Farmer’s Maze

Character

Steli Anoksa

The Anoksa family

General area of expertise: military and personal leadership, mastering strategies of war and battle

Sexuality and relationships: Occasionally extragamous, polygamous

The Anoksa family is a large multi –generational family. They have supplied the Abaranian army with many of its generals for more than a hundred years, and the family life is strongly influenced by military norms and ideals. Discipline and proper behavior is strongly encouraged, the main pastime is strategy games and physical competitions, and most family members are highly competent, enterprising, intense and serious.

To say that they are well fitted to serve as army officers is almost an understatement: they are born officers. In the field, they show initiative and courage, have a high self confidence and carry themselves with natural authority.

Pre-lieutenant Steli Anoksa, 20 years

Polygamous and extragamous, heterosexual

You carry yourself with complete confidence and exude natural leadership. You like to improvise and make decisions on the spot.

Your special ability: When you give orders, people obey you. Your special ability works when you say: "This is an order: xxx!". People want to obey you, and are very likely to do as you say. Of course this is not 100 % effective.

Steli is eager and tense to go on her very first mission as an officer. In school, when she was a teenager, of course she was also a leader, someone that her friends and class mates looked to for direction. But it's not the same as a real military command. Being chosen to be a member of the Anoksa family, she has known from childhood that she would make a good officer, and now is the time to show it.

Her primfather has warned her that her abilities do not mean she will never make mistakes – everybody makes mistakes – and that there are details and elements of leadership that can only be learned in the field. But Steli feels certain that this job will go without a hitch. It's not even a real mission, just a civilian problem that is best solved using military intelligence. She knows little specifically of crime investigation, but that is of no relevance. Her job is to utilize the capabilities of her team, decide on the optimal strategy and get the job done.

She wonders what the crime in question is? She has received hardly any information, not even the names of of her group members. Well, she will know soon enough. She just hopes she won't encounter that senior agent Kali Leban, either here or in the future. It was just mortifying to discover the he was out-of-generation to her. He had apparently discovered it very soon after their first meeting on the train going to the base at Reaktat, while she never knew till he told her. So she had plenty of time to thoroughly embarrass herself by sending him flowers!

She should have researched his background before doing something so foolish. The best basis of an optimum strategy is to know as many facts as possible. She has been reprimanded by her mothers and fathers on being too impulsive some times. Well, she has learnt that lesson, and luckily without much of a consequence. No one knows anything, except her, Kali Leban and the flower service.

She has never been off planet before, and it feels as such a shame that she'll have to go back so soon. Some military families send their children off for education on other planets, but the Anoksas pride themselves on being Abaranian through and through. Since Abaranians are chosen for their latent abilities and these abilities are given the fullest opportunity to flower, Abaranians must be the best in everything they do. The average officer from Abar is as good as the best on any other planet, and the same goes for all other professions. The self confidence of an Anoksa is no false pride, it is more in the nature of a realistic assessment. Her leadership skills may not flower in this exact assignment, but flower they will.

Her mission on Abar is on her mind all the time: The best strategy for establishing a cell, the best ways of connecting the various cells of infiltrators and spies, safe ways of passing on information. It is a nuisance to turn from her preparations to this civilian assignment, but since it must be done, it is worth doing, and she will give it her best.

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.

The combine harvester

Fela (20)

Primpartners: Used to be Eklan, but since Maklar has become old enough, he is gradually becoming the most important.

Primchildren: none yet.

Fela is five years older than Maklar, but he is a kind and intelligent boy, and it is nice to have a partner from her own generation, so Fela has spent a lot of time with Maklar these last months. For the last couple of days, however, Maklar has seemed quite distraught, when Fela has talked to him. Probably, it is because he knows something about his father, Kentes' involvement in Latefas death. He might even have witnessed it.

Fela did not have a very close relationship with Latefa. She had been a great friend to have at the lake during harvest, and sometimes Fela had also helped taking care of her guests, being the oldest of the children and all. It was also cool to have her advice, when the relationship with Eklan started. Latefa was Eklans older primsister, and it kind of evened out his being twelve years older than Fela to have Latefas advice from time to time.

But the last year or two Fela has actively kept her distance. It was simply too embarassing to have such an old woman behave like a 20-old and keep on having guests. Old women do not have as healthy guests, anyway.

Fela is expecting her first guest now. It is still very early in the pregnancy, and nothing shows – but wow, it would have been weird if Latefa had been there expecting yet another guest at the same time.

Fela finds it pretty weird also that Latefa had a string of sex-partners outside the family after she fell out with Anares. Actually she is not all together sure that it was not the other way round … maybe Anares ditched Latefa because he found out that she had partners outside the family.

The yeast vats

Eklan (32)

Primpartners: Jakeb, Klea and Fela

Primchildren: Lekala

Eklan is Latefa's youngest primbrother, and also the youngest member of his generation in the family. His varied and unsettled sexual patterns may lead other people to regard him as easy going and almost insincere, but he is actually very earnest about his family obligations.

When Eklan got his first primchild last year and named him Lekar after his primparent Lekala, his empathy with his sister Latefa, who still did not have a child almost ruined the pride and joy of holding such a perfect little person in his arms. But the computer knows best. He had to tell himself that, and nursing and taking care of the adorable little Lekar, he also realized that they belonged together and that it was folly to try and tamper with the wisdom of the computer.

To Eklan, it is inconceivable that anyone in the family would kill Latefa. It simply is not possible. It is much more likely that she killed herself. After all she was chronically depressed over her condition. She had been so for some time, and it only became worse as the years went by. Eklan is deeply saddened by his sister's untimely death and also for the fate she has suffered which can now never be remedied. He really is sad, but he also makes a point out of showing his poor spirits to everybody in order to harvest encouragement or sympathy.

Being the youngest of his generation, Eklan is used to being popular, and he is also quite dependant on being popular. He usually tries to please others in order to gain praise and affection from them and is quite often successful. This pattern will also be relevant in relation to the investigators, whom he will try to pleas as best he can.

The family's current standpoints on the central controversies

The question of Latefa's guests

Latefa has had many more guests than is usual. As usual, they were tested and given to their families, but some died accidentally before being tested, and lately she has isolated herself when she had guests, and there hasn't been much information about them.

I fear to think what she does to the poor creatures	Rabel Anares Mala Renka Kentes Maklar	Jakeb	Partos Fela	Eklan Torek	Pelek Klea Lekala	She has been so unlucky, I guess she tried the best she could

The controversy of who should take care of the children at the lake

The children of the family always spend harvest time frolicking at the lake. Usually, Lekar and Latefa together with the larger kids take care of all the small ones. But this year, Kentes has been voicing his concern: he felt that Latefa was trying to usurp his role as primary parent for his two-year old Katli and did not want her babysitting at the lake. He said he did not feel that it was safe, and that Latefa's interest in Katli seemed unhealthy.

Latefa should not be allowed near the kids	Rabel Mala Renka Kentes Maklar	Jakeb	Partos Anares	Pelek Fela Torek	Klea Eklan Lekala	Latefa loves the kids, she wouldn't dream of harming them

The production and sale of illegal vision spores

The family secretly produces hallucinatory spores at the yeast vats. These are traded for luxury items on the black market, but nobody in the family would dream of using them. They are just not that kind of family.

The vision spores are a valuable addition to the production of the farm	Pelek Klea Renka	Partos Fela	Rabel Anares Maklar Torek	Jakeb Kentes	Mala Lekala	The vision spores are illegal, and we should stop producing them