



Creation

by Philippa Werry

Today I devised a new game. It is not particularly exciting, but then, to Andraz and me, anything at all is a change after the long, boring years we spend surrounded by nothingness, emptiness, loneliness. Ours is a pointless existence, so it seems to me. Andraz said nothing when I suggested my game but gave a non-committal, perhaps partly contemptuous grunt. I realise that I in my youth must seem childish and immature to him, he who is older than the loneliness that surrounds us, for he can remember when all was life, gaiety, excitement; when there were others of our kind and every day brought new thrills and experiences. To him, I must seem full of nothing but youthful zest and ideals – but surely that is better than dwelling in the void, the feelingless void, which he inhabits? While one still has hopes and plans, and one refuses to face the future, and see that one will live this way forever, never ending, every day – year – century doing the same things without even the slightest break – but no, I must stop this, for this is the kind of thinking which has made Andraz so gloomy and dull.

But my idea – this is it. To while away some, at least, of the eternity of years, I suggested to Andraz that we create an entirely new world. Just think of it, to create a world of which one is the sole and entire ruler – what power! To Andraz, this merely brought forth a very slight flicker of interest – almost negligible, but still more emotion than I have seen from him in a very great time – but to me, the idea brings forth untold opportunities. It fills me with excitement so I cannot wait to begin. Something to live for, a goal to aim for...

We work hard, sometimes until our muscles ache from peering at the tiny things we create. It is the moment of life-giving that is the most exciting; the feeling of life pouring from Andraz and me into these creatures.

I cannot imagine now the long aeons with nothing to do – why did we never think of this before? Everything must be perfect, I am determined – not a single flaw!

Well, it is done – no, not done, for it will not be finished for a long, long time. But it is begun, at least, and even Andraz, though he does not admit it, is becoming infected with my enthusiasm.

Together we have created a new world. We have shaped it like



a ball, its surface irregularly marked with pits and mountains, with a clear, thin blue liquid spread over parts of its surface. We have surrounded it with other balls of its type, and sent them all spinning round much larger spheres of heat and fire. The balls – we call them “planets”; soon perhaps we will think up individual names for them – look so small and fragile; I am afraid something may happen to them. They could so easily collide with each other, and splinter, or glide into the central fire-spheres and burn up in a flash of flames.

In filling the lands of my Planet with life, we let our imaginations run off with us. Why, even Andraz roused himself from his customary stupor to help me design various animals. We invented quaint names for them, to match their strange – even hideous at times – appearances and habits.

We spend untold ages watching the life on My Planet unfold. The ball is so tiny that we have to use equipment to magnify its surface, so we can see, and I am afraid that our breath will blow the little ball off its course. It will be perfect, My Planet; the beings we create on it will be full of the life and joy which used to inhabit the space around us. They will discover things, invent things, and revel in the beauty around them – forests clinging to hills as I cling to My Planet, fearing to leave it lest something happen; snow-covered mountains overlooking still lakes, as I watch over My Planet, feeling a thrill at each new stir of life.

I really cannot understand Andraz. Since the idea, I thought he was becoming less introspective, more cheerful. Yet now it is worse than ever, for he gets angry at seeing me spending so much time over My Planet. He says it is a senseless idea, infantile; that the planet will break up, that the creatures will die off – and yet he seems not only angry, but grieved as well, for when he watches the life there – as he occasionally does – his expression is deeply sad. Then he wrenches himself out of this mood and tries to hurt My Planet to get rid of the hurt inside him. He steers it further away from the sun so layers of ice form and my carefully-created beings die in frozen agony, or he shakes it so the earth trembles and cracks dangerously while huge waves crash onto the shores – oh, I do not understand him! Of course I do not believe him, My Planet will never fail, but why? why? why does he do these things?

I must describe the new beings I have made. They look quaint and outlandish, yet at the same time intelligent. They are indeed far more clever than the creatures I have made previously. To distinguish them from all others, I have made them able to walk upright. They have a thick central tube from which protrude thinner tubes; two at the



bottom end, upon which they walk, and two more, one at either side, ending in very slender cylinders which they use for grasping. A ball-shape is situated above the central part, with a number of ingenious features which I myself dreamed up: openings for talking, breathing and hearing with, apertures with which to see, long thin material to adorn the ball-shape. Andraz snorted when he saw them, for of course we have no need of such features – but that is typically Andraz these days, intolerant. At times, I feel so much older than him, yet other times I could not start to guess what he is thinking about...

I have discovered one flaw with My Planet, for these new beings, the ones I call “men”, only live for one of our days. It is hard, for when I watch a group of them for any one time I cannot help but get attached to them, and then I see them die. I wonder why I cannot give to them my own gift of eternal life? But perhaps they would not want it. They seem happy enough... They are intelligent, these men; already they have made inventions, and clothe themselves more decently, and use better tools. They kill other animals – that, too, is a flaw; I did not foresee it, nor did I foresee the other. I hope there will not be more – but surely not.

I feel a great period of time is approaching for My Planet. The men are so much more civilised; they fill me with delight. What did I ever do without My Planet? Sometimes, it is true, they do sadden me – when they have these wars which end in deaths, so many deaths – when I see my creations lying, bruised and bleeding, on the battle-grounds, I cannot repress a tear. But oh! there are other, brighter things. The inventions they think up, the exquisite cloths they weave, the dances they indulge in, the fun they have! Often I feel like a young child with a present, never wishing to leave it, hurrying back from whatever other menial tasks are set so I may be with it. Sometimes I find Andraz has been there while I was away, and created disasters for my beings. But what can I do?

Something has happened which fills me with a vague sense of uneasiness. Why it should, I do not know and it is pointless, baseless, but it happened thus: this morning I was watching My Planet, entertaining myself by watching the boats sail to and fro on the rivers. Then, switching my attention to another part of the Planet, I saw what appeared to be a gigantic bird floating above the surface. I was alarmed, I confess. What was this enormous thing? On peering closer, I found it was actually a strange contraption which my men had used to fly above the ground.

Oh! it is stupid. Why should this annoy me? Yes it does, it bothers me; a small, persistent niggle at the back of my mind...



Things are happening quickly on My Planet. Somehow, after I saw that first bird-contraption, everything has seemed to move faster. There are more buildings – bigger buildings – more black smoke from factory chimneys. They cut down my beautiful forests and destroy the quiet beauty of my lakes and mountain-sides. They move faster; use ships, trains, aeroplanes. And twice, twice have I seen a most terrible thing. In the past, I know, there have been wars, but – these wars! It is horrific! I see men lying dead, not merely a field-full, but everywhere! Across the nations I see men killing each other, senselessly, with murderous guns and bombs – why? why? And what can I do – I am powerless – are my men too strong, too clever even for me? Near the end of the Second War a cloud rose above one of my fine cities – but – it was a city no more! Rubble, ruin, devastation, death! What have my men done?

The men have sent out a small weird-looking contraption to the planet closest to them. Looking at it, I felt an urge to laugh, but then I remembered my feelings when I saw the first plane, and I remembered what evil planes had done since then. And I thought perhaps these things might also be used for evil, and I was sick with fear.

They fight, still; they fight amongst themselves and death seems everywhere. My Planet, My beautiful Planet – there is hunger and grief in it; I see starving people, starving for food, starving for love – everywhere. How could I have been so blind to it all? I see piles of rubbish fouling my land, crying children with swollen bellies, sleek cars mangled up and surrounded by the smell of blood, earthquakes, eruptions, fires, hurricanes, disasters!

My Planet, why did it have to happen? I truly am not responsible! Andraz, it was Andraz – he saw the wars, the famines, the distrust and hate. He was full of grief, I could sense it, and at last he told me what he had been brooding on.

“Can you not see? Are you blind? Do you not realise that what is happening to this planet, is what happened to the life which used to surround us? They will destroy themselves. To them, now, their fellow-man is no more than an animal. Could you not see what would happen from the very beginning?”

And he picked up My Planet and hurled it into the glowing flames of the fire-sphere.

But surely all is not over? No, I will not let it be so. For even in those dying days there was still peace and love to be found somewhere. I cannot, will not live in this dreary nothingness again. This time I will take infinite care, and My New Planet will be perfect! And even if it is not – I will keep trying!