

EVGENIY SHMIGIRILOV

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# Super Queen-Mother

BOOK I. THE LAST HOPE



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**Super Queen-Mother.  
Book I. The Last Hope**

«Издательские решения»

## **Shmigirilov E.**

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«Издательские решения»,

Summer vacation for Julia suddenly interrupted. When bathing in the sea it drags on the bottom of the unknown force, the Earth Keepers. They tell Julia that the sixth Earth civilization may soon die. Fighters previous civilizations were destroyed. Earth Keepers found the cause of the lesions: men are logical, and therefore easy to calculate... This time the fighter will be a woman. Woman nature has entrusted the birth of the people, she them and protect... the Super Queen-Mother.

# Содержание

Prologue	6
Chapter 1	7
Chapter 2	10
Chapter 3	12
Chapter 4	14
Chapter 5	21
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	23

# **Super Queen-Mother. Book I. The Last Hope**

## **Evgeniy Shmigirilov**

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## Prologue

The high-pitched thin sound was barely audible. Gradually, it grew louder, throwing numerous passersby into confusion. Some people started to throw back their heads and to look intently into the sky.

The sound came from a tiny spot high in the sky. It was changing, disturbingly vibrating, as if complaining and warning everybody of some disaster that was happening there.

People felt this and kept their eyes on the spot with alarm. Smiles disappeared, and silence fell all around. Anxiety gripped the drivers of the vehicles going by. Some of them stopped, got out of their cars, and started to look into the sky, too.

The spot became larger. Now, one could see with an unaided eye that some badly controlled aircraft was making a crash landing. Everybody sensed that the crew was fighting desperately to keep the craft gliding slowly and prevent it plummeting down.

The sound became louder and even more plaintive, as if it came from a living creature.

The unusual round shape of the spaceship stood out sharply against the background of Westminster Palace. It suddenly turned around Big Ben, nearly knocking down one of the towers of the palace.

The sound coming from the spaceship turned into a scream, the last cry for help choked with the Thames waters...

People hung on the bridge railing peering into the water. Air bubbles, rising from the depths of the river, were carried away by the current, and it seemed that nothing had happened, were it not for a strange bright light coming up from the water.

Suddenly, the atmosphere around the place of the accident became dry and brittle, multicolored electric flashes, followed by unpleasant cracks, ran across the walls of the nearest buildings.

All vehicles on the bridge stopped, and three more spaceships of the same shape hung over the river, their dull metallic color evidence of long traveling in space. They formed a triangle over the place where the light emitted from the water, motionlessly hovering in the air.

«The London Eye» stopped, but no cries were heard from there.

Only Big Ben's clock chimes broke the silence.

Soon, there appeared a new spaceship in the center of the triangle, of much bigger size.

People heard a weak buzzing, and the drowned spaceship slowly started rising out of the water. First, its upper part became visible, and then it all came out of the water that flowed down the spaceship in streams.

The new spaceship opened a huge receiving bay, and the drowned spaceship was pulled into it. The door closed, and the spaceship disappeared.

In short time the three spaceships, guarding the point of impact, disappeared too.

People regained their composure, exchanged uncomprehending glances, and continued their own business.

Vehicles started up on their own, and the drivers who got out of their cars looked around perplexed, as if asking – what am I doing here?

The life of the town got back into a groove, as if nothing had happened there.

And had anything really happened?

## Chapter 1

Their departure was being obviously delayed – one passenger did not board, and ground crew was looking for his baggage. The air in the cabin was stuffy, because the air conditioning was not switched on yet.

When all problems were solved, the huge plane soared heavily upwards. The cabin crew was excellent, and flight attendants quickly served the passengers. All were restored to good humor, and passengers got busy with their own pastimes.

A group of young people stood out against the background of typical passengers. They were briskly exchanging remarks, paying no attention to recent discomfort and to other people in the cabin. Their light-hearted laughter was evidence of good moods, and that soon rest was waiting for them.

The plane started descending, sharply turned over the sea, and landed at the airport. The baggage was got, and the cheerful company noisily headed for the exit. A bright sunny day welcomed all who arrived at sea side.

The town they arrived in was a real sea pearl. Situated on the only bay there, it was sheltered from high winds by mountains from three sides.

The company of young people picked their way towards it. Having driven through an old bypass road up the mountain to the top of a low pass, they got out of the cab and called. In some time, a door in the big metal gates opened, and they went in.

The friends walked down a road with a slight grade, and in about three hundred feet, after a steep turn, they saw a two-storied stone house, looking like a ship, with an attic and a big terrace, like a captain's bridge. It seemed that it stood at its moorings, by a small mountain, which hid it from all misfortunes.

The terrace gave a beautiful view of the town and the bay. The mountain to the right of the house was particularly impressive. It looked like a huge petrified crocodile, with a hotel on the mountain as its eye.

The air here was also unique. A morning offshore breeze blew away all evaporating waste products to the sea. Instead, the air of the ancient relict box-tree grove filled in all the space around.

A narrow mountain river with transparent purling water flew out of the ravine. It divided the town into two parts. One part was occupied by dwellings, and the other by entertainment and theatre buildings.

In the afternoon, a breeze blew from the sea, filling the territory with its summer smell.

When the breezes stopped their work, the fragrance of all flowers and blooming trees, gathered here from all over the world, flooded this beautiful bowl by the sea...

An iron door opened, letting the guests in. In a big hall, decorated with marble tiles, was a sofa, a big mirror in a gilded frame, and a small carved table with curved legs and a light marble top.

The guests put down their baggage and went to the living room.

The living room was lit by Italian bronze chandeliers and side lamps. By the fireplace, there were two green leather armchairs and a coffee table. A big green sofa, a huge TV set, and some pictures by modern artists added to the interior of this room.

The main windows of the house faced the bay, and the last rays of the setting sun painted the living room into different inimitable colors.

The living room joined the dining room through an arched passageway. The dining room was ready to receive guests. A crystal chandelier illuminated a dark incrustated table with tableware on it; crystal side lamps gave additional light to the room.

Thick soft carpet covered the floor, completing the interior.

The cheerful fuss of guests noisily settling into their rooms animated the whole house. Everybody tried to choose a room, facing the bay at the foot of the mountain. Guests opened the windows, and rhythmic music filled in the surroundings.

Not all young people were guests, though – Julia was the master's daughter, and, as hostess, gave orders to her friends, helping them to settle and unpack their things. Soon, everybody went quiet, took a shower, changed into summer clothes and came down to the dining room.

Girls seated young men around the table and went to the kitchen.

In the kitchen, they saw a huge cake, ordered by Julia's parents for the occasion of their arrival, and lots of cold snacks, that were quite to the point in such hot weather.

The girls were quickly carrying the dishes to the dining room, and putting them on the table closer to the young boys.

Such attention and care pleased the young men. Full as they were, they asked for more. Joking, the girls good-naturedly obeyed and put more food on their plates.

When the dinner was over, the friends went to their rooms to have a rest. After their rest they had to make the acquaintance of the dogs that guarded the house.

Nord – «the Lord Dog» – warily came up to a guest, slowly and deeply breathed in his or her smell, and only then put a stamp – nuzzled up the guest with his wet nose, leaving his smell on the person.

Alfa was his opposite. She did not want to accept anybody, and could just keep her patience with the strangers. Each time she looked at them with suspicion, she kept her distance. To show the strangers how much she didn't trust them, Alfa, one by one, carefully took her hostess's house shoes to the farthest corner from the guests' spot. Her looks clearly showed that the hostess's shoes were under good protection.

The last dog, Berta, was very young yet, and copied the older dogs in her behavior. She instantly joined their company in any undertaking.

The three dogs were German Shepherds, so nobody was going to take liberties with them. Nobody, but Michael. His behavior with the dogs was quite boyish, and, in response, they did not reveal any aggression towards him. It seemed they understood that he would never be different, and were indulgently patient with his tricks.

Julia took out a big piece of beef, bought specially for the dogs on her way home, fairly divided it into three parts, and put a piece onto each dog's plate. Then she poured clean cold water into bowls and carried everything to the yard, in front of the main entrance.

The dogs started eating all at once, standing with their front legs far apart over the plates with food. From time to time, each of them began to stamp against the ground with its hind legs. This showed that they liked the food very much.

Our company was watching the dogs' feast from the bench in the yard.

Suddenly, Alfa, seeing that the delicacies in the other dogs' plates were coming to an end, ran up towards the iron gates, loudly barking on her way. Nord rushed after her, outran the dog, and dashed forward. Berta, like a flash, ran after Nord, and cunning Alfa, having waited at the turn when they would run past her, quickly returned to their plates, and as quickly ate everything on them. Then she licked clean the plates, and went to have a rest in the shade, inside the yard, with an obvious feeling that her duty had been done.

The young people curled up, looking at this cunning muzzle, licking herself all over. This trick was worked through by Alfa, and she used it not once. When the other two dogs, hot after running, returned, they sniffed around their plates, drank cold water, and also went to the shade for an afternoon rest.

It was still hot, and everybody was worn out by the heat. Michal suggested that they could go swimming in the sea. Michael was a ringleader, with lots of ideas on his mind all the time. Not all his ideas were good, but this one pleased everybody.

Looking at his T-shirt, soaked with sweat, Julia assumed that she looked no better. Linda, her friend, also agreed to walk down the mountain to the sea, and William just stood up, tacitly approving the suggestion. He preferred deeds to words. William kept his silence more often than he spoke. He listened to others and gave a meaning to what was said; he did not like to be an object of somebody's analysis.

Preparations were not long – swimming suits were put on, and terry towels thrown over shoulders – this was all they needed to bathe in the sea.

## Chapter 2

The hot southern sun, which supplied the earth with heat and sultriness not so long ago, was quickly rolling down to the horizon. The day was drawing to a close. Crickets started performing their nighttime symphony.

The walk down to the sea was not difficult. The path went through a small town park. The warm southern air was composed of the fragrance of all blooming plants and flowers, but the aroma of the plants one passed by prevailed.

Bushes of jasmine and sprays of wisteria smelt particularly sweet. The fragrance was so thick, that it seemed one could drink it. You would like just to sit down on a bench and breathe it in...

The sea met the friends with an empty beach and warm water. Shingles, warmed-up by the day's sun, generously gave away their warmth. There were small oases of sand on the beach, and our friends set to dig William into the sand, doing that with great pleasure.

When a small hill grew over the young man, Michael fell back down on it. William was silent and only closed his eyes to avoid getting sand in them, while Michael's bulk gamboled on this hand-made hill.

The girls were slowly coming into the sea. Michael joined them, leaving William alone. The latter had complete freedom to decide how to get out of the sand.

Any splashes of water were followed by microorganisms' glow. Bioluminescence was exciting and uncommon. Having pushed from the sea bottom, young people zealously stroked on the water with their hands causing impetuous glow of microorganisms and additional ripples on the moon path that had appeared on the water. Having become quiet, they slowly swam to the buoy and back.

Swimming on her back and viewing the stars that became brighter as it grew darker, Julia dropped slightly behind her friends. The night was quickly setting in.

The bright stars and the glow of the microorganisms that enveloped the swimmers created a magical picture of the night sea, so the phrase «Come to us!» said by someone, fell in with the magic of the night and didn't surprise Julia. But when this phrase was repeated, and repeated more insistently, Julia looked around, but saw nobody, and quickly swam back to the shore.

Her friends, ready to go home, were waiting for her on the beach. They were briskly discussing the night's sea-bathing. Julia attentively looked them over. Judging by their behavior, nobody had any relation to the voice she had heard.

«Most probably, it's somebody's joke», she thought, and joined the conversation. The young people were particularly impressed by the microorganisms' glow in the warm water. Julia explained that such a phenomenon could be observed during only one month, when the water was at its warmest. Thus talking, they soon came back home.

Julia's parents were waiting for them. They had a lot of questions for the young people, and all evening were asking them about their lives in the other town.

Nobody wanted to go to bed. Somebody switched on a radio at a low volume, and the boys began to light a fire from kindling in the barbecue. Then they put charcoal there, and, in a while, small pieces of meat.

The smell of frying meat and fat, dropping on the charcoal and burning there, filled the whole yard. The dogs knew that they would get their pieces too, and attentively watched what was going on in the yard.

The boys turned over the meat together – William was giving some light with a lantern to the pieces of meat, and Michael was carefully taking them with tongs, looking them over, and then moving pieces that weren't done yet to where the heat was stronger.

The table was laid in the yard. The fragrance of a warm southern night mixed in the air with the smell of fried meat...

Crickets and slight crackling of charcoal, slowly getting cold against the background of the illuminated town and the vast dark blue panoramic sky, studded with blinking stars, added to this tangible composition.

It was already late, charcoal went out, music was turned off, and young people, yawning and stretching themselves from time to time, leisurely dispersed to their rooms.

In the morning, Michael woke up everybody very early:

«Enough sleep, or you'll sleep away your whole life!» he yelled, knocking on all doors.

After such an awakening, sleep was gone for good. All quickly got up and went to take a shower. Julia tore away a disposable tooth brush set from a hanging band. The set contained water for preliminary rinsing, toothpaste and mouth wash. She cleaned her teeth, tore away a new set and gave it to Linda. Having examined the novelty, Linda was impressed – she had never seen such a thing before.

In some time, the girls fixed themselves up and went downstairs.

In the yard Michael was capturing the dogs on video – they all at once were sticking their tongues out, to one side, trying to push something out of their mouths. The dogs tossed their heads, but nothing came of this. Something remained in their mouths.

Michael roared with laughter; the dogs, however, did not reveal any displeasure. It appeared he had stuck some soft sticky candies on the dogs' posterior teeth. It was incomprehensible how they allowed him to do that.

This silent concert made everybody else laugh, too. Michael suggested:

«Let's walk the dogs down the street to frighten passersby – nobody will understand what's happened to them. The candies will take five minutes to melt, and then we'll stick in some more...»

Nobody agreed, however, and the answer was unanimous – to leave the dogs in peace.

Breakfast was ready. The dining room was waiting for guests, and the company started eating up homemade buns and rolls, baked in advance by farsighted parents.

The sun burst free of the mountains' grip, and began its visible stalking along the dome of the sky. Morning coolness was gradually transforming into daytime heat. It was better to go to the sea before the sun rose high.

From the mountain one could watch dozens of boats that combined leisure and morning fishing. They were one to two miles off-shore. One could even see rods, and caught fish, which sparkled in the sun near some fishers.

## Chapter 3

Walking through the town, the friends dropped in a shop and bought lots of useful and necessary things – beach mats to lie on the sand, hats, water and fruit. In expectation of swimming in the sea, rest and sunbathing, they went to a far beach at the cape edge of the «Crocodile» mountain.

The trip was not long, and soon they came to the beach. Linda went first into the sea, splashing water on herself.

Michael couldn't keep from sprinkling her wet back with sand. The sand clung to her body, and she plunged into the sea to wash it off. Having bathed, she began to splash water on her friends, who were cautiously coming into the sea. Wet from Linda's splashes, the friends all at once plunged into the water. Then they all pounced on Linda and shoved her into the water. Linda, who did not want to get her hair wet, was quite wet now.

After long racing and diving for awhile, the friends decided to play beach volleyball. Their ball was well pumped, and, from time to time, after somebody's heavy hit, it went into the sea. One of the friends, nearest to the water, had to swim to catch the ball not to allow it to be taken away by the current.

After playing and another long swim in the sea, the friends decided to get a tan. They put straw hats on, lay on their mats, closed their eyes, and let the sun work on them.

The sea was still. Only lightly breaking waves stroked the sand, filling the air with the sounds of splashing water and everlasting sand rustling.

Julia looked at her friends, sprawling on their mats, and decided to swim alone. She missed the sea so much, that she couldn't lie on the beach for a long time.

Having taken snorkeling equipment out of the bag, Julia went into the sea, put on flippers, mask and snorkel, and swam along a man-made levee, built of big boulders and protruding into the sea for a short distance.

Clean cool morning water made it possible to examine the underwater world in detail. Small crabs and fish were fussing near their shelters, and immediately disappeared at the least danger. Larger specimens were there in deeper waters, and Julia fearlessly swam farther from the shore.

On the rock bottom, covered with swinging drift weeds almost everywhere, Julia could see small clearings of pebbles and sand.

Here, at this depth, crabs were larger, and Julia attempted to catch one of them with her hands. The crab was faster, however, and, in a sideways manner, quickly ran away and hid under a big stone.

Thanks to flippers, mask and snorkel she could not only swim at the distance of ten feet from the bottom, but also have a good look at the underwater world, surrounding her. Fish of every kind, swimming next to her and not in the least afraid of a human being, were iridescent. Colors were bright and rich in comparison with those in the air and, on the land, where they seemed to be their poor copies.

Clean shells, slightly rubbed with drift weeds and sea sand, were real masterpieces, created by nature – the greatest master.

Julia decided to collect some for her friends. Having filled her lungs with air as she was used to, Julia dived to get each shell that took her fancy and put it into the net, fixed to her waistband. Soon her net was full with shells.

Julia felt a bit tired and had already decided to swim back to the shore, when some unfamiliar voice called her:

«Come to us!»

Julia looked around, but saw nobody nearby. She thought she was hearing things and swam fast to the shore.

Swimming was becoming more and more difficult for Julia; her arms and legs became heavy. Julia thought that she spent too much time in the water for the first time and got tired. She wasn't by the sea for a long time – she studied in another town, far from her home.

Julia turned over on her back to rest on the water.

The shore was not far, only about five hundred feet. She spread out her arms, slightly threw back her head into the water, and relaxed to gather strength.

At first the rest was pleasant. Julia closed her eyes to protect them from the bright sun, and enjoyed bobbing slowly on the small waves.

Suddenly, her body started slowly sinking into the sea, against her will. She could not cry – the water had already covered her face. Her friends were baking in the sun behind the man-made levee, and nobody saw her. Soon she heard the same voice. It calmed her:

«Don't worry, you'll be OK!»

Her sinking was gradually quickening. The sun turned into a small spot, hardly seen through the water above her, and, in an instant, disappeared at all. Her body was swung around and dragged into the depths at a great pace.

Julia was rushing along under the water with the speed of an express train. Fish, like fearful birds, scattered different ways. Larger fish and sea animals swerved to avoid collision.

Her travel was going on above a steep slope, ending abruptly into a fathomless pit. She was sweeping past ship and plane wrecks, which caught hold of the eroded rocky surface of the slope. Julia had no time to descry smaller details of the constructions on the slope.

Her physical state was very strange – she could see, but her body did not feel anything. Moving was fast and painless.

The first fear ceased, and Julia could already examine her surroundings more attentively. The slope ended, but her fall into a fathomless pit was going on.

Lower, the walls of the pit were upright and smooth, with rare bushes of underwater plants, which, by a miracle, caught hold of small hollows or cracks to survive.

Fish and sea animals she met on her way seemed to be brought here from some fantasy novel.

A huge squid, of the size of a carriage, was also plunging into the depth nearby. It was a slow and grand plunging – at least so it seemed to Julia. A sheet of water it let out sharply speeded its motion, tentacles stretched along its body, and the squid was plunging, in splendid solitude, until its motion was slowed down again. Then the whole process was repeated.

Some fish glowed in the darkness; others had only one or several lights, which twinkled in bottomless depths. It would seem amusing to Julia if she weren't carried past one such visible light. It appeared the light was over a huge large-toothed mouth with prodigious lower jaw, decorated with several rows of sharp large teeth, which stuck out every way. The monster's body was so long that Julia didn't see its end. It was lost in the terrifying darkness of this underwater bottomless abyss.

Light did not filter through the water any more, and she was moving in full darkness. At last, the dragging down was over. It was the bottom of the abyss. Suddenly, a pale light appeared, and Julia could look everything over, as far as the lighting allowed it.

She saw that she was on a rocky bottom with small patches of sand in hollows. There was neither mud nor silt – a strong bottom stream carried everything away in this narrow crack. Only in some places on the walls there was dark brown moss, and rare shrubs jutted out here and there.

Julia ran her hand around and found a strange layer of water, surrounding all her body. It made possible living in the water, without oxygen, and protected her from the enormous pressure.

This water layer seemed to be alive. It consisted of water mussels, which were tightly clasped to each other; however, they were not staying still, but moving, gleaming with silver pearl with blue or coral tint, like small transparent sea eels.

She took only a quick look of at her surroundings. Her movement scared some flat fish, which jumped out from the bottom, raising the sand up, and swam away behind the rock.

## Chapter 4

The light slightly intensified, and Julia found herself in a small grotto. She was being slowly and smoothly dragged to the rock. Part of the rock moved forward and then aside, forming a passage. Julia was dragged inside, and the rock behind her was closed at once.

She was in a poorly lit room. The water level was quickly falling down. Soon the water ran off, exposing a wet floor. Then the other part of the rock in front of her moved forward and aside. Julia came into an opening, leading to a big hall. The rock behind her was quietly closed.

The big hall was empty. It was a hemisphere with walls and floor looking as if made of stainless steel, polished to a high finish. On a metal cube in the center there was something like a biker's helmet. Julia stopped and touched the wall – it was smooth and felt warm.

She heard the same voice:

«Take a seat and put the helmet on!»

Julia sat down on the cube and put on the helmet. The metallic pedestal was slowly caving in under the weight of her body, and soon took the shape of a convenient armchair, flowing around all her body. She felt warm and comfortable. With a light click, the helmet was switched on, and the surrounding scene shifted.

It was the Earth. The sun was hanging in the sky on its trajectory. The alternation of day and night was as usual but there was no moon and the constellations were located in different places.

The earth and the sea were the same, only their colors had changed, while plants and animals were quite different. There were lots of them, and they all were larger and more colorful than those growing on the Earth now.

Real giants with huge wings and oblong heads were flying in the sky.

The sun lighted up the surroundings evenly and not very brightly.

Everything was gigantic – the forest was huge, various large flowers were growing in glades. Flowers of similar sizes were trailing from some trees.

Giant insects of a human being's height were flying among the trees.

Tremendous lizards and snakes were climbing in bright green grass several meters high.

Here and there some traces of the struggle for surviving were seen – broken bones, skulls, and trees, pulled out of the earth with roots.

The voice said:

«We are the Earth Keepers.

Your civilization is the sixth on this planet. The previous ones were wiped out by the United Civilization of the Galaxy «Milky Way», which includes the Earth planet.

At a certain stage of the mankind's development, we put forward a fighter for a single combat with the Galaxy Civilization. The fortunes of the Earth's population – whether they will live on or not – depend on the result of this combat.

It's a standard procedure of admission to the community of civilizations of our Galaxy for any civilization. They want to know – to what extent we have developed and have established ourselves as a civilization.

Combats are carried out on the planet chosen by the Supreme Council of the Galaxy.

The place where they are carried out is always the same; so, we reproduced its exact copy. It is our training facility now. All scenes of battles we had have lost were built into the program. Besides, we added our own episodes. Now it's the place where one can learn a lot.

If we win, the Sixth Civilization of the Earth will get a powerful impulse for further development, and, in several thousand years, it will become equal to other civilizations of the Galaxy. Not everything is so simple, though. There exists one more danger.

When all civilizations of the Galaxy join the United Civilization of the Galaxy «Milky Way», the next stage will be admission of our United Galaxy Civilization to the General Cosmic Civilization.

Loss means destroying the whole United Galaxy Civilization.

It will be the last, but the most complicated and dangerous exam. However, it's still far in the future. Let's not think about things that will not happen for some time.

We couldn't pass the first trial – to win in mortal combat – and were thrown back for millions of years; that's why we can't use the knowledge of the United Galaxy Civilization.

After millions of years of necessary waiting and detailed analysis of all combats, which were carried out, we worked out a new training technique for our future fighter. The losses of the previous five civilizations gave us an enormous data base to analyze our defeats. This time we must win...»

Julia was listening and watching closely the scene taking place around her, while the voice was commenting on what was going on.

The space around her was transmitting the end of one of the earthmen's combats for their right to life.

The battlefield took up all the visible space around the fighter. The ground was dug through all around; huge trees were broken or torn up by the roots; pits and gaps were being filled with water, and, in the distance, one could see large woodlands in conflagration.

Flame was coming up to the stars, forming fire whirlwinds. With frightful roaring, they were coming away from the main bulk of fire for a long distance from the burning woodland. The fire whirlwinds quickly died, burning and evaporating everything on their way, and then were soon displaced by new ones.

Large field stones were cleaved by powerful blows and scattered all over the field, up to the horizon.

Everything in view was flooded with thick luminous liquid looking like blood, which was not only red, but also blue, green, black, and yellow.

A big man, about one hundred and fifty feet high, was fighting shadows, trying to win.

It was clear that he was exhausted. His numerous wounds were bleeding, and he himself and the ground around were in blood. Several times the fighter fell down on his knee, and each time he rose up, beating off attacks; long blinding flame was shooting out of devices fixed on his hands.

Everything was in vain, however. His enemies were too numerous...

Suddenly, ambient light started pulsating. This pulsating lighting worked against the fighter.

From an outsider's viewpoint, it was seen that, in the light, shadows jumped aside, hiding in tall grass. When, for an instant, it became dark, they jumped out of the grass and, as vampires, sucked the lifeblood and energy out of the fighter.

Then, in a moment, the fighter lost all his strength; he staggered and fell first on one knee, then on both, and, finally, collapsed on the ground.

The light pulsation was instantly stopped, and the light became dark blue. Bright red creatures, looking like short and fat half transparent snakes with big teeth, started to devour the fighter.

The combat was continuing. Some earthly web-footed creature with big snakelike head and thick and short tail was fighting the enemy this time.

The fighter was persistently beating off all attacks, setting his back against a rock and not making it possible for enemies to attack from the rear. His enemies, fitted with strong long paws and half-round heads without eyes, but with antenna-like outgrowths on their shoulders, were keenly catching the fighter's every movement.

A big energy octopus was floating in the air, in front of the earthly fighter. It was transparent like water.

Its feelers instantly responded to the fighter's movements. They copied all motions of the fighter's arms, as if they were its own arms. The motions were copied by all its feelers over and over again, but much faster.

When the watery octopus hit an enemy, the rear part of the latter flew off, and it was dying in fits, as from an electric stroke.

When its feelers hit an energy ball sent by the enemy, it fell on the ground with hissing and crackling, and then quickly evaporated.

The fighter was retreating and attacking. From outside, it was seen that his enemies were having a hard time. Dozens of them, scattered here and there, were killed or dying. The fighter artfully avoided attacks and then struck, like lightning, effectively using his energy animal.

Carried away by the combat and forthcoming victory, the fighter, however, did not notice that in the process of the battle his enemies were emitting some light, volatile green gas. It was going up into the air, and at some height was merging into a single whole. The process of gas coalescence finished very quickly, resulting in an acid-green cloud.

The enemies felt this. They stopped the battle, quickly moved away, forming a semicircle, raised their paws with palms up, and stayed put. Thin light winding lines came out of their paws and set against the acid-green cloud.

It was quickly changing, taking the shape of a tube aimed at the earthly fighter. Soon the tube was formed in full and compressed. Suddenly, a blue fire lightning, aimed directly at the fighter, dashed with a crash out of the middle of the tube.

At the same moment, it was blocked by a barrier – the energy octopus co-opted the whole power of the produced blow. The blow was followed by a short sharp whizz.

The energy octopus got out of the earthly fighter's hand. Its feelers were producing spasmodic, aimless movements. The whizz was heard again.

«It looks like the octopus started sucking something in», Julia thought.

Its transparent watery body was being filled with bright golden dust, overflowing from the fighter's reservoir on his back. Its feelers were becoming shorter and shorter. Their contents were being swollen until the feelers disappeared entirely. One big ball was formed, filled with bright golden dust. In the background of the swelling whizzing orb, small lightning was rushing among specks of dust.

The earthly creature did not cease his attempts to influence the energy weapon, which did not obey the fighter any more, but it did not help – a great amount of energy taken in by the octopus destroyed its controls.

The ball, looking in its structure like a big soap bubble, began to whirl about its axis faster.

Increasing whizz turned into airdrome rumble.

Bright golden dust concentrated in the center of the whirling ball like a small kernel. The kernel became dazzling white, sparkling like the flame of a working welder.

It was not only painful to look at and listen to it; it was on the verge of physical strength.

In the meantime, the kernel swelled, filling in the whole ball.

Julia turned away from the three-dimensional screen and covered her ears with hands.

A deafening explosion, creating a big crater, was heard.

The burning wood on the horizon disappeared, and no one of the combat participants was seen on the field.

Their deaths were instantaneous – they had been evaporated.

The next three-fingered fighter had a dinosaur-like head with large green eyes.

He skillfully used a wave resonator and a laser as weapons. The fighter instantly destroyed all barriers with his resonator, and eliminated any target in sight.

The fighter was very good. His enemies had nothing to do but to retreat and hide, but the fighter did not give a chance to anybody. His eyes were closing like a shutter of an old-fashioned camera, and his head was turning like the head of a pilot in an air battle.

It was difficult to approach him, and the enemy changed tactics. The color of the soil around the fighter started changing. At first, it was very far from him, and the fighter did not pay much attention to it. He concentrated on what was going on in the vicinity and what was an immediate threat.

The circle around the fighter was narrowing. The land in visibility range had changed its color to brown.

The fighter noticed danger and switched on his resonator at full capacity, but at this moment something unexpected happened, that became disastrous for him.

The killing power of his weapon became his enemy. Mold, which was changing the color of the ground, divided into smaller parts after each blow. The stronger the blow, the higher the rate of division. The dead mold was growing darker, and new, brown one, was growing faster and spreading ahead.

The mold grew up to seventy-eighty feet high. The rate of its spreading had increased manifold.

The fighter shot at the mold from his laser weapon. Loud hissing and gurgling was heard, followed by poisonous smoke rising from the spots where his blows struck. The mold turned black and fell down, but was immediately replaced by the new, brown mold.

The fighter made one last attempt and then began to turn around himself with his laser switched on at full capacity.

Brown mold was growing taller and taller, filling in all the space around. Soon it was hanging over the fighter. Its layers grew thicker and thicker. The laser failed to shoot down the whole mold. Soon it crashed down on the fighter with all its mass.

It was seen that he was shooting at the mold with his laser, hanging on by the skin of his teeth; from time to time a laser beam burst out of the thick layer of the mold, illuminating the breach from beneath.

Julia saw that the laser was working more and more slowly. Finally, it stopped dead in its tracks. The laser beam went to the distant space.

Soon it died out, and the breach closed. A hill above the fighter flattened. The mold, like soap suds, was reducing until the earth came to light.

The fighter wasn't to be seen anywhere.

The mold had dissolved him.

The next combat was taking place in space.

The camera, filming this battle, was at the level of the fighter's shoulder, on his silvery spacesuit.

The fighter himself wasn't seen. His spacesuit resembled an elongated egg. Its surface contained lots of shallow cavities with small circular apertures.

To husband his weapon, he successfully avoided space debris and asteroids, rushing towards him. But soon their speed began to grow. Stars, surrounding him, were becoming longer and longer.

The fighter began to use his weapon, and it exactly reacted to collisions, eliminating all hindrances in his way and ignoring cosmic bodies, which were not dangerous.

It became his «Achilles' heel». Camera went aside, and Julia saw his death.

Dozens of asteroids were rushing towards him from all sides – it was a kind of original space rose made of asteroids, and the fighter from the Earth was in its center.

It took only a moment for these super heavy asteroids to pass by the fighter and to go away into far space, but combined gravitational force, created by them for parts of a second, disassembled the fighter into atoms.

The last battle that was shown, took place above the sea and on its bottom.

The fighter looked like a big, tall man. He was standing on a small platform which emitted a blue cloud, tightly enveloping his body.

Some small hard triangles were rushing around him, shooting from their weapons. The fighter was quickly changing his position, and beams went into the sea, raising puffs.

The fighter's movements were very unusual. He passed out of sight for some time, and then appeared again at some distance from the previous place. It seemed he had disassembled into atoms and then gathered together in a safe place. One could call his movements stroboscopic.

The number of shooting triangles increased with every minute. It was becoming more and more difficult to avoid them. The fighter plunged into the sea. Triangles went on flying for some time over the sea, and then vanished in the air.

After the flying triangles had disappeared, the camera went under the water. Julia not only saw, but also heard what was going on there.

The fighter went down to the depths. He was seen there as a blue light, moving in a broken manner.

This blue cover betrayed him.

Huge shadows appeared at some distance, approaching to our fighter's location.

He went on moving, but, judging by the way he did it, the fighter noticed the danger – his blue light was moving now only in one direction. Nevertheless, the shadows were moving faster.

Suddenly, a sharp slap was heard, and the blue light disappeared. It became totally dark.

Soon a powerful explosion tore the body of a sea monster into pieces, and, for a moment, lighted this bottomless abyss.

Dozens of similar monsters with big open jaws and several rows of long crooked and very sharp teeth, bent backward, were swimming nearby. It seemed as if these, excessively stretched monstrous jaws could swallow a seven foot yacht. It was impossible to discern their big bodies. They only flickered in the flash of explosion. But Julia was very impressed with the sizes of underwater monsters she had seen.

They instantly pounced on their torn companion. Its pieces, still moving, were slowly sinking down into the depths. These body parts were quickly seized and swallowed. In some minutes, everything was finished.

Julia understood that the fighter's energetic platform had been blown up, having left him no chances for life.

Looking at the combats and seeing their unpredictable, but equally sad aftermath, Julia involuntarily was trying on the fighter's role. It was not easy because every time she had to rearrange herself psychologically to the actions of another fighter.

And what would she do in these situations? Julia looked at her hands and groaned. She was not shown the whole battle, only its last episodes. She would have perished much earlier than those trained and armed fighters.

One has to face up to real things – she is just a girl who can't be compared to them. They were heroes who were fighting for their civilization, and who did all they could do, and even more than they could.

Julia groaned once more and lifted up her head to view what the Earth Keepers were going to show her next.

She saw fighters of each of the five destroyed civilizations. Of course, Julia was interested to know about these past civilizations on Earth. But the circumstances she was shown this...

After demonstration of the fighters' deaths, the Earth Keepers showed one of the pictures of Earth's destruction.

Asteroids were approaching from deep space in a continuous string to bomb the planet. Their silent, grave flight in space was turning into a roar, with explosions and howling, following all celestial rocks after they came into Earth's atmosphere, up to their strike against the ground.

Hell was setting in all over Earth.

Blows followed one after another. Everything that could burn was burning. All woods were burning simultaneously, throughout the Earth.

Even objects which couldn't burn, in principle, were burning.

There was no way out for living beings. Their only salvation was their quick death.

Suffering from burns, wounds and fractures, people and animals were writhing among dead bodies everywhere on the ground.

There was hardly a breath in the air – only clouds of smoke and dust in burning hot air.

Bodies, torn by a shock wave, were lying in pools of their own blood and excrement.

The ocean bottom became bare where asteroids fell, and turned into boiling lava in a split second.

One mile high waves seemed to stand still for some time, displaying fish and big sea animals, twisting with pain. They did not understand yet that body parts nearby were their own.

Finally, these still hills fell down on the melted ocean bottom with awful noise.

Following deafening cacophony of explosions, steam in the form of huge columns was rushing up into the sky, burning everything alive on its way.

Earthquakes were changing the Earth's landscape in seconds. Where there were mountains, there was water everywhere; where there were seas and oceans, there were rocks and dry land.

Burnt birds were falling down; fish and sea animals became boiled.

The whole planet was turning into a hellish fiery vessel, cooking a horrible meal out of all beings that were living on the Earth...

Julia was stunned by the pictures she had seen. She was overburdened with events and information she had been given. A logical question, «What can I do about it?» was not left without response.

«Since the time of man's access into space, Earth has become an object of careful attention on the part of the United Galaxy Civilization.

Earth's people are doomed to exterminate themselves if they don't get the knowledge of Galaxy civilizations.

People will test new weapons again and again, though they don't understand what aftermath it can have.

You have already exploded super-power nuclear warheads, though you did not know for sure whether chain nuclear reaction would begin or not.

You have built a gigantic collider and switched it on in full production, though you don't know whether black holes, which can take up everything, including the earth, are being formed or not.

You are becoming dangerous not only for yourselves, but for others, too.

Development on Earth will come to an end when such a weapon will be invented, made and tested, after which life on it will be impossible, even in a million years.

So, if we lose again, human civilization on Earth will be destroyed by large cosmic bodies from the asteroid belt.

We'll have to wait for more millions of years until the next civilization comes into existence and is ready to undergo another test of combat.

We selected the best fighters, trained them in different ways; nevertheless, we lost combats.

Why did we lose? It seemed we foresaw all possible attacks that one could imagine. We were struggling with this problem for a long time.

Now we have found the cause of loss.

We have staked on men, on their strength and logic.

That was our mistake.

We need different tactics. We don't have to win – we will never be able to do that – we have not to lose.

Our fighter has to back out of attacks, before attackers stop the combat. At the same time, eluding blows should be combined with our repulse, and then the amount of attacks on us will go down. This is the way to victory.

**MEN ARE LOGICAL, AND THUS FORECASTED.**

That's why we were losing.

Now we are staking on a woman – young, strong and trained.

She will be able to perceive attacks physically, through her intuition and life experience, which was being passed on to her at a genetic level, from generation to generation.

Nature entrusted her a human being's birth and life maintenance.

Only she can hold out in the fight for life on Earth.

The time has come when only a woman can defend the sixth civilization on Earth. The life of people. Their future.

We were selecting a future fighter among all the women who have been born on the Earth since a human being's exit into space. You are the best. Only you can hold out in this battle.

Now, you bear enormous responsibility for future generations and their lives, and the lives on Earth.

You are

SUPER

QUEEN-MOTHER.

It's your call whether your civilization will live or die.

**YOU ARE THE LAST HOPE.**

Now we'll send you back. Time is drawing on. You have only three days to make a decision».

Julia took off the helmet from her head and got up from the metallic armchair. Her surroundings took on their previous form, shot with cold metallic luster.

Julia slowly went to the exit. She could hardly digest all that fell upon her.

The rock moved aside, and Julia came out of the hall.

Before the scale moved back to its previous position, Julia heard the voice of the Earth Keepers, which said once more:

«**ONLY THREE DAYS!**»

The room she came into was quickly filling with water.

Julia saw as water layers, reminding her of cable stitch, were enveloping her body up and up, while water was filling the space. When it filled in the whole room, the outer part of the rock, walling the room from the external world, opened.

Julia was carried up. The rock behind her was closed.

She tried to snatch at a bush hanging over, but it was so stiff-leaved that she, wary of injuring her hand, released the branch, and was immediately dragged upward.

Her rate of rising was gradually increasing. She saw a small glowing spot overhead, which was growing little by little, and then turned into the bright sun.

## Chapter 5

Julia came to the surface at the same place, looked around and, having seen nobody nearby, slowly swam to the shore.

She was not tired but shocked by what she had heard and seen. It made her view everything around her in a different light.

She reached the shore, took off the mask and the snorkel, rinsed her face with sea water and came up to her half-sleeping friends.

They were still sunbathing, and even had not noticed her absence. Julia silently joined them, pondering over recent events.

One could not see this even in the wildest dreams, and here it had happened in reality.

The company, overheated in the sun and awakened by Julia's return, with a stretch and a yawn went swimming again. She emptied the net with collected seashells, divided them into equal parts and put them on each mat.

In her thoughts Julia relived her trip once more, beginning with falling into the abyss and up to her coming back, and ...decided to take her mind off things for a while, up to the moment when she would have to make a decision, though she understood quite well that she had no choice.

She had only three days for a rest before the inevitable event.

Her friends came out of the sea, stayed in the sun for some time, and decided to go home.

William noticed that Julia was concerned about something, and directly asked her about this:

«Julia, you are unlike yourself, has anything happened?»

Julia could not tell him the truth, so she dismissed the matter with a joke:

«Maybe I was diving and swimming too much», and then changed the topic:

«What shall we do in the evening, why don't we go to the concert?»

There was a good concert hall in the town, and many famous musicians came on tour there. To switch off disturbing thoughts, she had to busy herself with something. And what could be better than good music?

They chose seats closer to the stage, next to the aisle, to have a chance to dance during the concert.

The concert of the rock group was wonderful; Julia liked the soloist in particular – he was short and plain, but his voice made people spellbound to it.

They came home well into the night and dispersed to their rooms.

In the morning, soon after breakfast, they went on a planned mountain trip.

The day was nice. Small clouds were covering the broiling sun, and the walking was quite easy. Part of the way was along the channel of the mountain stream. Small waterfalls and rapids enlivened the climb up.

In some time they came up to the object of their trip – the emergent top of the hill. Here they took off their rucksacks and halted.

Michael and William got busy with the fire. They went to gather some brushwood, and Julia and Linda started to lay out the food they had brought.

Their purely woman-to-woman talk concerned Michael and William. The girls liked them: Julia was fond of William, while Michael was more to Linda's liking. They were discussing their habits and courtesies they paid to the girls, but soon the boys came with the brushwood, and they stopped talking.

The fire blazed up quickly. The flame was greedily swallowing the dry brushwood. The young people grilled their sausages on thin whittled sticks and warmed the bread.

After lunch they stretched out on the grass watching the clouds floating across the sky. They were constantly changing their shapes and all the time distantly resembled something familiar. It was so relaxing that the friends took a nap.

The evening coolness was coming in. Clouds grew dark. It was time to go back. The small fire burnt out; there was not even a bit of charcoal left.

The friends gathered the trash into a package and set out. The air was cool, and the way down was much easier and faster.

Several times Michael tried somersault, but bumped his back against a creeping burr and after that stopped his peculiar descent of the mountain.

The short stay of the friends at Julia's was coming to an end; they all had to go home.

The three days that the Earth Keepers gave her to think over what they had told her, were over.

Among friends, the days went by quickly and without being noticed.

In the evening the friends flew away to their homes. Julia saw them off, then closed the iron gates and went down to the house. Nobody even suspected what could happen.

She did not say anything to her friends, because she did not know much herself. What will she do, and how should she act? She did not know who to ask for advice.

Julia was watching some film on TV, but her thoughts were far away. Did she have another way out? No, she did not. She had to do only one thing: to act in a right way in this new real-life situation. Nothing else.

Julia watched the film to the end and went to her bedroom. She was walking around the room for some time, then went to the bathroom and soon went to bed. She was lying for a long time with her eyes closed, mulling over unknown and incomprehensible events that could happen to her. At last, she opened her eyes and said, loudly and positively:

«YES!»

«We knew that!» the familiar voice of the Earth Keepers sounded. «The training will start tomorrow, in the morning, at our base. Good night!»

A quiet, pleasant melody filled the room; light multi-colored rain poured merrily from the ceiling. It was impossible to look at that for a long time, and Julia quickly fell asleep.

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

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