

## CHAPTER FOUR    YOURI AND SNUG

Late afternoon. Youri, fast asleep, has taken over the Admiral's favorite Library chair. Julian and Samuel play backgammon. Samuel - "No matter how well you think you play, luck is luck."

Asha, Shilli and Emilie walk in together. Emilie, holding up a small bag, "For you, Samuel." Samuel opens it to find a pair of eyeglasses, their plastic lenses filled with small holes. "What is *this*?" Emilie - "They're Pinholes. Try them on and wait a few seconds." Taking off his glasses, Samuel puts on the Pinholes, looking around the room. "I can see perfectly! How's that possible?" Emilie - "Our eyes are muscles, they're part of our brain. We never exercise them. Wearing these every day exercises your eyes." Samuel - "Thanks, Emilie"

Samuel notices that both Shilli and Emilie have bandages on their arms. Jokingly, "What happened to you, get in a fight?" Emilie - "I have thin skin, bruise easily." Shilli holds out his left arm, turning over his hand. "The car door attacked me, doctor said it'll leave a scar." Samuel- "I always thought it was odd how the skin of a scar is much smoother than it was before."

"Samuel - "Anyone for a farewell round of Monopoly?" The game is in full gear when the yelling and laughter starts. "Go to Jail, Go directly to Jail, Do not pass Go, Do not collect two hundred dollars!" Youri wakes up and walks to the game table.

When Snug enters the room, carrying a Mourning Dove in his mouth, it's clear something is about to happen. With wings fanning over both sides of his face, Snug looks as if he's attending a Venetian Masked Ball. Julian begins putting the game board and pieces away. The Dove flies to the game table. "I am Mal'akh."

Asha - "Each of us had the same dream. How did you do that?" Mal'akh - Many humans believe that unless it is spoken or written a thought doesn't have meaning. Thoughts have meaning by our thinking them. There're many different ways to communicate. In the natural world, we use color, sound, design, echo, and others you might not understand. Learn to listen.

For the next hour, Youri, Snug and Mal'akh explained all they knew about communication.

Shilli - "Hmmm...social media versus telepathy." Snug - "Close your eyes. Sit quietly and concentrate. Think about the Admiral. Picture him." Suddenly, the door opens. The Admiral - "Is everything all right in here?" Everyone rolls their eyes. "Everything's fine!"

The Admiral - "Heard you gave each other nicknames." Shilli puts his hand in front of his mouth. "Shhh." The Admiral is taken aback. Shilli laughs. "That's my nickname, "Shhh." Shilli points to Julian. "May I introduce "Cool?" Julian nods to the Admiral. Emilie walks over, extending her hand. "How do you do. I'm Shy." The Admiral replies. "A pleasure to meet you, Shy." They both smile.

The Admiral - "I'm going to miss you; you're all true blue." As the Admiral turns to leave, he changes his mind and turns back. "Do any of you know the word "indigenous?" Julian answers. "Something that's native to a certain place, but I'm not sure." The Admiral - "When you get home, find out about the indigenous people where you live. You might be surprised. See ya later. Dinner's in a half hour."

The dining room is full and noisy. As Emilie, Shilli and Julian come in from the kitchen carrying a large tray and singing, everyone joins in. "Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday dear Memo, Happy Birthday to you!" Asha is surprised and smiling. The cake, shaped like a giant rose, has a small flag in the center, *Happy Birthday Memo* in pink icing. Everyone shouts "Make a wish!" Asha stands up, reflects for a few seconds, then blows out the thirteen candles. The kids gather round for a group hug, then start singing again. "Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday dear India, Happy Birthday to you." The Admiral walks over - "Your birthday's on India's Independence day? What a bobby dazzler!" Asha's mother whispers. "Why are they calling you Memo?" "We gave each other nicknames. Mine's "Memo" for memory, observation." Shilli puts a small box in front of Asha. "This is for you - we each have one."

In the middle of the night, the lobby is quiet. The Admiral, holding a book, is nodding off. The head of housekeeping walks to the front desk. "Dining room and Library are spic n'span." The Admiral - "Ace! Thanks."

Continuing to read, the Admiral hears something. Crossing the lobby, he opens the Library door. Julian is sitting at the piano playing The Moonlight Sonata. That this melody evokes a memory for the Admiral shows immediately on his face. He is struggling to hold back tears. After listening for a few minutes, he quietly closes the door. When Julian leaves the Library, the Admiral waves. "Didn't know you could play." "It's the only thing I play. It reminds me of something, someplace, someone, but I can't remember." Admiral - "G'night."