Farmer's Maze

Character

Kali Leban

The Leban family

General area of expertise: Recruitment and turning , incrimination of enemy personnel through seduction, interrogation
Sexuality and relationships: Strongly extragamous and polygamous

The Leban family is a medium-sized family, 17 members. It has been in existence for several hundred years and lives in Aksellat, the Abaranian central city. The structure of the Leban family is quite unusual, even for Abar that really has no "standard family". The family members are separated in age by 5-7 years, and each family member has just one child. Consequently, there are no generations, but instead a string of sisters and brothers, and a few young children.

They have a huge sprawling home and get on very well with each other – and their many guests. All family members are gregarious, easy-going and extremely charming, and the house is like an ongoing party. In peace time, family members have mostly worked in the entertainment industry.

Kali and Alli are brothers, separated in age by 11 years. Even though the age difference does not prohibit a sexual relationship, they have never been close in that way, since Kali is strictly heterosexual. Kali has a primchild, Arakke at five years old, now at home with the rest of the family, while Alli is still too young for receiving his first primchild.

Contact Agent Kali Leban, 39 years

Brother of Junior Contact Agent Alli Leban, polygamous and extragamous, heterosexual

Charming and suave, you radiate sincere interest and understanding.

Special ability: You make people trust you and tell you more than they meant to, maybe even their secrets, or help you. Your special ability works when you consciously mirror your co-player's body language and say:"You know, can trust me." Your co-player must then be affected by your sincere interest and tell you more than they meant to or act in your interest. This does not mean that they have to tell you everything or do everything you ask, though.

Kali is feeling completely disgusted with this assignment. He and Alli was already offplanet, having said goodbye to Arakke and the rest of the family at a big party. And now they have been called back down to the surface of Aris, the clouds alone know what for, and he's not even in charge! He wasn't able to find out who is, but the rumours say that they're going to be lead by a pre-lieutenant, even though he's the only senior agent in the group. He cannot fathom what he's doing wrong, but he really should have passed beyond the rank of agent by now. It's beginning to burn in his heart. People of his own age or younger, with shorter service time, have passed him by and are now senior agents.

It all started really well. He joined the intelligence service in his early twenties and when he was on only his second mission, he earned a medal and a commendation for uncovering and stopping an Arisian plot to introduce a virus in the underground supercomputers. His prim-mother suggested that he may be too god a field operative to ever be promoted into a desk job. Or maybe it's that he's not good enough in making snap decisions? Some of his aptitude tests are a bit lacking in that direction, it is not his strongest force, but still he's better than the average person.

Of course, the average officer is somebody like Steli Anoksa. From a military leader family where the favorite family pastime is playing strategic board games or staging a mock war in the garden! He thanks the stars that he was born on Abar and so didn't have to spend his childhood in a family like that. His genetic source was actually an Anoksa, so on any other planet he would have had to. What misery that would have been!

Of course he couldn't remember anything from his own handover ceremony, he was only a year old then, but he has heard the story many times: the stiff Anoksas, all in their galla uniforms, and his family in colorful garb of the latest fashion. The Anoksas were terribly serious and intense and clearly did not enjoy the humorous mood scene performed by the antigravity dancers hired for the occasion. And even though the Anoksas had tried to imagine what someone from the Leban family would like, they gave him a vid by a very famous 3D artist – depicting a space battle! It hangs on his wall, though, the depiction IS exquisite.

Of course he was intrigued, when he met an actual Anoksa last year. Especially as she was really beautiful and interesting, and he only found the intensity arousing. It was SO lucky, that nothing really happened on that train. They had seats next to each other, when they were both reporting to the military base at Reaktat. Talking lead to flirting, that lead to sitting a little too close, and then thankfully they arrived. They exchanged access codes, but very soon he learnt about the new rank of pre-lieutenant and realized what the slightly different striping on Steli

Anoksa's uniform had meant. He inquired, and she was not a lieutenant, as he had thought, but a pre-lieutenant straight out of the military academy, only 20 years old. Normally, she would have been placed as a cadet first, assisting a lieutenant, but as the war was heating up, they needed more officers, hence the idea of pre-lieutenants. She had to be more than 15 years younger than him – not a nice thought.

He has never been interested in the out-of-generation, and his rationalization of his mistake was that her air of authority lent her more years than she really had. Steli Anoksa didn't realize the problem and actually sent him flowers, at the same time he sent her a polite message informing her of it. Well, his rank of agent added to his youthful looks was misleading, and she was somewhat excused in assuming that he was younger than his 39 years. She had been so embarrassed, and he had been embarrassed to admit that he was only an agent at his age. But it's people like her that will be commanding people like him, no doubt about it, and she should probably have been more careful. Assumption is the friend of the enemy, goes the saying in the military. He would never make a mistake like that. He should have been promoted to senior agent years ago!

Abaranian and Arisian Culture

There are two inhabited planets in the Abaris system: Aris, the third planet, and Abar, the fourth planet. This tale takes place on Abar, when the war between the two planets was just beginning.

Abar

On Abar, children are tested at the age of one to map out their innate personality, talents and intelligence. After this they are placed with the family unit, where they will be best able to reach ther full potential. Based on this test and further tests throughout childhood, their educations and careers are also decided by ingenious programs in the gigantic computers, buried deep underground.

Abaranian families are bound together by the love that arises out of their harmony and common interests, while the biological origin is nothing more than that, a coincidence, a random combination of the genes of two different people. The family shares everything with each other, and everything is owned in common. Sisters and brothers are usually lovers and regarded as spouses, since they are obviously not biologically related, and thereby one of the most common human taboos is lifted.

Marriages as such do not exist, but the adult part of any family the equivalent could be seen as such and thus consist not of one woman and one man, but can consist of any combination of people of both sexes. Physical fidelity and sex is not seen as that important, but does take place mostly within the family. Abaranians define sexual relationships on two different axes, the first being monogamous vs. polygamous, the other being introgamous (sex inside the family) vs. extragamous (outside the family), and all variations can be found. The most loving name you can call your beloved is brother or sister, and even extragamous lovers use this endearment. The only taboo is sex between generations, known as out-of-generation, and a generation is generally agreed to be defined as an age difference of 15 years.

Women normally bear children in their twenties, on average three or four, and are then sterilized, but again this can vary widely. Children are conceived as it may happen as the result of sex, since the culture is yet young, and the planet has room for many more people. The children are not given names and are known as "guests" untill their first birthday when they are tested and placed with their real family, who gives them their name. The attitude displayed towards a guest brings to mind the love given to a special pet.

All of society is consequently organized so that everybody is placed in exactly the niche they are best suited for. There are several families whose members are the directors, lawmakers and administrators of the state apparatus, but the Abaranians see themselves as a democracy. The computer chooses only those persons for these families, that are capable of governing, enjoys it, and that the population would have chosen, did they have the full knowledge that the computers have. Other families are involved in research, farming, the arts, industry etc.

Companies and businesses and are often owned and controlled by one or more families. The economy is a mix between capitalism and a planned economy. Each family or business delivers their services or products without payment. Their performance is monitored, as all data are fed into the computers, and the family receives an allocation of luxury points, based on how well they have done (measured by many variables, among them generation of happiness). All normal amenities are freely available to everybody, while luxury goods and services (as defined by the government and the computers) cost luxury points. The computers are not otherwise involved in the running of society, only in family placement, education, career choice and market monitoring. Everyone is happy, because they are in the right place - with the right people. Or are they?

Aris

On Aris, people are also placed in niches, but based on quite different criteria. Arisians believe that everything is determined by blood. You are born into your family and caste, and you belong to it forever, since no one can obviously change who they are. Everyone knows quite clearly what is expected of them and are trained from an early age in their role. The eldest son or daughter inherits the family property, while the younger child is either dependent on their family's goodwill, or have to fend their own way in the world.

How did the societies on Abar and Aris arise?

The many similar and yet remarkably different customs on Abar and Aris are not incidental. Abar was colonized by disaffected individuals from Aris, who felt that their talents and abilities were wasted in Aris' rigid caste system. Raised as they were in a caste system, their thoughts ran on within this framework, and they developed a different caste system - based on talent and skill, rather than inheritance. The early Abaranians built the gigantic computers and fed them with data from Aris. Tests administered to children at different times were compared with how they had performed in their given career together with data from other planets, where choice is free. For the first several generations, the system

was far from flawless, but gradually, as more and more data were gathered, the process was refined.

The Abaranian community has now existed for over 600 years, and eventually it has become clear that their system works somewhat better than the Arisian. Abar was outcompeting Aris before the war, and some historians believe that this is the real reason for the war between Abar and Aris.

The strife over Allera's inheritance

Albak Skeop, an Abaranian merchant from a prestigious family, met and married a very rich arisian, Lera Skasenak, first-born daughter of a family of mine owners from the industrial caste. When they had a daughter, the father expected them to have their child given the standard Abaranian one-year test. The infant girl had after Arisian custom already been named Allera. The test showed to the father's great joy that Allera belonged in one of the best research families, Kareol. Albak and Lera took the child to its "family" for a longer visit. Albaks unvoiced intention was to surrender the child to the Kareols, but under the influence of his wife's Arisian morals, he became reluctant to be parted from his little guest. When it became clear to the mother, what was happening, she insisted furiously that they immediately go home to Aris - with their daughter.

The Kareol family demanded that she be returned to them, and while these demands were still being tried in the judicial system, the controversial couple died in an accident, exploring for and finding axondit in the belt of Eklas, midway between Abar and Aris. The orphan Allera was now the owner of large properties, including this asteroid belt filled with axondit, a rare mineral, which according to Abaranian researchers from the Kareol family could solve all energy problems.

Now began an inheritance dispute, the equal of which has rarely been seen. The Kareol family felt that they had been deprived of a daughter whose abilities would now never reach their full potential, as she would grow up with people who were merely her biological relatives, never knowing the joy and harmony of a true family. Of course they were also interested in the amazing wealth that was her property. Allera's guardians, her aunts and uncles, refused flatly to give her to people they regarded as complete strangers with no claim to the child.

When the importance of the mineral became known to the public, the two planetary governments became involved. Abaranian lawyers ruled that the asteroids belonged to the Kareol family - according to the very own law of the Arisians - while Arisian lawyers ruled that the Kareol family had no legal claim.

The decisive differences between the two planets' way of life, which until now has been tolerated largely by ignoring each other, are now very visible. The contempt they feel for each other's social structure and moral standards, the disagreement on something as basic as what constitutes a family, has added fuel to the fire, and there seems to be a real all-out war brewing. The skirmishes between Abaranian and Arisian forces have been growing ever more frequent and the seize fires ever shorter. Talks about enforcing a seize fire has bogged down. Both societies are gearing up their military forces, including the military intelligence.

The genetic inheritance of the Abarisians

The people of both Abar and Aris closely resemble the human genetic normal standard.

Gender roles

Both on Abar and Aris the sexes are completely equal, and gender is considered to be a relatively unimportant factor in the assessment of a human.

Dress

Both on Abar and Aris, a constant part of the clothing is a braided ribbon with your family's colors. Traditionally, they are worn on Aris as a braided sash around the waist. This is a symbol of how the family is the living expression of their genetic heritage, which they themselves are carrying around and can pass on (in the genitals). On Abar, on the contrary, they tie a braided ribbon around their heads to symbolize that the true community springs from the mind. The clothing have besides these braided colored ribbons no special features.

Names and behavior

The family name is the more important one, and outside their family you will often simply be called by your surname. Abarisian names often contain k, l, a and e, as seen by the names Allera, Albak, Lera, Skasenak and Kareol. In both languages final e is usually transformed into an I and final o intu a u.

Arisians are very conservative and polite in their behavior, while Abaranians are somewhat more relaxed and individualistic.