

ANNIE: Hmm?

KJ: You are definitely a girl, but . . .

ANNIE: What?

KJ: Nothing. You're just surprising, that's all.

ANNIE: Surprising in a good way, or a bad way?

KJ: Good way. Definitely a good way.

ANNIE: What's your name?

KJ: Oh, shiz. I totally forgot. I'm not nonfunctional or anything, just a little weird sometimes. I'm Kenneth Jerome Urbanik. My friends call me KJ. What's your name?

[ANNIE stands.]

ANNIE: I'm Annie. Annie Jump.

## Annie Jump and the Library of Heaven

Reina Hardy

### Seriocomic

ANNIE: 13

ALTHEA: 13 to 15

*ANNIE is sitting outside, looking at the stars. A small, round object drops out of the sky and rolls to her feet. She picks it up. It's a pool ball. The eight.*

ANNIE: . . . the heck?

ALTHEA: That's mine, you know.

*[A very pretty, nicely dressed teenage girl with a good deal of attitude has appeared.]*

ANNIE: What?

ALTHEA: That thing you just picked up. It belongs to me.

ANNIE: Um . . .

ALTHEA: Do you understand American English? It's mine.

ANNIE: It came from the sky. [ALTHEA gives her a look.

ANNIE withers.] Do you want it back?

**ALTHEA:** I just wanted you to know it was mine. [ALTHEA goes and sits on a rock and begins brushing her hair. Her hair is totally beautiful.]

**ANNIE:** Who are you?

**ALTHEA:** You can call me Althea.

**ANNIE:** Is that your real name or just something you made up?

**ALTHEA:** Do you think I would just go around making up a name like Althea?

**ANNIE:** What are you, an oil kid?

**ALTHEA:** An oil kid?

**ANNIE:** The rich kids always have superfancy names. Clementine. Dashiell. Are you new?

**ALTHEA:** I just got here.

**ANNIE:** Well, look. I'm sorry to mess up your plans for tonight, but this is my rock. And I have plans of my own. So can you just text whoever it is and tell him to meet you somewhere else?

**ALTHEA:** Meet who where?

**ANNIE:** Y'know, Pete Stockholm, or Darcy, or whichever boy you're planning to make out with. . . . Oh come on. Don't pretend you're out here to watch the Perseids.

**ALTHEA:** The Perseids?

**ANNIE:** It's a meteor shower visible from Earth that comes around once every August—they call it that because it looks like they're all coming from the constellation Perseus but that's just an illusion caused by . . .

**ALTHEA:** I know what the Perseids are.

**ANNIE:** Sure you do.

**ALTHEA:** I know everything you know.

**ANNIE:** You don't have to be embarrassed. I don't judge. We all have our areas of expertise. Mine is engineering and astronomy. Yours is. I don't know. Hair. Shoes. Boys. I mean, someone has to do it, I guess. Just . . . not on my stargazing rock, okay?

**ALTHEA:** I didn't come here to make out with some smelly teenage boy.

**ANNIE:** So you did come here for the Perseids.

**ALTHEA:** I came here for you, Annie Jump.

**ANNIE:** Whoah. How do you know my name? What did you do—look through the middle-school yearbook?

**ALTHEA:** Seriously?

**ANNIE:** You threw a pool ball at me. Are you some kind of lesbian?

**ALTHEA:** [Thinks about the question for a second.] No. I'm the visual manifestation of a mindfurl of an intergalactic computer built and maintained by a collection of the most advanced intelligent species in the universe. [Beat.]

ANNIE: You know what? Screw you. You are a terrible human being.

ALTHEA: I just told you that I'm not a human being.

ANNIE: It's not my fault, okay? It's my dad. I didn't ask for him. I don't encourage him. I would like it if he just shut up and went away also, all right? But he won't. He never will, and I have to deal with that my whole life, so you don't have to rub my face in it. I came out here to be *alone*. I came out here to watch a *meteor shower*. I didn't come out here to get made fun of by some popular fluffhead for something that I didn't even do.

ALTHEA: What makes you think I'm popular? Is it more the clothes, or is it the hair? I'm very proud of the hair.

ANNIE: Sometimes I wish I were pretty.

ALTHEA: Why would you wish that?

ANNIE: Because when you're pretty, you can be as weird as you like, and no one even notices.

ALTHEA: You're only three-eighths as smart as you think you are, Annie Jump.

ANNIE: That's rich, considering the source.

ALTHEA: That source being a manifestation of a mindfurl of an intergalactic super computer. I told you, Annie, I know everything you know, and everything you don't know, and everything you're not allowed to know. I pretty much know everything.

ANNIE: Yeah, right.

ALTHEA: Try me.

ANNIE: I'm not as dumb as my father is.

ALTHEA: Try. Me.

ANNIE: Okay. Who discovered Cepheid variable stars?

ALTHEA: Henrietta Swan Leavitt, the Harvard computer.

ANNIE: What's Kepler's third law of planetary motion?

ALTHEA: The square of the orbital period of a planet is proportional to the cube of the semimajor axis of its orbit. Come on, Annie. This is high school stuff!

ANNIE: Fine. What's the initial step in Wile's proof of Fermat's last theorem?

ALTHEA: Given an elliptic curve  $E$  over the field  $Q$  of rational numbers, for every prime power there exists a homomorphism from the absolute Galois group. [*Beat.*]

ANNIE: Crap!

ALTHEA: I told you. I know everything.

ANNIE: How do you reconcile quantum mechanics with general relativity?

ALTHEA: I can't tell you that.

ANNIE: Too complex for you?

ALTHEA: It's too complex for *you*. But the real reason I can't tell you is that there's a slight chance you'll understand it. I'm not supposed to reveal any truths or any



information not currently known on planet Earth. No telling you the answers to the big questions, no giving you alien technologies. It's kind of like my prime directive.

**ANNIE:** No big questions, huh?

**ALTHEA:** Well, I can give you one. Are we alone in the universe? Hint hint. You're not.

**ANNIE:** What are you even doing out here?

**ALTHEA:** I told you. I'm here for you. I know everything about everything. But I also know everything about you, Annie.

**ANNIE:** That's creepy.

**ALTHEA:** I know what happened to your mom when you were little. I know about your dad. I know your Gmail password.

**ANNIE:** No.

**ALTHEA:** Stardate 403604. I know your middle-school grade in intermediate Spanish. A-minus.

**ANNIE:** Stop it.

**ELWOOD THE TREE:** I know your father used to read to you from *A Wrinkle in Time*. I know your grandparents sued him for custody when you were three and again when you were five, and again when you were seven. I know you were a muppet for your eighth Halloween party, yip yip yip yip yip yip . . .

**ANNIE:** You're a total freak.

**ALTHEA:** I know you wrote Carl Sagan a fan e-mail when you saw his television show and thought he was alive. I can list all of your father's court-ordered prescription meds. I know the only solo you ever sang in grade school choir: [*She sings.*] "Somewhere out there, beneath the pale moonlight . . ."

**ANNIE:** [*Overlapping with song.*] Stop it! Just stop it—go away! Go away!

**ALTHEA:** You can't get rid of me, Annie. You're the one. You're the Chosen One.

[*Beat. ANNIE runs offstage.*]