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A Day at the University of the Future

Rrrring!! Donna looked at her alarm and groaned. she was late again and had missed the university shuttle. She would have to tube there today. Of course, she could not miss the lecture today with the world famous marine biologist Prof. Walter Magerk holographing in. She would finally get to ask the Professor all those questions zinging in her head since time eternal! And if there was time left over Magerk would actually go over a whale skeleton with them. Whales have been extinct for over a century now and whale skeletons are highly prized. Magerk was involved in research to clone whales and someday Donna wanted to be a part of that team.

The lecture was awesome. There was time left over for the whale bones as well. There was a moment of distraction when her friend Maria accidentally holographed in from Brazil. She then had to give Maria directions to holograph in to the Biovision lecture in Mauritius. Donna's university was one of the first to adopt this holographing system. They could now attend lectures in colleges of any part of the world using the same holographing network. All they had to do was go to the VR (Virtual Reality) room and insert their student cards into slots on their seat armrests and select the country and lecture they wanted to attend and voila, they could holograph in!! They could even participate in discussions. The system wasn't perfect yet. It had its occasional glitches. Like the time she ended up in an archaeological hunt along the Indus river in the Indian subcontinent, instead of her cruise with the pop star turned environmentalist Ramon Roda along the Nile. Needless to say, the archaeologists were as startled as she was. Apparently they were expecting a mature lady of the Miss Marple variety and Donna with her blue streaked hair did not quite fit the bill. Donna did not stop to chat. Ramon's lectures were supposed to be the best in the field. When a lot of students wanted to attend a particular lecture, the university usually got the lecturer to holograph in, like Prof Magerk did today.

Donna's lecture over she headed over towards the cafeteria greenhouse. On the way she was joined by a few of her classmates. They went over to



the fruits section where they could pick fruits of their choice directly off the trees. And this was done at no cost to the students. The epidemic of ill health in the mid twenty first century had convinced authorities that the government should play a role in helping and educating people to eat healthy. And hence, almost every university had a cafeteria greenhouse these days. People still cooked the high calorie and fatty foods at home though.

After lunch, Donna decided to stay back at the library to do some further reading on Prof Magerk's lecture. She really hoped she would do well enough to get a place in his research group. That was all that she dreamt of. In the library, she downloaded journals that interested her, onto her library card, and then inserted the card into her electronic book to read it. The book had thin electronic papers instead of the perishable papers used in previous centuries. If the downloaded book had more pages, the electronic copy would merely start from the beginning again. This system was more convenient as this way more people could access the books at the same time as there was no limit on the number of downloads. However the books had to be issued from the library if you did not want the data erased while leaving. Also, the publishers were savvy enough to include limits on how many copies were issued at a time. So if one wanted a book that was particularly in demand one had to read it in the library.

From the library, Donna stepped over to the university ice-rink to practice her skating. The inter-university championships were nearing and she was still slightly rusty. There were a few familiar faces at the rink. It was good fun. They started goofing off after couple of hours of practice. That's when she decided that it was time to return home. One of her friends gave her a lift home. Her housemates had returned from their universities too. They chatted up on their days events and they all had a good laugh when she told them about Maria holographing in to the wrong lecture. Dinner and television over, Donna turned in for the night, with a satisfied smile on her face. Tomorrow was a Saturday and she did not have to wake up early for classes.