

THE REINCARNATION OFFICE

The Acoustic Funambulist was savoring a Moondiver cocktail, a colorful mixture of heavily fermented fruits with a dash of stardust spices, in Zornnivas, the main city of the small planet Nekton, in the Andromeda Galaxy. The day was hot and the terrace of the cafe was crowded with locals and visitors alike, all enjoying refreshments.

- "Do you mind if I sit here? The place is full and I can't find an empty chair anywhere." asked the most curious character pointing at the vacant seat facing the acrobat. His features resembled that of a toad, with big bulging eyes almost on the sides of his flat head, a tiny nose and an extremely wide mouth. He had long arms and legs emerging from a compact body, almost no neck and a rather sad expression. However, the most fascinating aspect was the fact that he was semi-transparent, a ghost like appearance of the most unusual effect, like an ancient hologram.

- "Yes, of course." responded the funambulist with a smile. He had never seen such a being before and was already itching to find out where he was from. "It's a very hot day." he declared, going for the small talk.

- "Doesn't bother me." said the other with indifference as he sat down and called the waiter over. He ordered a drink and sat motionless with a blank look on his face.

The aerialist returned to sipping his drink but his curiosity would not leave him alone and since innocent chat was leading him nowhere, he decided on a less subtle approach.

- "How come you are so transparent?" he asked bluntly, still smiling.

- "Oh that... That's because I'm in between lives." groaned the spectral entity.

- "You mean, you're a... well... a ghost?" exclaimed the astonished funambulist.

- "Well, I guess so. There has been some mix-up with my file, so my rebirth has been delayed." explained the poltergeist toad in a fatalistic tone.

- "So, you wander around like this?" said the acrobat who noticed that his counterpart had not touched his drink and that his arm was actually going through the table. "It must be annoying, not being able to interact with anything material." he remarked.

- "Well, it's a lot better than the wrong incarnation, believe me! I've spent the last life as a sort of toad experiment which was obviously meant for a totally different being and that was hell." grumbled the ghost. "Now I have to