

At a sci-fi-convention: "Just for your information, we're Space Vendors working in sector 41 alpha." When the Lukes and Vaders just stared blankly at him, Aaron elaborated: "From the monumental classic "Accountants in Space!!" by Victoria Glomp. Honestly, you call yourselves sci fi fans? Pathetic!"

– Nils (throughthewalls@hotmail.de)

Accountants IN SPACE!!!



"OK, Team", Mr. Smith looked at each of them, then continued, "It is clear that the entire S.U.N.¹ has to go down. And we will have to do it. We can't shy away from our responsibility."

There was a moment of silence. Even Cora looked serious and Tomba had balled her small fists and set her chin.

"Why do you, of all people, look surprised, Erik@?", asked Sangeeta, brushing a strand of long blond hair out of her face.



"I'm surprised of myself", said Erik@ and added slowly, "I always thought I was such a tough rebel. And now that things get serious... I should be excited, but no... I'm scared."

Timothy hung his head. "Me too", he said, "but that's hardly surprising, is it."

Cora gave him a smile. "I think we all are. Overthrowing the human government and the Star Union North *is* scary. But like Mr. Smith said, we've got to do it. Will you help?"



"Of course!" Timothy looked up, his eyes wide with astonishment that Cora had to ask.

But she just smiled even more. "See, that's what counts."

"Cora is right", said Mr. Smith, "It is a frightening prospect and it will be dangerous. We must know our limits. But we must also know our strengths. What are we good at? And how can we use it--"

"But we're a bunch of *Accountants!*", blurted out Erik@, then immediately clamped eir hand on eir mouth. "I mean..."

"Everyone can help", said Tomba with conviction, "Even me, and I'm only four."



Tomba's headmate Sheila put on her glasses, thought for a moment, then said, "I think Tomba is right. We all have talents and every talent can be used in this fight. If our talents – if *we* are unusual, so

¹ S.U.N.: Star Union North, of which humans are a member

much the better. We're so much more alive than our opponents and they just can't think alive, if you know what I mean? They don't get it. We can use that to our advantage, it's not a flaw."



Timothy put the glasses away. "Wow, that's a really good way of looking at things." He was genuinely impressed by his headmate. "But still... None of us can fight and we're only seven people, three of which are sharing the same body and none of us can fly a ship or anything!"

"Who says we can't work together with other people? We're not the only ones who want to stop this war, this massacre! We're not the only people – not even on this station, much less this part of the galaxy – who want freedom and justice for everyone. For us those are not only words, we don't use them as lies like government officials and business-people. To us, they're dreams, hopes, they're the goal we know we must reach for."

Pause.

"Oops, that was a little much pathos, wasn't it? I'm sorry, I've just never been a revolutionary before", said Sangeeta, this time letting her hair fall around her face like a veil.



Mr. Smith frowned, looking even more serious than usual. "Me neither. In fact, I've always been proud of being a good, law-abiding, hard-working citizen who pays his taxes on time. I have paid taxes for illegal wars. I have paid taxes for legal wars. But mostly I have worked hard and paid money for wars that weren't called wars. I've believed in and repeated the lies that make violence invisible or declare it to be necessary." He stopped talking, but frowned even harder than before.

Cora looked as though she knew what he was thinking. "It's like we've got to relearn everything, learn to see the world with different eyes.

"I've always thought that curiosity, joy, happiness and connectedness are the most important things ever and that they're universal, intrinsic rights. I'm 68 years old and only now do I realize that these and many other rights are systematically violated every single day, right in front of my nose. Right IN my nose!"

Erik@ chuckled. "In your *nose*?"

"In me. That includes my nose." Cora was her usual, cheerful self again.

"Um, OK, I'm sure that was really funny and everything, but this *is* a problem, right?", asked Timothy and seemed to want to apologize for bringing the conversation back to the topic. "I mean, we've all been parts of this whole mess, I mean this system of exploitation and lies and whatnot. We've been part of it for all our lives and we're still part of it!

We can't escape it, can we?"

"Not as long as it exists", said Erik@, "because even if we fled to some distant part of the galaxy, we'd still know that it is here. But even though we are simultaneously victims, witnesses and enablers of the cruelty of this society, that doesn't mean we can't fight it. It doesn't mean we can't win. We'll just have to be aware that we're enmeshed in it and unravel the system inside ourselves as well as outside of us. At the same time. It's got to be a parallel process, otherwise it's useless."

"You've been thinking a lot about this, Erik@", said Mr. Smith, who used to be their boss until recently. No one had spoken about it, but in the past months they had somehow stopped being colleagues and developed into a subversive group. They didn't need a boss. Mr. Smith had decided to stop being one. And if he made a decision, he dedicated a lot of effort to it.

Erik@ rolled eir eyes. "Yes, thought a lot. And read. Now see what good all this oh so intelligent theory does."

"We need it. We need everything we have."

"You're right. It's just... It's always just been theory for me. It was comfortable. I could feel so snug, but until now it didn't have any real impact on my life. I didn't have a chance to act on it, or at least that's what I told myself. It was nothing but empty words."

"That's not true", said Sangeeta and Cora together. They looked at each other. It had never happened before that they said the same thing at the same time.

"You had a real impact on me. I mean just working in the same office as you has made me think about many things, see many things in a different light. Even if at first that didn't go beyond 'Who would have thought guys who look like butch lesbians wearing grim rebel fashion can be orderly accountants who are even good at their job.'" Sangeeta looked at Erik@. "You know that was a long time ago. It feels like it was in another life." She smiled. "It must be at least five months!"

"See how much can change in such a short time. We change. Our perception of ourselves, each other and the world around us has changed so much since Sangeeta took the job at the ministry and found out about those weapons deals", said Cora.

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"See all this?" Tomba jumped around excitedly, "I decorated the room and Timothy and Sheila and me baked this cake and veggie-pie and I forgot what that Phee-Yah food is called, but Smart Fungi don't eat--"

“They do eat, but they can't come here in person. They send their Robots to speak through them. Also, they call themselves Zeroes”, said Mr. Smith, who had just entered the room with Sangeeta and Cora.

Sangeeta slumped into the next chair and sighed. “That wasn't easy, I had to run around the whole space station until I found someone who knows someone from the Lukkan underground movement who would meet with us. But ey couldn't come today. Next time.”

Cora, who had admired the Phee-Yah-style decorations and the food and laughed with Tomba at the balloons, now looked sympathetically at her, “Your legs must hurt a lot now. Can I get you something?”

“Thanks, but all I need is some rest. The leg-supports' integrated painkillers will kick in soon.”

“In a better world you would get the best medical care there is, without having to pay for it. Your legs would be as good as mine or anyone's”, said Erik@, who had just entered with two Phee-Yahs in tow. Phee-Yahs are the descendants of extragalactic A.I.s who had started integrating living tissue into their systems some time after arriving in the milky-way. They evolved into half-biological, half-mechanical beings which their ancestors would have considered a horrible mistake. These two looked a bit like cyborg-llamas covered in purple leaves instead of fur. But only a bit.

A short time later an anarchist from the human capital Mars arrived, and then the Zero robot.

“I think this is everyone, right?”, asked Timothy who would be moderating the meeting. He looked around the room nervously. None of them had worked together with aliens before.

“Not everyone!”, shouted a harsh voice from the door. About a dozen people, all humans, had crashed through the door and stood there looking menacingly at the rebels. Sheila didn't have time to put on her glasses, but she had recognized one of them: “That's Pete from the next habitat module!” He and several of the other uninvited guests were carrying gockey-sticks.

This is an (unfinished) short story that we wrote for Nils' birthday in 2011. It was sparked by the quote you see above the story, which comes from Nils, and in November 2011 we started fleshing this idea out into what will eventually become a novel. But we'll write that in german. Ah, and just in case you were confused: This is not Nils of Meeresbande, it's another Nils, author of several highly recommended zines and our bestest friend!