

CHAPTER EIGHT

...in which Astro and Luna visit Marty's Laboratory

Marty threw the door open, and Astro and Luna saw a truly amazing picture: Marty's room was full of various devices: there was a microscope, vials, some strange gadgets with magnet coils, wires and microcircuits. Music speakers stood next to a huge refrigerator with a transparent glass door, packed with jars of all colors, shapes and sizes filled with various substances: green jelly, blue liquid and some violet-colored cream.



“Wow! Gee!” Luna exclaimed. “It’s an actual laboratory!”

“So cool!” Astro said excitedly.

“Unfortunately, there’s not enough free space, it’s stuffed with all kinds of equipment, but we’ll come up with something,” With his small hands, Marty grasped a huge box stacked on an armchair near the table, rolled back and placed the box on the floor. “Well, now you can sit in the armchair and on this box.”

“And what’s this?” Astro asked pointing on a metal box.

“What? Ah, this! It’s a synchrophasotron converter, an old model.”

“Won’t we damage this thing?” Luna asked tentatively.

“Oh, definitely not,” Marty said. “Some parts need to be replaced anyway, so I’ll rebuild it from scratch.”

Astro sat on the mysterious metal box; the synchrophasotron converter didn’t make a sound. Luna preferred a more conventional and comfortable armchair. Though, apparently, there were curious surprises in the synchrophasotron.

“Be careful,” Marty warned her. “There’s a button that turns on levitation mode on the right armrest.”

“Oh,” Luna quickly withdrew her paw—otherwise it would have touched the right armrest in a fraction of second.

“In your lab, even armchairs can fly?”

“Yes. After reading the description of a flying armchair in the Designers of the Universe Journal, I decided to make such an armchair myself for fun. It functions by principle of a magnetic cushion. The button on the armrest activates the magnetic field, and the armchair rises above the surface of the floor.”

Astro and Luna nodded listening to Marty, but they looked pretty flustered.

“Forgive me for cluttering your heads with all these technical details again!” Marty came around eventually. “Where is your pot? Give it to me.”

“Here it is,” Astro got the clay pot from his bag and extended it to his new friend.

“Well, well,” Marty’s eye turned into a small telescopic tube. “At first, we need to take a sample of the material.”





At once, a microscopic knife snapped out from one of his arms. He used it to scrape down some clay from the pot's surface onto a transparent plate. It looked like a small heap of sand. Then Marty put the pot back and started examining the content of the sample under the microscope. Next, he used some chemical agents to conduct experiments with the surface of the pot. Using microscopic tweezers, which also slid from his metal arm, Marty took the sand particles, put them into reagents and examined them under the microscope one more time. Astro and Luna watched the process intently.

No more than ten minutes later, Marty turned to his new friends and concluded:

"The pot is undoubtedly made of clay."

"Is that all?" Luna asked in disappointment.

"Haven't you learnt anything else from your experiments?" Astro added.

"Of course, I have!" Marty raised a finger solemnly. "The clay's properties suggest it has a great share of organic substances. It can't be said for sure, but this pot might be a living organism! Just imagine, friends, that this unpretentious pot might turn out to be a representative of some great space civilization of clay pots dating back to the Big Bang itself!"

"What if we cast a revival spell on the pot?" Luna suggested.



“And what if this object, as Marty suggests, is already alive? It might see and hear us, and even talk to us, but we just don’t understand its language,” Astro countered.



“It’s an important consideration, my friends. That’s why I advise you to wait. The object might come into contact itself. As for now, I will make an inquiry for the intergalactic card catalogue of all races and planets to find out whether they know anything about the pot civilization.”



“It’s a good idea! And we’ll deal with the disappearance of the child,” Astro decided.



“Yes, I guess, it’s for the best,” Luna agreed. “I hope you’ll manage to find something out.”

