one Ajean representatives · the parity of their number to that of active class three’s in the colony and in whom their native guides invested the greatest part of their attention, did not escape the colonists’ notice.

I tried tirelessly to understand the Ajeans. I was caught between my personal and practical curiosity regarding our new home and its indigenous people, and my awareness of very dangerous unease among the psi blind colonists that daily threatened erupt into something darker and more primal. In quiet moments, throughout our acclimatization of the colony to Ajea, I probed my associate, the same Ajean from that first encounter. Gradually, I began to understand the world and the people we had asked to become a part of. I found myself poised on a very thin and deadly line between the known and the unknown, unable to resist probing the paradox of these exotically human aliens.

Hard answers were hard to come by, but I learned a lot—as did many of the other Ajean paired actives—just by looking for the answers that expressed themselves in our hosts and in our hosts’ world, language and culture. Finally, when the representative pairs had reached a certain level of understanding, we, the fifty-one actives, were invited to the homes of our associated Ajean