

# STRANDED

A short story by Andreas Ingo

I took to the stars after a period of unemployment. It was on a huge space-ship, a space-bus, going a relative short distance between two destinations. I was a lone worker, a cleaner, a cook and a game machine player. It was long days of casual rest and many occupations. Sometimes I saw tired travellers. Bent on low income. Traveling the empty space on short vacations.

Not much was said during these days. I calmed down in my lonely room. I ate left over food from kitchen areas. I summoned thought about the real reason for my change of lifestyle.

It had to do with my existential choice of choosing random work for the chance of new experiences. But not much new were revealed on my journey. Just angered workers, silent travellers lost to tedious silences. And occasional victories from people using the game machines.

The space-bus ended up in a paradise environment. It was a cleaned region. A region of blue beaches, of green neon lights projecting their energy beams upon the travellers from random destinations. At some point I stopped some travellers to ask them for the reason for their vacation. They said they wanted to take it easy: Calm down, lose routine and schedule.

“But easiness has its price.” I said to one of the travellers.

“Compared to what?” One of them said.

And I mentioned that vacation also had its bad points.

But as I went back to the space-bus and the journey went along to the starting point I started to see that much of my life amounted to the same thing: Taking casual work, taking it easy between jobs and doing it again in constant repeat.

It was a horrid life cycle, not a spiralling movement, just a circular arrangement of events. I had met the final destination for a conscious explorer. For an experienced worker and game machine player. Not much more could be said or done. I had already taken my life to the limit. Instead I had to calm down much more. Realize that “knowledge” only could take me that far. And that my new life was a life of pure Dionysian pleasure.

It was boring. But “boring” was a true state of affairs. I started to accept my boredom. My previous will of transcendence was replaced with a will of acceptance. The acceptance that life didn’t amount to more than this. To work, to have some casual pleasures. To think less and enjoy life in all its simplicity.

I had a sex partner, I had a couple of grown kids. But still my life had eased down. It became so silent as to scream aloud in its silence.

It screamed for a change of plans. Or for a higher form of acceptance. That I just had my bodily pleasures. That I already knew enough. And that even a hard working day was seen as a way to stretch my bodily muscles. It was like walking exercises.

The unbearable truth was the truth that life didn’t amount to more than this. I saw it clearer for every day. For every ride with the space-bus. For every chance encounter with travellers. For group meetings with the space-bus staff.

All I knew could be summed up in simple sentences: “Take care of yourself.”, “Be truthful.”, “Arrange your life around your primary passions.” The problem was that I had no more passions. Not a fixed goal. Not something to build against as I already knew my victories and defeats.

I gave up learning for the simple recognition of my true nature.

And as passions ended I found a richer life. A life without the burden of intellectual progress. It was a silent life. A life devoid of any purpose except the purpose to go on in the same way. It was no real

problem. But it felt peculiar. A bold transition from my earlier life as a reckless explorer.

I used my spare time as an exercise in futility: The consideration of myself as moon dust. As a small crack in a planetary surface. Or a small wave particle in the ocean.

I found greater pleasure in the silent observations of nothingness. I attuned to this black void. And I realized that it was nothing unnatural with this state of mind. Just a silent observation of perfection.

I saw the world as a silent oscillation within a world of vibrating strings. A universe of stillness and wonder.

I accepted my condition and was content.