

# Far Star Girl

*by Sarah Sarai*

She thought maybe an angel had called out her name. She wasn't sure. She was waiting for her older sister to return with Juju Fruits and bonbons. The theater, neither light nor dark, was to Cassie's ten-year-old mind, an appropriate-enough setting for a visit from an angel. Cassie knew better than to mention her divine suspicions to Dot who was five years older.

"No. We'll start off with the bonbons. I don't want you pawning off a melted mound halfway through the show." Dot could be okay. She and Cassie watched old movies on TV late at night. Their parents slept with the bedroom door closed. "Don't know why they bother." Cassie was not sure what Dot meant. It was one in a line of remarks that made her anxious.

"Shh, I don't want to miss what they say," Dot whispered when the lights dimmed. Cassie understood the word ironic. Dot was being ironic. Collectively they had seen this movie seventeen times and could successfully anticipate each word, beep and ship sweep. Angels could travel to far stars, she thought.

She and her sister had been sent to Sunday School two years ago so they could get a taste of it all: Heaven, Jesus, ice cream socials, etc. Both girls now spooned Hershey's on the cheap vanilla ice cream in the church basement on Sundays and considered pictures of the holy crew, including angels flying in a sky the same soft blue as L.A.'s.

Dot did not waste time on the religious aspect of Sundays, as she did not waste time on the academic aspect of weekdays. Her instincts were sharp, her mind absorbent. "The more you know, the better you get by," was Dot's philosophy. Cassie wanted to know everything, but deeply. She figured she got by. She lived on a round

earth and walked in straight lines. The world could not require more than that. Pushing her thoughts and strong feelings through a lifetime was going to be tricky, however. Cassie assumed that.

Dot put a black Juju Fruit in each of Cassie's two ears when the movie finished. Cassie shook her head until they fell out, and ran up the aisle trying to punch her sister. The sun stormed in Cassie's eyes by the time she caught up with Dot. She managed a shove. Dot was nonplussed. They caught a bus down the boulevard and then walked ten blocks more. Their parents' tract house was yellow stucco and small. The tree in front was larger than a stick. The girls were not as rich as many of their friends. Money mattered. They could do nothing about it. Thus Cassie was finding life easier than Dot. Cassie was younger. Dot had social pressures.

"Do you take drugs?" Cassie asked as she swung open the front door.

"Not yet." Dot was free to answer. Both parents worked. The summer belonged to the girls. "I could, I suppose. Why?"

Cassie shrugged. She did not know why she had asked. Drugs weren't important. Dot claimed the phone and brought it into what had been the den and now was her bedroom. Cassie went to her room and lay on the bed. She thought about the angel. It meant nothing religious to her, although she knew Bible characters were visited by angels and could change their lives. She also knew that great and famous people got a calling early in life. Was it from angels? Maybe because her name was Cassie, any spat, any sibilance, any across-the-broom slur of s's could cause her ears to perk in ersatz recognition. Cassie lisped and knew those sounds scuttled from her mouth at whim. Probably another girl had lisped, across the theater.

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