

Blue Fog

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I dedicate this book to my children, who give me a reason to continue fighting every day.

Without you, all would be for nothing.

I can't say I've ever been a model student or that teachers have noticed that I had any talent for writing. Instead, I always knew that I was different and that I had something important to fulfill in this life.

I discovered my passion for reading when I had my first child in 2009. I noticed that I was making all sorts of connections and that I could unlace the thread of complicated novels and also imagine other endings for them. I wanted to be able to create myself.

In 2012, I wrote for the first time four pages of the novel "Blue Fog" just for fun, but I abandoned the project, feeling that it wasn't the right time for it.

In 2018, I anonymously posted the same fragment on Facebook and received many encouraging comments. It was the beginning of everything.

I started writing this book, initially intending for it to be translated into English under the title "Hope". But because the key element of this story was this strange phenomenon called "the blue fog," I decided to change the name of the novel.

I was inspired by this paranormal phenomenon that occurs in a mountainous area of Buzău county where I live. This is a fitting backdrop for all of the strange events that overturn all of David's principles. The main character loses confidence in

the universal governing system promoted by Orions, an alien species that came to Earth to bring peace. He starts having questions about the real purpose of this domination as well as about the notion of freedom.

I wrote the book as I felt at that moment, at a time of uncertainty in my life. I abandoned the novel for about a year, then I worked on other projects. I gained some expertise, and I can say that I have evolved. I changed the story, cut out many parts of the text, which I initially had considered good, but then I realised they weren't that important.

I intended to publish the novel in 2019 because I had long finished it and I had edited it so many times. Something held me back and I hid the book in a drawer for a year or so, then I thought I'd give it another chance. It was the best decision because, although it was a very hard job, the last editing round was the one that brought to light the complicated destiny of David Jacob.

"Blue Fog" will surely remain the book that has changed my fate, that has helped me overcome a difficult period in my life and given another meaning to it—that of creating.

My dear friends, I hope you understand more than words can say and enjoy my novel!

Yours truly,
Irina Dumitru

Chapter 1

The whole staff has already left, and I have just finished my work. I'm still in the room where we keep our bio products, and I'm preparing to leave. Following the automatic locking up of the lab, I come out into the hall where it's dark and there is a heavy silence. The temperature is as cold as it is inside, but I've been used to it for a long time and I can't even smell the disinfectant anymore. Although I was never keen on company when I was the last to stay after hours, I wonder what it would be like to... Suddenly, I hear a noise and someone covers my mouth from behind my back without any time for me to react:

"If you make a sound, I will blow your brains out. Go back to the lab and make no noise! Unlock the system and act normally," a female voice says, pushing me from behind.

I try to escape, turning my hand to the back and gripping her wrist, but I fail because she's pushing the weapon even harder into my flesh.

"Just try something," she says.

I decide to cooperate because I'm curious about the purpose of this visit. I place my head in front of the facial recognition panel, and the door opens with a soft sound.

I go inside slowly without any struggle, then I realize she's a rebel, one of those who have removed their Orion-implanted chip. They reject universal peace, and I know they're

dangerous. I've been instructed to report if I see anything suspicious. My first thought is to activate the alarm, but when I see my attacker, I forget my intentions and simply stand there. The woman is no older than twenty, and she is rather small.

"I need a healthy kidney. Get me a cryogenic box!"

"It's here," I say, pointing to the place where we keep them.

"Do you really think I'm that stupid? Move!" she says, trying to intimidate me with the weapon.

I notice her large, almond-shaped eyes, which stand out on her round face with nicely formed lips. She's wearing worn-out but clean clothes that try to hide the generous shape of her hourglass figure.

"A child is scheduled for a transplant tomorrow. He needs it urgently, and it's going to take a while for another to be fully developed!" I insist. "You can't escape anyway, They're everywhere."

"I have no choice. My mother is dying. I'm sure you'll find a solution for your child. I know it's not the only kidney. I've heard the assistants talk."

"If she's sick, she must be brought here to the hospital."

"Move and shut up!"

I take the box and try to hand it to her, but she says I should hold it and makes me turn my back.

Meanwhile, she grabs a doctor's coat and puts it on, moving the gun from one hand to the other.

It's the perfect opportunity for me, and I make one last attempt to escape, just to see how far she's willing to go. With one movement, I hit her forearm, hoping I will make her gun fly, but the weapon fires and I am shot. Red lines begin to trickle down my arm, tickling me slightly. A few seconds later, the pain strikes, just like thunder comes after lightning. The wound burns a little, and I grab it with my opposite hand, trying to stop the bleeding.

"I told you I wasn't kidding. Stop putting me to the test. I'm right behind you, and if you pull any more tricks, I'll shoot. I have nothing to lose. I have to save my mother," she says.

"If you want to be sure of the success of the transplant, you should take some serum."

"Serum?" she replies as if she has never heard of it before.

When They came from the Orion Constellation forty years ago, They promised salvation. I hadn't been born at the time, but my father told me that he had looked at the sky in fascination. "God is too great to have created just us!" he kept saying. At first, he thought they were the archangels of the Lord. Back then, he was working as a doctor at a clinic in Buzău. He was so amazed when They'd brought the serum into hospitals. Seeing that just a tiny amount could heal serious wounds and help assimilate new organs after transplant was incredible.

"It's Their gift to us humans. One drop will speed up healing," I tell her as I take two little bottles and put them into my pocket.

"Hurry up!"

We leave my lab, and, after I scan my eyes, the automatic shutoff triggers. We head down the long hallway. I'm moving as naturally as I can with the terrible sting in my arm that makes me sweat like a pig.

We pass the second level of security. I scan again and the doors close behind us. From the right corner of the corridor, Ikar, the guardian, appears. I have never liked the guy because he's not really nice. Although Orions are anything but nice.

The thing about Ikar is that he makes me feel somehow uneasy whenever I see him. Sometimes I catch him following me like a criminal, sitting still in my lab, and analysing me while I work. It is true that his task is to observe, but he makes it too invasive.

From his angle, it's less noticeable that I'm hurt. Ikar looks at me cautiously, as he usually does, then sees the rebel. I could have taken advantage of the moment and pointed out that something was wrong just by looking at him, but I decide not to.

"David Jacob, why is there an unauthorised human in this center?" That's all he can ask.

It only takes a moment for the rebel to draw out another weapon and fire. The shot hits him in the shoulder, and the alien instantly collapses.

"You killed him! How could you do that?" I shout in shock, realising for the first time what a dangerous situation I am in.

"I just tranquilised It. It should sleep for a while because, for Them, the effect lasts longer than for humans. If others see It, They will be on our tracks too quickly. Where can we hide It?" she asks, nudging me with the gun.

"There's a closet back in my lab. Nobody will look over there."

"Okay, carry It!"

"But I'm hurt, and it's a long way to go."

"You expect me to do it?"

I drag the Orion's inert body back to the lab, then stuff It into my storage space. The door closes automatically, locking It inside.

She looks at me as if she's happy with what I've done, but doesn't want to show any signs of weakness. There is something bizarre there, in her eyes, a kind of madness or despair that intrigues me.

We cross the security checkpoints again and finally manage to get out of the building without encountering other Orions.

She forces me to go to my HOV, then urges me to get into the pilot's seat as she sits to the right.

Cars have been out of use for a long time, and were replaced with HOVs, spherical flying machines made of a technologically advanced silver mercury-like material that the Orions were willing to share with humans.

"I don't think I can drive."

"You managed to carry the whole body to the lab, and now you're complaining about this? I just grazed you. If I'd wanted to kill you, you would be dead by now. Look," she says as she tears a piece of her shirt fabric, then ties up my wound.

In the vehicle, silence leaves room for my thoughts. It's hard for me to focus on the road with the wound on my arm, but I try to ignore the pain and think of other things. I can see the rebel's profile out of the corner of my eye. Her natural chestnut hair is tightly tied at the back, leaving her small, leprechaun-like ears visible.

For a moment, she catches my gaze and returns an expression of disgust.

I can't say that I'm scared, rather I'm curious. If I wanted to, I could make her gun fly out of her hand. Although in a more diluted form, I've inherited that telekinetic ability from my mother.

Although I am a hybrid, the result of a cross between a human and an Orion, I prefer to keep this information to myself. They don't generally mix with the human species, and such accidents would be unwelcomed.

I was three years old when I first became aware that I could move objects if I focused enough. I wanted to get back the teddy bear that my grandfather had taken from me. I imagined the bear coming back into my arms, and that's exactly what happened. My mother insisted on cultivating this ability of mine.

We drive for about thirty minutes until we reach an abandoned warehouse where we dump my vehicle and get into another HOV.

"Get in!" she says, pushing me toward the passenger seat, then she blindfolds and handcuffs me.

She doesn't want me to know where we're going; but what she doesn't know is that, compared to humans, the area of the brain responsible for my memory is more developed. That's why, as a curse, I never forget anything. I remember every curve of my mother's face and everything Master Orion told us at school.

It was autumn. We were sitting on the 'grass and he was showing us the Orion Constellation in the sky. I perfectly remember the position of each star on the great sparkling hunter.

"Do you see that bright star, the brightest one? That's Ori. We come from over there, from Orion, a planet smaller than Earth. 'Ori' which means 'life' in our language."

"I can't believe how they washed your brain," her voice stirs me from my daydream. "Salvation? Really? But who do you think you are? God? Go back, you monsters! Leave us alone, 'cause no one called you."

Her words, which had erupted all of a sudden without having anything to do with what was happening, make me believe that she might be crazy.

I try to estimate how much time passes by, attempting to remember any clues about the places we pass. She's driving