

## World's New Makeover

One galactic day, Venus, World's next-solar neighbour, said, "Darling, how scruffy you are. Now don't take this as an insult, but you need a complete makeover."

"What's the matter with the way I am?" said World. "I've been like this for centuries and no one has ever complained."

"Frankly, Darling, all the other planets in the system are talking about you. Just look at yourself."

Venus held a very broad cosmic mirror up to World.

"Is that me? Why I look horrible! What has happened to my lovely blue coat with the green patterns? And what are those slicks and spots all over my globe?"

"Oil and human pollution," said Venus, brushing some meteor dust off her curves. "I'm afraid that your blue coat is hopelessly soiled, and those green patterns are being stripped away."

"What can I do?" said World in dismay.

"No problem, Darling. I know some fabulous designers and stylists. They'll make a completely new World out of you."

Venus handed World a card: "Millennia Studios – Master Designers and Style Consultants" was written in flashing four-dimensional colours, along with interstellar coordinates. World immediately contacted them and got an appointment.

"I am the Master Designer," said a seven-foot tall extraterrestrial with square iridescent glasses as World rotated into the Millennia premises, a gleaming dome of metal and glass. Two other extraterrestrials appeared from the background and scrutinised World. Androida, who had long spiky fingernails, prodded World in the equator and shook her oblong head. "It's terrible! What an unsightly bulge."

"I agree," said the Master Designer. He kept on playing with his glasses, taking them on and off, and peering at World with compound eyes. "I have never seen anything in such bad shape."

"Then stop criticising me and do something," said World.

The third extraterrestrial, a young Martian in a skin-tight metallic designer outfit, glided over to World. "I am Halley, hair artist and haut couturier," he said. "And this simply will not do." He flipped one of his three fingers through World's frowsy hair. "I

propose a polar hairstyle with bangs. It is the coolest and funkiest of cuts. And who ever heard of wearing green with blue? A most unflattering combination.”

Androida wobbled around World in gleaming black pumps. “Yes, and these depressing rags must go,” she said. “What you need is a more professional appearance – deux-piece business attire with solid colours and subtle weave patterns, and perhaps a touch of pinstripes.”

“Rubbish,” said the Master Designer. “World is the natural type. We must use complementary colours with boreal material to conceal that...appalling balloon-shaped girth.”

“No, no, no,” said Halley, his face turning crimson. “World must be flamboyant like a bird of paradise. We will use lots of supernova colours and intergalactic material.”

He went over to World with a long yellow tape and took careful measurements of the latitudes and longitudes.

“Don’t forget the appropriate make-up,” said Androida as she reached for a beauty case full of powders and creams and assorted lipsticks. “But first World needs a face pack to remove the disgusting human infestation that’s ruining her skin. Afterwards we’ll apply some rouge and eye shadow to counter the sickly pallor. And lipgloss, yes, lots of luminous lipgloss.”

“World must remain natural!” the Master Designer shouted.

“World is World and must be glamorous,” Halley said as he fetched a catalogue with the latest hair styles and fashion in gowns.

“No, World is business and has to appear professional.” Androida almost fell as she stamped down hard with her right appendage.

“Obviously, we cannot decide how to go about World’s makeover,” said the Master Designer. “So I propose we call a conference of experts.”

And they came at great expense in luxurious spacecraft from every constellation in the Milky Way to attend the *Universal Conference for World’s New Makeover*. They argued and debated incessantly about the causes of the damage and proposed elaborate plans and strategies on what should be undertaken. But most of these experts belonged to lobbies and conflicting interest groups, so that in the end no one could come up with a viable plan of action.

After weeks of listening to the experts’ never-ending talk and watching them indulge in sumptuous banquets when the conference was not in session, World had enough and with a thundering rumble went into a gravitational spin. All these experts, designers and

style consultants were too busy arguing and fighting to notice how the domed ceiling of the Millennia Studios began to crack. Then huge chunks of glass and metal dropped on them, and finally there was silence. As World's centrifugal force increased, the pollution and human infestation was whirled away from the globe. During the next few galactic days, World's original blues and greens and browns gradually emerged in fresh, vibrant colours, like in the beginning. World was pleased and rotated out of the wrecked Millennia Studios back to its orbit as the third planet from the sun.

When Venus saw World again, she said:

“Why Darling, I hardly recognise you. You look absolutely ravishing! I knew those designers and stylists would work miracles for you.”