

Title = Aliens Onboard

Decade = 2080

Characters = Bowe Henderson

Plot = An intergalactic peace treaty has to be brokered when aliens - very powerful aliens - are discovered. To help maintain it, they agree to allow one human (chosen randomly out of the entire global population) to live with them and teach them about human customs for 10 years.

1st January 2080

I have a late new year's resolution update: I got chosen to lead the human customs course. That makes sense. I went downstairs this morning expecting cereal and there was Ulric Kleepnex sitting on the stairs with weeds in a bouquet. The first lesson of the course started there and then.

Mum said I have a choice but we all know what that means - I either go of my own free will or disappoint the entire human race.

Packed up all my alien conspiracy stuff, figured I'd at least get a kick out of that. I'm allowed social media 'on a basis of 20 meterbites' - whatever that means. I guess I'll find out. Missing home isn't really going to be a problem, it's like I'm barely there half the time anyway.

To the aliens we go.

28th October 2084

I've literally lived here for 4 years and Ulric still jumps when I say a word. I was told it's because my 'unsettling human smell' is that startling. It's a bit hard not to take offence at that. The alien with the 37 blue fingers (still can't remember names) told me it's a general human thing, not just me. Doesn't really make it any better but whatever.

I would say I'm homesick but living here has been the most fun I've ever had. Anti-gravity has been insane, and the food is based on emotional sense rather than taste.

Human customs 101 has been going on for a while now. I think THEY think I have a detailed 10-year plan or something but I'm honestly making this all up as I go. So far we've only covered religion. That took 4 whole years. At this point, I feel like it'd almost be easier (and quicker) to learn about their customs instead of trying to teach them ours.

29th October 2084

I told Ulric my idea, and he dissolved into a ball of gas. Everyone gasped. Again, I'm a bit confused about what that means.

4th March 2085

So! It's been a busy few months. I've learnt that dissolving into a ball of gas is alien-speak for 'I have something urgent to do so I have to leave to do that immediately and travelling as a ball of gas is faster.' Who would've guessed?

Ulric spoke to 'the council of inter-human affairs' and they agreed it'd be easier to teach one human the customs to see if they could accept them, and then try it out on the rest of the world. One step at a time I guess.

They split the lessons into a few weeks of telepathic concentration and then I had to tell them humans can neither read minds nor stay awake for weeks on end. The 48ft alien that bends herself into a spiral and walks around, she told me they've sorted it out into a curriculum which will last for the remaining 5 years of the customs plan.

18th November 2085

Aliens are super weird.

22cd January 2086

Turns out aliens don't celebrate the New Year the same we do. They get really angry and competitive and they have - what is essentially - a murderous dodgeball competition but with these weird floaty translucent sentient spiky balloons that you have to move with your mind. I think they're pets.

And it takes about 3 weeks to recover from it; lessons got paused for a little while.

6th March 2086

Stuff's been weird. Very weird.

Most of the time I'm just consistently baffled by what's been going on. A few weeks back I had to sign a non-disclosure agreement when I walked in on Ulric hugging his floaty spiky balloon pet. Later that night I was told hugging is illegal.

Money doesn't exist as currency. They work for each other to help each other and that's how they keep society functioning. People do what's necessary and the jobs that no-one wants to do are done by robots. Everyone pursues their own interests.

Houses are very important here. They're symbols of your growth. A 4 year old isn't allowed to have a certain colour house because he hasn't reached his 'marking time' yet, and a 44 year old isn't allowed to have a certain colour house because it'll interfere with the passage of time. Oh right, the passage of time. They control it. Human timelines obviously work chronologically and here, they can manipulate it and spread it out and slow it down and even fast forward past certain events.

They have an institution dedicated to learning colours. Everyone has to go and it's punishable by death if you don't. Colours are very big here. If you wear yellow at the wrong time of day, you could be committing treason. If you wear pink at the wrong time of the day, you could be proposing marriage. And blue? Let's just say you're going to be mobbed if you wear it after 5pm.

14th February 2090

Yeah, it's only gotten weirder from here.

I got to read some of the manuscripts on work, dating back centuries, and this is the basic gist of it:

- Time during work must not be manipulated unless for necessary function
- Everyone must contribute, punishable by death
- Work starts at 10 - no need for education when everything is telepathic
- At least 20 years of school is mandatory
- When you turn 30 you have to get a job even if you're still in school
- Aliens, or maybe just this specific species, live to 822 years on average.
- You can retire at 500 if you really wish to, or you can keep working
- You can choose to keep the same job for life if you want, but changes are possible if you feel you need stuck or uninspired
- No experience is required for any job whatsoever (the telepathic thing again)
- There is no inequality gap between royals (more on that later) and ordinary citizens
- Your house size is solely dependent on how big your family is, in regards to either offspring or pets

I guess the rest comes when the work module of the plan is over, and then I can start learning about their holidays. To be honest I'm more interested in how their colour system works but I guess I'll have to wait and see.