

CHAPTER 6 **Psychic Training**

When Ali told Eleanora that she had some experience engaging in telepathic communication with her aunt Elma, and that she believed we all can develop our telepathic skills with training and mental exercise, Eleanora was encouraged about Ali's potential to become psychic. Some scientists on Earth thought for a couple of centuries that the next great Frontier would be in developing what was considered the vast untapped resources of the human mind, and many non-scientists were inspired by Yoda in "Star Wars," as well as real world psychics. However, instead of putting energy and resources into developing man's psychic potential, Earth's resources went into developing smarter and smarter devices to substitute for human mental and physical strength so that Earthlings could run their world without lifting a finger, so to speak, mentally or physically. Ali wondered sometimes if Earthlings were in fact retarding more than psychic potential.

Eleanora started with classic exercises like those from classes in Intuitive Linking that Ali had attended, offered by psychics on Earth. The exercises in Eleanora's class included discovering Eleanora's aura (and for homework discovering the auras of her housemates), balancing her own chakra and describing first a hidden object like a box or ball, and then a photo on a device she held with her eyes closed. She even astral traveled to the Girls' School and was able to describe the artwork on the walls. Ali's psychic intuition was strong, a good sign, but not the same as telepathic communication.

Eleanora explained that people receive information telepathically much like they receive spoken language. "Some people are auditory; they hear the words; others are visual, they may see words as written or they may see what is being described, and others are kinesthetic; they feel what is being described on their skin or from the emotional content of the situation. There are also differences in thinking styles, which some people relate to gender and/or culture."

"You seem to use linear logic in your reasoning; one idea leads to the next without veering off topic and you are often very analytical," Eleanora told Ali.

"Actually, more male than female and very American," Ali thought.

"Interesting," Eleanora responded. "So, you think your thinking is linear because you come from a male dominated culture. But in conversation, and when you tell stories, you often wander off topic and then circle back to the central point of the discussion."

"We've been much less male dominated for the last century, Ali said, "but we still tend to be linear because of the dominance of science and engineering. As for me personally, spinning off in another direction is a personality trait."

"Your non-linear communication style could result in some misunderstandings in this culture, especially telepathically. But you may be able to use that attribute to your advantage in hiding your thoughts."

Ali was well aware that, in the US, where time is money, not getting to the point quickly is seen as wasteful. In a litigious society like the US, there is little reliance on context and a strong need to select accurate words and phrases, especially in contracts. However, in psychology class, she learned that making a point indirectly, through a story, often avoids sounding like you are giving criticism or advice and prevents the listener from becoming defensive. *But Eleanora's point is well taken. Circular communication can make me appear to be disorganized, or low in intelligence, or like I'm not following the point of the discussion.*

"Do you think in stories like you talk in stories?" Eleanora asked.

"Sometimes," Ali answered. "Does that mean I am going to confuse people who are listening to my thinking?"

"Do you want to confuse people?" Eleanora asked.

Interesting question. "Sometimes, or some people, yes," Ali replied.

Eleanora pointed out: “perhaps you can think about things in circuitous, vague, ambiguous stories that people will not understand, when you want to hide your thoughts.”

“I have another skill which might help - multiplexing.” Ali’s thoughts by nature flipped quickly from one to another in pieces. She could hold a great many thought paths or sequences in her head without losing or forgetting the parts of any of them, a practice that worked in her favor as a teacher. In the classroom, while many teachers need to stay focused on the sequence of information they are presenting, and therefore, do not take distracting questions from students, Ali could allow a student’s question to take her completely off track, and come back to exactly what she had been pursuing before the question.

Eleanora thought for some time; then “yes, multiplexing, disassembling information and then reassembling it; yes, that just might help, but the most important skill is meditation.” Eleanora helped Ali explore some mantras. She then asked Ali to meditate, as deeply as possible.

Eleanora left the room while Ali meditated for a half hour, Earth time. When Eleanora came back in, Ali had emptied her mind of thought, so Eleanora received nothing but a mantra. That was the first step toward controlling her thoughts. Ali’s homework was to meditate at least 3 times each unit/day until she became proficient.

“Our final lesson for today is a very important one. You will need to anchor the learnings you want to take home with you in a place in your brain that we can identify and leave untouched when we evacuate your brain before you leave,” Eleanora said.

“You want to pick a place on your body that you don’t routinely touch, and that you can touch unobtrusively, because you might need to do this in a public place. Like don’t scratch your nose or put your hand on your leg, because you might do that from time to time to time. My favorite is the two fingers placed on the back of my wrist with the thumb and the rest of the fingers tucked into my palm.” Eleanora demonstrated.

Ali “It’s kind of an unnatural position.”

Eleanora: “Yes, something you are not likely to do unintentionally. Do you want to use that one?”

Ali nodded.

“OK, now, what is something you have learned that you do not want to forget?” Eleanora asked.

Ali replied: “I’d say - observe, don’t judge, but that is so deeply embedded, I’ll never forget it.”

Eleanora: “Evacuate means everything from here no matter how deeply embedded.”

Ali: “I won’t forget you.”

Eleanora: “Yes, you will. You may remember something about my counseling technique you want to anchor in your memory.”

Ali thought: *Holy Shit! This is serious.*

“Yes, it is, so shall we learn how.” Eleanora looked like a teacher looking over her glasses at a recalcitrant student.

Ali put her fingers on her wrists as Eleanora had instructed.

Eleanora: “Not yet; take the fingers off. Now think of something pleasant from your childhood and recall how you feel about it.”

“Are you going to wipe out my childhood?” Ali was genuinely fearful.

Eleanora was losing patience and getting exasperated; she spoke very slowly and deliberately. “NO, of course not, now please pretend for a moment that I just might know what I am doing and that you trust me.”

Ali, a bit chagrined, sat quietly with her hands in her lap and closed her eyes so she could feel herself on the swing in the front yard of her home on the farm. The day was sunny, and warm, and her older brother was pushing her; she could feel his hands on her back. He was saying in a questioning tone: “Higher? Higher than this?” And she was responding gleefully, “yes, yes, more, more.”

Eleanora could see the small smile on Ali’s face and feel the sense of peace that washed over her. In a very soft voice Eleanora said, “now say childhood and put your fingers on your wrist and keep them there till you count to 10.” Eleanora counted to 10 and then said, “open your eyes.”

Ali did as she was told.

Eleanora continued: “This was a test. Before you go to bed, put your fingers on your wrist and say childhood. The memory should come back. If that works, go through the same exercise, but with ‘observe not judge’, or something else you want to remember. Start without your fingers and when you have exactly what you want to remember, anchor with your fingers. We will test your memory another unit/day. This is to fix the event or learning in your memory; you will later write these learnings down as well. The council will occasionally monitor to be sure you will not be walking out with something you should not have.”

Ali: “Ok, I’ll give it a try.”

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In doing her homework, Ali was starting to understand the magnitude of the adventure she had signed on for, and she was getting concerned. At her next lesson she asked Eleanora: “What about what I knew when I got here; will that be removed also?”

Eleanora assured her: “None of that will be touched.”

“Will I still be able to use telepathy? Can I contact you and Kyra when I get back to Earth?”

Eleanora’s sad and sweet smile looked like she knew something that she didn’t want to say: “You will still have the skill, but you will not be able to contact Paradiieceo from Earth.”

Ali: “But I thought if I learn telepathy, I might be able to contact my Aunt Elma on Earth.”

“If we provide that conduit, you will be able to. We will not provide a conduit back here after you leave.” Eleanora had a strange tone in her voice: a cross between empathy and ‘read my lips.’ “Now we need to move on.”

Ali was to meditate to clear her mind of all thought.

This is a real test, if I can shut down my distress over what I have just learned, Ali thought.

Eleanora explained that they would repeat short meditations until Ali could ‘hear’ Eleanora’s thoughts, which she transmitted in English to eliminate the burden of Ali’s translating device. The exercise was successful. Eleanora was transmitting directly to her, and she was understanding and answering. For her to listen in on thoughts that were not directed at her would take more practice.

Ali was curious why Eleanora or anyone on Paradiieceo, for that matter knew English. In the 22nd century it had become clear to other planets in other galaxies that Earth was an inconsequential planet, being small, having exhausted natural resources, even water, and having a generally unpleasant climate. If one did have reason to have contact with Earth, Chinese Mandarin was the dominant language for business and travel, so why would anyone learn English? Apparently, English was fairly easy for Paradiiecians to learn because the

grammatical structure of English which makes the function (part of speech) of a word dependent on its position in a sentence is like the grammatical structure of Lugha, their native language, and the Paradiicians liked English books and movies, but none of them were translated into their language so they had to use a translator or learn English.

"When we decided to take an anthropology intern, we chose Earth in part because it would be such a low-profile event that no one would notice, and an English-speaking American in order to have a native speaker teach English in our school. Then, when we found out an English-speaking person would be coming, many of our people studied English, seeing the opportunity to interact with a native speaker. English is a fine language as long as you do not have to spell the words."

Ali laughed: "English is a bitch to spell."

For the final exercise Eleanora gave Ali an envelope with a photo inside and instructed her to hold the envelope in her hand. "Please close your eyes and take a couple of deep breaths. Relax. Now, concentrate for a moment on your body making contact with the chair. Feel yourself solid in the chair. Now concentrate on your feet connected with the floor; press them down hard as if you thought you could push through the floor. Use the hand that is not holding the photo to squeeze the arm that is holding the photo. Now relax and connect with the energy of the person in the photo. Can you feel some energy?"

"I can, I can!! I feel like I am inside someone's aura. Ali was running her right hand up and down her left arm, and then touching her face with her fingers. Now in a more tender voice: "I can, I can feel you, whoever you are."

Eleanora was asking: "Can you see this person; is it a man or a woman? Ali shook her head No. That person is welcoming you into their home. Take a little tour and tell me what you see. If you want to, you can use the astral travel."

Ali concentrated on the photo for several minutes with her eyes closed. Her fingers were warm around the photo as she entered the house.

"Are you with the person in the photo," Eleanora asked.

"No, I'm alone, just looking at the house. I don't see anyone. There are 3 rooms. The ceilings are low. I'm not sure my brother could stand up straight in here. The walls are made of that rattan material like your furniture and the furniture in the park. They are natural colors, and some have geometric designs. Some look like herringbone weave and others are plain weave. There is very little furniture. In the larger room there is a big table, 4 chairs and several rattan trunks. The smaller room has 2 chairs and 4 trunks. I don't see any beds."

"Open a couple trunks," Eleanora said.

"What?" Ali was nervous about being in someone's home: "I'm trespassing."

"You are not there physically, only mentally so they don't know you are there. I would like to know what's in the trunks," Eleanora responded.

"Ok," Ali's voice was shaking, and she was reaching down to open the trunks that were, who knows how many miles away. "This one is full of clothes. This one is full of fiber like the walls are made of. There are some rolled up mats in the corner."

"OK, that's good," Eleanora said. "What does the kitchen look like?"

"Just a minute, there is a piece of artwork on the wall in the large room. It's really good; it reminds me of the one on your wall."

It could be the same artist, Eleanora thought.

"I heard you!!"

"Good job! I wasn't transmitting to you."

"Yes, finally!" If one could exclaim a thought this would be it; Ali was listening in on Eleanora's thoughts.

"Wonderful! The kitchen??" Eleanora asked.

"The kitchen has a very long table covered in jars of some sort; they look like old fashioned canning jars. There are 2 cooking surfaces and two large pots on them. There does not appear to be a replicator or refrigerator. There are some teenagers standing around talking; they don't seem to see me."

"Of course not; you are not there physically." Eleanora responded.

"It's so real," Ali responded.

Eleanora just smiled.

Ali continued: "There is a bathroom; the toilet looks like it is from an outhouse, and there is a large floor to ceiling open bookcase and no shower."

Eleanora was delighted with Ali's description.

"Ok Ali, it's time to come back. Concentrate on your body making contact with the chair.

Feel yourself solid in the chair. Now concentrate on your feet connected with the floor; press them down on the floor.

Put the photo in your lap and hug yourself. Rub your hands together as if you were washing them. Ok, when you are ready, open your eyes."

"I've never seen that place before; where was I?" Ali asked.

"Somewhere you might visit before you leave." Eleanora replied. "Do you feel anything about the person in the photo?"

Ali felt confused to the point of being agitated, and a bit frightened. *This was way too close to my experience in the US.* "In my intuitive linking class, I was paired with a woman I did not feel positive energy from. We were asked to travel to our partner's house. When I described the house I visited, my partner became indignant: 'That modern thing is not my house; my house is a country cottage decorated with lovely tiny floral prints.' Then from the back of the room came a voice: 'You are describing my house.' What made it so unsettling was that I felt an attraction to the woman whose house I visited; I intended to invite her to have coffee, but she did not show up for the last class. I regret not having approached her sooner. I think I would like to have coffee, or tea, with the woman in that photo."

Is it possible to have such a close connection to someone you only see from across the room, and now, not a person at all, just a photo? Ali was shaking, and her eyes looked as if she had seen a ghost.

Responding to Eleanora's question: "She seems kind and extraordinarily strong mentally as well as physically, maybe even wise, like you." Ali's voice had a note of surprise. "I trust her; I would trust her with my life. But more powerful than my feelings for her, I am overwhelmed by your feelings for her; Eleanora, you love her deeply." Ali did not know where these insights were coming from; she did not know if they were accurate, or real; they were just there. It terrified her to experience this level of insight. "I'd like to see the photo."

Eleanora declined to show Ali the photo, and she did not respond to Ali's observation except to point out that Ali may be kinesthetic. "It appears you get to your insights and probably your memories as well, through what you feel rather than what you see or hear. Once you are engaged with your powerful feelings, the sights and

sounds can become stronger. You have done very well; that is enough for today. I believe you will very soon be able to communicate telepathically AND to control your thoughts."

"Wait." Trying to control her trembling voice, Ali asked: "Do you have another client? May I stay in the room of secrets for a while? I'm freaking out."

Eleanora answered: "I do not have any more clients today; you are welcome to stay." She left the room and closed the door behind her.

Ali felt like she was playing Pin the Tail on the Donkey. She had been spun around and pointed in a direction. She had plunged in headfirst, and now she was completely disoriented, and Eleanora was sending her away. Ali was pacing, wringing her hands, and talking to herself inside her head. *Have I done something wrong? Did I offend her? Why wouldn't she show me the photo; why wouldn't she talk to me about her feelings for the person in the photo?* In that moment, gone was the super woman who had worked her butt off to win the cherished prize of this assignment; the American who would win hearts and minds, and teach the aliens how archeologists practiced their craft, the survivor of the interrogation. The creature who sat down on the couch, shaking and hugging her knees was a frightened 5-year-old, desperately wanting her mother. "Why can't I cry?" she mumbled.

Ali had met the 5-year-old who lived inside of her before; she had spent time with a psychologist learning how to satisfy the needs of that part of her psyche; she had trained herself to keep her 5-year-old hidden, comforting her from time to time in private. "Why are you coming out now?" She rocked and consoled herself for some unknown number of minutes. *Why am I so afraid?* And then it hit her: *control - I feel like I am out of control of my mind; of course I'm terrified - terrified of going insane* - the one thing Ali knew she could not tolerate - being out of control of her mind! She sat up straight, pressed her lips together, and in a stern voice: "OK wee one, time for a very long nap; we must be grown up now."

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The great lamp in the sky gave the illusion of warmth, like a bright sun on a cold day. Ali's head started to clear, but only a little. As Eleanora expected, she headed to Kyra's shop. *Why am I going here; I hardly know this woman; why do I want to be with her - more that I don't understand. Should I tell Kyra about my experience, or will she think I am crazy?* As much as Ali would not want anyone to hear her thoughts, she could not stop her mind from racing.

Kyra was delighted to see her: "I wondered when you would find time to stop and see me."

She had not been listening to Ali's thoughts; Ali was relieved. "My orientation schedule has been crazy, and it promises to get worse as I begin actual work; I think I'm going to teach a class for girls." Her speech was robotic.

Kyra took a closer look at Ali. "You look like you've been to the end of the universe;" she said in her most gentle voice, and adding a bit of humor: "Are you planning to come back anytime soon?" Silence. Then, "do you want to talk about it?"

"No, not now." Ali felt like a ventriloquist's dummy. It wasn't her answering. It was someone else's voice from outside her..... or from inside her? She didn't know. She just knew she had to do what that voice was saying. She had heard of an out-of-body experience; was this it, or was this an out-of-mind experience?

Kyra took Ali's hand and led her to a small table in the space at the back of the kiosk. "Telepathy lesson?"

Ali nodded.

"Astral travel?"

Ali nodded again. *How did she know?*

“Sit down and have some tea.” Kyra was almost afraid to leave Ali long enough to get tea, but she thought nourishment might help bring Ali back into the physical world.

When Kyra returned with the tea, Ali was staring into space. “You know Ali, we here in Paradiieceo learn to be psychic as infants or toddlers. I can’t even imagine what it must be like to go out of your mind, into someone else’s mind or space for the first time as an adult. It’s not at all like learning a new language where you keep your feet firmly on solid ground while you are doing it.”

Ali was drinking the tea, slowly and unconsciously, but she was drinking it. She heard Kyra from some unknown distant place.

Kyra brought out some snacks. It was like her job to get Ali mentally and emotionally fit to have dinner with her housemates. *Why did Eleanora allow her to leave like this?*

“Food,” Ali said, “food; when I did a 3-hour grueling past-life regression in the US, the facilitator fed me a big lunch afterward. She said food was necessary to reconnect with the physical world.”

“Shall I make you a sandwich?” Kyra asked.

“No, I’ll be having dinner; the tea and snacks are good. I’m starting to come back.” She realized she was squeezing her arms and pressing her feet against the floor.

“Thank goodness,” Kyra responded, squeezing Ali’s hand; “I was on the verge of taking you back to Eleanora for fear of losing you out there somewhere.”

Ali brought Kyra’s hand up to her cheek focusing on the warmth on her face. “I was out there; way, way out there; It is kind of you to befriend me. You might have thought I was drunk.”

Kyra leaned over, took Ali’s face in both hands, and kissed her on the forehead: “I love you,” she whispered almost inaudibly.

“Thank you.” That moment coming from anyone else would have felt threatening to Ali, but this didn’t, it just didn’t.

Ali took Kyra’s hands from her face oh so gently and kissed the inside of her palms, first one then the other. Then she put Kyra’s hands down and left. *I should be freaked out by what just happened, but I’m not, and I don’t have any brain or emotional space left to figure out why, she thought, just put one foot in front of the other.*

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Drota and Salme were already home when she got there.

They both stared at her. Ever so tactless Salme was the first to speak. “You look like you’ve been rode and put away.”

That was it; Salme found the cure; Ali was back -- laughing a grand belly laugh.

Drota’s eyes got wide, and her jaw dropped: “Ali, are you OK? What is so funny?”

Ali managed to choke back laughter enough to explain, wondering where the heck Salme heard that. “There is an expression in English that you can use when someone looks truly terrible – like me. The saying is ‘you look like you’ve been rode hard and put away wet.’”

Drota still looked puzzled: “I get that it’s funny because Salme screwed up the saying, but what does it mean?”

Salme shrugged her shoulders. Drota had fire in her eyes when she got inches from Salme's face: "You insulted our friend, and you don't even know what you were saying." That was the first and last time Ali saw Salme shrink into sheepishness.

"Hey, you two, I know what it means and it's not so terrible. Do you know what a horse is?" They nodded yes. "If you ride a horse very fast for several hours the horse works up a sweat and you are supposed to dry the sweat off the horse before putting it in its stall. If you don't, the horse looks all sweaty and could even get sick. Salme, you are not so far off. I've been on a hell of a ride, and my keeper forgot to dry me off."

Salme: "You dropped acid?"

Ali snickering: "That's a trip, not a ride; guess again."

Drota: "Salme, Shut up! You need to be locked up somewhere."

Salme, aggressively defensive: "LSD is big on Earth; everyone is using it."

Ali was trying not to laugh: "That's 2 centuries ago."

Salme: "Oh, well we still use it here for....."

Drota broke in: "Salme, have you lost your mind?"

Salme looked a bit startled, stammering, "we... uh... yes.... Occasionally..... yes, we use it for clients who have mental or emotional conditions which make it difficult for them to fit into their societies, and we use LSD as part of their treatment plan" looking at Drota and using a slightly sarcastic tone, "don't we Dear."

Drota: "Yes Dear..... help for our trading partners. But Ali, let's get back to you. Did Eleanora by any chance set you up on an astral travel trip."

Ali: "Bingo; oh, I'm sorry; that means you are right, or you win. It's the name of a very simple game."

Drota: "So you have successfully gone out of your mind and come back to us."

Ali: "Yup, well I'm still working on the coming back part."

Drota: "That's impressive. It's quite frightening when you do it the first time."

No Shit Sherlock! Ali blushed a little, supposing they "heard" her.

Drota responded: "You are a brave lady."

Ali: "I don't feel very brave, and Sherlock is a detective."

Drota, trying not to laugh: "What you need is dinner and then you will sleep very very well, and by morning, you will be fully reinstated in your body and your mind."

Ali was extremely grateful, but all she could say was a meek, "thank you."

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It took 2 more units/days of training for Ali to hear Eleanora's thoughts clearly and consistently, and to listen in to thoughts not directed to her. She religiously worked on her psychic skills including some telepathic conversations with her housemates. She had been concerned that once she became proficient, she would be flooded with thoughts coming at her from every direction, like being in a very crowded room where it is near impossible to have a conversation because the chatter all around you is so loud. But, to her great relief, it wasn't like that. One could direct one's thoughts to another person and get their attention so that person would

direct their thoughts back in response. It was also possible to focus on another person to listen in on their thoughts or a conversation the way the housemates had done Ali's first night, and the way the authorities were doing to monitor her.

When Eleanora thought Ali was ready, they went on an outing into the park at lunchtime when there were mothers and daughters from school having lunch. They spread out a rolled-up mat and took bread and jam out of a small basket. As always, the artificial sun was high in the sky and the warm temperature and slight breeze, and the fragrant flowers were most pleasant.

"So the reason Kyra does not hear my thoughts when I am on the way to her shop, is because she is not focused on hearing me. The investigators from the Council hear me because they are focused on my thoughts all the time."

"That's right," Eleanora said. "Now, I'm going to do a test." She thought in her own language. Ali could repeat some of what she heard, but she could not translate. To translate, she would have to think or say what she heard and then listen to the translator to get the meaning. That was a difficult and cumbersome process. It would require a lot of practice. But Ali was a quick study. She could practice on people in the park.

Ali noticed a child with strawberry blond hair, the only person she had seen deviating from the normal yellow blond. Ali engaged in the telepathic equivalent of whispering to Eleanora what she was thinking. *"Eleanora, look at that child's beautiful hair."*

Eleanora suggested they try another type of telepathy: sending a message from Ali to Eleanor, but in a way that would make it likely the child would hear. The equivalent of speaking loud enough that someone else would overhear you.

Eleanora went on to explain that since this was a culture where no one was expected to or wanted to stand out in any way except for an exceptional accomplishment, this child, no doubt suffered some inferiority feelings because her hair is an unusual color. It would be good for her to hear that someone admired her hair. Ali agreed. It would be a bit complicated; it would not be expected that the child would understand English. Ali would have to have her translator translate from English and then she would have to send the message telepathically in Lugh, Paradiaceo's native language.

"Eleanora, look at the beautiful color of that little girl's hair. And it's so silky smooth, it shines when the sun hits it. I wish my hair was like that."

The little girl looked around to see who was talking about her. Her mother was talking to another woman and did not hear the compliment, but the little girl tugged on her mother's sleeve to get her attention. The mother was annoyed to have her conversation interrupted but turned her attention to the child who was very excited. "Mommy, Mommy, that lady thinks my hair is beautiful." She was pointing at Ali. Eleanora was sitting behind Ali, so the mother did not see the woman in the saffron robe.

The mother lashed out, screaming telepathically: *"You have no right to stare at my child and make fun of her appearance; she can't help it if her hair is different; what do you want me to do; send her to the Wilderness. Who do you think you are; I've never seen you before with that dark hair; are you some kind of alien?"*

Ali was in a state of shock; The child was crying, and the mother was in the process of packing up their things to leave. Eleanora changed position so her white hair and saffron robe were visible to the mother - who stopped dead in her tracks.

"Wise one, I am so sorry for my outburst in your presence; please understand, I am so defensive about my child;" now she was crying too.

Eleanora stood up and walked to where the mother and child were sitting. She spoke out loud to make it easier for Ali to get the translation. "It is I who must apologize. When my friend commented to me quietly that she admired your daughter's hair, I encouraged her to say that loud enough for your daughter to hear. You

see, my friend is here from another planet as an intern in anthropology. She does not have the cultural bias we have toward all looking the same. From her perspective, your daughter's hair is simply beautiful and only when she said so, did I see how beautiful your daughter's hair really is. I had been focused on your daughter being different and politely keeping my observation to myself. My intention, and my friend's, was to make your daughter feel good about herself because if you put aside our cultural focus on all looking alike, her hair really is beautiful. Wouldn't it be grand if she could see herself as beautiful rather than different?"

The child was probably 8 or 9 EY, old enough to understand the wisdom of the white-haired woman who stood before her in a dress that was different from hers and her mother's. "Look, her hair is black," the child said out loud pointing to Ali who had not moved a muscle since the incident began.

"Don't be rude; just pretend you don't see her hair," the mother admonished her daughter.

Eleanora beckoned for Ali to join them; Ali reluctantly complied.

"Can I touch your hair," the child asked.

The mother was mortified, but Eleanora told her telepathically to just watch.

"Yes, of course," Ali replied, kneeling next to the child. Ali's hair was much thicker and heavier than the silken hair of the Paradiaceo natives.

"This is great hair," the child said; "you could make rope out of it."

What a great asset, Ali thought, I can grow it and cut it off and start a whole industry. The thought was in English, gibberish to mother and child.

Very sheepishly, the mother asked if she could feel it.

"Of course," Ali said, and to the child, "I'm going to cut it soon; would you like to have what I cut off; maybe you could use it for a school project."

"Oh yes," the child said gleefully, "please Mommy, can I have it?"

"Yes," the mother said with great reluctance, and to Eleanora: "I am ashamed, wise one, but you understand, of course, that I am suspicious of the alien and protective of my child.

"Oh, my goodness," Ali blurted out, "A mother must never be ashamed of defending her child. I can understand completely how you would interpret my intentions. It is I who did not think about how my compliment would sound in the context of your culture."

"We all look at the world from different points of view," Eleanora added: "Perhaps we are all studying anthropology today. I only hope you will allow your daughter to see her beauty regardless of how others see her."

As they parted company, Ali asked for the child's name so she could leave her hair at school. The child's creative use of the hair in school eventually led to purchasing hair from a trading partner whose women have thick hair and using the hair in weaving by the Wilderness women. The mother made no progress toward recognizing beautiful hair nor appreciating aliens.

Ali and Eleanora went back to their mat, ate their lunch, and practiced holding their thoughts silent. To completely withhold a thought was still very difficult for Ali. She could do it for about as long as she could hold her breath. The greatest challenge which Eleanora assured her she would accomplish, was to think through something in the background while keeping a different thought in the foreground. Eleanora assured her that eventually, she would learn to compartmentalize her brain so that she could think and withhold her thoughts at the same time. Ali had no idea how critical that skill would become. For a moment, she wondered if her skill in

telepathy would be removed when they did the final evacuation, and then she remembered this was a skill she could keep, no memory of what she telepathed, or how she learned it, just the skill. *Wouldn't Elma love to observe the evacuation!*

The confrontation with the mother of the strawberry blond child was emotionally draining, but to give that child a moment of feeling beautiful, and to learn that your average Paradiician did not welcome aliens was worthwhile. Ali walked 'home' wondering what adventures tomorrow would bring; tomorrow was Ali's birthday. She had no idea if they celebrated or had any traditions attached to birthdays, and she had not told anyone that tomorrow was a special day.