

# Earths in Space

## Vol. 1: Where Are the Little Green Men?

By Daniel Sherrier

### **TEASER**

The forest was just like any old forest, until an archer in a spacesuit appeared.

The individual transitioned from invisible to transparent to solid in half a second. No one was around to witness this marvel—which was a shame; she was the only archer in a spacesuit this world had ever seen.

She immediately detected the abundance of oxygen and popped her helmet open, revealing to absolutely no one a woman of effortless beauty. The redhead's ponytail hung down her back, and her pretty smile exuded infectious whimsy, if only there was anyone around to be infected.

Amena Wharry simply had to view this strange new world through her own eyes. But much to her disappointment, it appeared not the slightest bit strange. It was a forest, no different than any she could find back home.

This wouldn't do.

She hopped several times, hopeful, but no, the ground was just a ground. Utterly ordinary. Ho-hum.

The air tasted like air, no matter how far out she stuck her tongue. The plants, regrettably, emitted only the usual plant-like odors, no matter how closely she held her nose.

However unremarkable this world appeared, it could not steal from her two glorious facts: This was an alien world, and she was the first person from Earth to step foot on it.

It was so exciting! It merited a lifetime supply of exclamation marks!

This moment—this very moment—would go down in history. Granted, hardly anyone knew she was there right now, but historians had plenty of time to catch up.

She needed to say the right thing—precisely the right inspiring statement that

future generations would remember, would want to remember and quote over and over again. This needed to be perfect. She needed to think...

"I hope everyone realizes it's really difficult to come up with inspirational profundity when you all keep chattering away in my ear," she said softly into her tiny, camouflaged throat mic. "And there you have it, kids. The first words spoken by mankind on an alien planet."

Amena slipped off the superfluous spacesuit.

"Yes, Gilmore," she said. "I know I should've planned out a little speech ahead of time. Forgive me for not being as perfect as you." She sighed, but couldn't resist a smirk. "And I appreciate your forgiveness. Okay, take the suit back, please. Sela, nice work—your sensors were accurate. We can breathe here."

She set the suit and helmet on the ground, and it swiftly faded from solid, to transparent, to invisible. Good riddance. Her jeans and T-shirt were so much more comfortable. Amena reclaimed her bow and quiver, and she checked to make sure her shiny new weapon remained in its holster. It did, so she stepped forth, deeper into the woods.

Amena stared up through the towering treetops. Clear blue sky. Couldn't it at least have been green, or red, or turquoise, or anything other than that familiar shade of blue?

The voices in her ear never stopped. "Profundity is too a word. A delightful word. Tell them, Mariana," she whispered, scoping the area for signs of non-plant life. There were none. "Thank you. And even if it wasn't, it would be now—part of a future famous quote and all. Or at the very least, a future trivia game answer."

She studied a thick tree trunk, searching for any abnormalities. "It's just plant life so far," Amena told them. "Plant life that seems boringly familiar. I was hoping they might talk or walk or at the very least look psychedelic. But they're just the usual trees and grass and same old, same old, same old."

She knelt down to scoop up a handful of soft dirt. Also normal. Bah!

"Ballard, the discussion is over. It ended. I'm already here, so it's moot, so why are you still trying to discuss? This first time, we've got no idea what to expect, so I'm only risking me. We'll be sure to risk you later. I promise," she said. "It will be my

pleasure.”

Amena crept forward, pulling an arrow into her bow—not one of the special ones, just a regular arrow to match the utterly regular setting. Despite this precaution, she was optimistic. This was a whole other planet, after all, entirely new to her. It couldn’t let her down, right?

“Place your bets, boys and girls,” she said, with an intrigued grin plastered across her face. “What do you think the aliens are going to look like?”

Her grin was replaced by a wince, followed by a mental shower.

“Ew, Jem! They’re a different species. Why would your mind even go there? Ew.”

Rustling leaves drew her attention. This was it. Something had to be doing the rustling. Definitely something living. Possibly something sentient.

“Quiet. I think one’s near. Sela, your translator better work,” she said even softer, tapping a spot behind her ear and one on her neck to activate the micro implants.

“Yeah, I know it will.” She had to add, “Quiet, Gilmore.”

This was it! New life was right around the corner! New to her, anyway.

Amena pointed her arrow to the ground as she approached an especially rotund tree. She heard the crunching of footsteps on the other side. Those feet could have belonged to anything. Anything from a four-eyed little green man, to a creature composed mostly of eyes, to a creature composed entirely of feet, to...

...a teenage girl?

A completely human teenage girl clad in the blandest colors and a long, old-fashioned skirt?

“Who are you talking to?” the girl asked, looking around for anyone else.

Her voice echoed in Amena’s head due to the translator, which was unexpected, but not the biggest concern right now.

“You look like me?” Amena said. “Didn’t expect you’d look like me. What are the odds of that?”

“We look nothing alike,” the plump brunette said.

“I just meant, what species do you call yourself?”

“Uh...human?”

“You’re human, and you’re here, on this world? What do you call this world?”

The girl double-checked but still couldn't find any hidden audience waiting to tease her. "Is this a trick question...?"

"Just a regular old question," Amena said, quickly but calmly. "Uncommon, I understand that, yes, but please indulge me."

"Earth."

Must have been the translator interpreting the girl's words into something Amena would recognize. "Say that again, please," she said, tapping behind her ear to shut off the translator. She wanted to hear how this girl sounded for real.

The girl said slowly and clearly, with diminishing patience, "I'm a human on Earth, like there usually are a lot of humans on Earth."

"You—You speak English?"

The girl blinked. "Are you feeling alright?"