

## NEW HOPE

### - CHAPTER 1 -

Somewhere on a distant and mysterious planet in the cosmos, there was a small town that passed Unnoticed by the rest of the planet, this city held a secret. It was the most important and momentous secret in the history of humankind. In fact, it was so secret that no one knew what it was. All they knew was that whoever managed to obtain "the secret" would rule all of humanity. And so, like Frodo with the ring, governments, citizens, and organizations of dubious reputation from all over the world became obsessed with "the secret." It was said that there was someone in the city who knew the secret, but the problem was that no one was quite sure who that person really was. So everyone listened intently, because no one knew for certain if they were standing before the person who knew "the secret." In this way, the citizens of that city began to listen more attentively and to respect each other more, because everyone wanted to know "the secret."

On that planet, there lived a race, the Germanic peoples, who had a pathological obsession with making others work. In their own territory, this system worked well because they made each other work, and they fared quite well in that respect. But they also became obsessed with discovering the secret to making the entire planet work. They were perfectly organized into societies and social levels, with power determined by their degree of Germanic purity, and in this way, they organized themselves with the goal of making everyone work. They simply needed a sensible and reasonable objective, a motive. A noble cause that would put everyone to work to exhaustion, turning hordes of idlers into armies of profit-generating machines. On the other hand, there was Hispania, the world epicenter of Progress and multiculturalism. A social and commercial hub of great importance on the continent, home to countless cultures and traditions from around the world. It was constantly enriched by citizens arriving from humbler areas, and in turn enriched the rest of the continent with innovative social relations policies and ways of putting people to work that the Germanic peoples could never have dreamed of. For the Hispanics enjoyed a cultural enrichment that was the envy of the world and that generated constant innovation in society. Every day, innovative ways of not working appeared in Hispania, so there was constant innovation in how to put people to work.

This created competition with the Germanic peoples, who wanted that knowledge for themselves and no one else. With it, they could put everyone to work, and then they would only need to know how to invest all that labor. Once they knew, they would dominate the world. There were citizens called unicorns, since no one had ever seen one, who didn't work but enjoyed a standard of living and luxuries beyond the reach of most people. They never walked the streets like everyone else, because someone might mistake them for a middle-class citizen and try to put them to work. That was too high a risk for them to take, so if they ever traveled around the city, they did so protected inside their luxury cars. The Germanic peoples were convinced that they didn't need to know the secret to dominating everyone; they would achieve that through effort and dedication, and with the innovative Hispanic techniques for getting people to work hard.

On the other hand, there were the Asians who wanted nothing to do with anyone and, in fact, were the hardest workers of all, so they were terrified of the idea that the Germanic peoples would discover the secret and make them work too. Thus, half the planet wanted to know the secret to dominate everyone else and make them work for them; the other half also wanted to know it, but to dominate others and finally live peacefully without impositions.

And so the war on the planet New Hope never ended.

The problem was that it wasn't clear who wanted to make others work and who wanted to live peacefully, because people were hiding their true intentions.

Added to this was the problem that if people ended up living too peacefully, they would begin to develop innovative solutions to avoid working independently, thus destabilizing the state-owned industry in that sector.

The Spanish state was not at all pleased with this, so it quickly developed strategies to get everyone working. Many politicians argued in their defense that, in their case, working long hours was counterproductive, as it raised citizens' blood pressure and increased healthcare spending.

They held up medical reports of ordinary citizens firmly in front of their faces, and while beating their chests with the other hand, they shouted that their intentions had always been the noblest in the world and that anyone who doubted their honesty should be ashamed of themselves.

Anyway, on this distant and mysterious planet, which scientists from our planet named New Hope after discovering it had an atmosphere and could therefore support human settlements in the future, the scientists on the planet New Hope thought the same.

They had made identical observations regarding ours.

On the planet New Hope, there existed a plant that, when consumed, generated a great sense of tranquility and well-being. From now on, it would be known as THE DRUG, as there were vast differences between territories within the continental union. While in regions like Germania it was legal to cultivate, possess, and consume THE DRUG, and no one had any problem with it, in ancient Hispania, citizens were persecuted for possessing even the smallest amount, and constant and novel arrests were made of anyone found with THE DRUG. The pressure was suffocating. A company had promised to create a revolutionary teleportation machine with which users could instantly travel to Germania, consume the drug legally, and return immediately to enjoy the high in Hispania, but it was a very new technology and was not yet available.

Risk-free, so everyone was convinced that this company was nothing more than a smokescreen and that they wouldn't be able to keep their promises, so the Hispanic territory was plunged into a dark abyss, and its citizens at the mercy of the daily moods of the Hispanic State. Meanwhile, the Germanic peoples enjoyed quiet and peaceful lives surrounded by drugs. Drugs and the good life ran rampant in Germania, while

In ancient Hispania, innovative raids and arrests were carried out on anyone carrying drugs. Hispania, as mentioned, was the world capital of progressivism, but at this time they lacked the raw material. That which allowed the brightest minds on our planet to guide humanity toward a fascinating destiny—they lacked drugs. On Earth, the Spanish had secretly built a teleportation machine capable of transporting a naked person over great distances. After the United Nations secretly approved the project, considering it something that could greatly benefit humanity, a commission was created to decide the best use for the machine. It was decided that the most beneficial course of action for humanity would be to take the most qualified person in the world and send them to the planet New Hope. Scientists on our planet had detected many artificial structures, suggesting the presence of some kind of advanced civilization, and that with the knowledge of our pioneer and the technology of that planet, they would be able to contact Earth sooner rather than later. The person designated to carry out the mission was the Spanish astronaut Pedro Duque, who underwent intense training from the beginning of the project, being instructed in subjects such as psychology, sociology, international relations, communication techniques, non-verbal language, conflict resolution, and so on.

General Sanders had served in Afghanistan and Iraq. He had accumulated so many medals and awards on his uniform that everyone agreed that if he fell into the water with all that, he wouldn't survive.

They had been working on the project for almost three and a half years. At that moment, they were configuring the machine, and General Sanders, who had secretly come from the United States to collaborate on the project—his participation in joint maneuvers had allowed him to learn languages and he spoke perfect Spanish—was inside, acting as a test subject. Up to that point, they could calculate that the subject would appear somewhere inhabited, but they couldn't determine exactly where, only that there would be people around whom he could ask for help. They were conducting tests with the teleportation machine; General Sanders was inside it, and, at a certain moment, due to an unknown cyberattack, the machine went haywire. The artificial intelligence sent General Sanders to New Hope without warning, and then exploded into a thousand pieces, leaving Pedro Duque and all his entertainment on Earth, and all of humanity's hopes resting on its new global hero, General Sanders, who basically had to "fend for himself" based on his knowledge and military experience on the distant and promising planet called New Hope.

Well, as bad luck would have it, General Sanders happened to be in the restroom of a funeral home on the planet New Hope. After confirming he was alright and his vital signs were normal, he cautiously left in search of someone to ask for help. No sooner had he stepped out of the restroom than those nearby spotted him and mistook him for an exhibitionist. They alerted the security guard, who professionally subdued him with a judo hold, all while those present shouted that he was a pervert and should be locked up. And so began the adventure of our esteemed General Sanders on that distant and mysterious planet called New Hope.

Once at the police station, after putting on a uniform that was temporarily loaned to him, he told the officers that he suffered from amnesia and didn't really know where he was from, waiting for the officers to release more information, because if he said he came from another planet he ran the risk of being admitted to a psychiatric hospital, or the equivalent of what a psychiatric hospital would be on that planet. After telling him he should get a job, the police released him on charges.

All of this generated a lot of anger and frustration in General Sanders, but his years of military training had taught him to control his emotions in extreme situations, and after all, he could not stop pursuing the noblest goals of humanity because of a simple misunderstanding.

At that moment, he realized he had been speaking perfect Spanish with the police officers, and that according to them, they were in a territory called Hispania. In fact, the buildings, the vehicles, and everything else were virtually identical to those on Earth. General Sanders was overjoyed to feel free. At last, he had unlimited freedom to explore this magical and promising planet called New Hope.

After all that, everyone present felt in their hearts that General Sanders had just become humanity's hope, the pioneer in whom all of human civilization had placed its trust to lead all civilizations across the cosmos toward a peaceful and beautiful future. From that moment on, all of humanity's hopes rested on our shoulders.

new hero, General Sanders.

With three hundred euros in his possession, he set out to explore the unlimited possibilities that awaited him. that city offered, so he decided to go for a few drinks.

He was strolling through the narrow streets of downtown Barcelona. Yes, that city had the same name as on Earth, even though the rest were "territories" instead of countries, and things like that. The air was thin there; there was a strange smell everywhere. He didn't know what it was, although he remembered smelling it during his cadet days, but he couldn't quite place it. He approached a boy. He was standing still, rolling something with his hands, and asked him what that smell was. "DRUGS," the boy said enthusiastically, "What you're smelling is DRUGS, it's what keeps half the population here going. What would our great thinkers, artists, and politicians do without THE

"DRUGS? They wouldn't have anything to use to transport their minds in search of a better future for everyone." At that moment, the boy lit the joint he had rolled, took a few puffs, and passed it to General Sanders. Sanders, without quite knowing why, put it in his mouth, and while he was thinking about how  
Trying to act tough, but inhaling lightly so the high wouldn't go too high, chaos erupted. Some of those present ripped off their shirts, revealing police uniforms hidden underneath, shouting, "Police! Everyone stay still! Holy shit!" "Holy shit!" exclaimed Andreu, the considerate young man who had passed the device to our hero. The men threw their shirts to the ground in fury, and two of them lunged at Sanders and Andreu, tackling them with professional precision and knocking them to the ground. The policeman then placed his knee on one of the men's backs.

Sanders picked up the cigarette of THE DRUG that he had dropped, expressed what his mind and heart felt at that moment, and uttered a resounding "Well, well, what's this?". On his badges one could read: "Hispanic National Police"

- Espanyols fills like a whore!!! - Andreu shouted - It's the oppression of the Hispánico state!!! They are oppressing!!! Em sents?!!! They are oppressing!!!! fascists!!! putahispania!!! independence!!!

General Sanders didn't understand a single word the young man was saying, yet he stared at him, wide-eyed with astonishment at such a gratuitous display of aggression, intrigued by what could drive a human being to behave in such a hostile manner when it was clear that no one had actually done anything to him. To him, they had simply been officers doing their duty, nothing he hadn't seen in his years of service. At that moment, he fondly recalled the day he'd been assigned to a reconnaissance flight over the desolate plains of the New Mexico desert, to try and locate some undocumented immigrants who had escaped from a Border Patrol van during transport. The undocumented immigrants were all located thanks to the thermal imaging cameras on the Apache helicopter he was piloting. "Taxes well spent," he thought, and they were brought to justice on two charges: illegal entry and fleeing without authorization.

He was aware that tackling and simply throwing to the ground a respectable sixty-four-year-old man who was also an air force general was not the most ethical and moral thing in the world, but Sanders knew better than anyone the sacrifices of duty.

"Calm down, Andreu, calm down," Sanders told him. "I'm fine. I don't think I've broken anything," he said, understanding the boy's indignation at the way a respectable sixty-year-old had been treated. "I know they haven't treated us very well, but there's no need to get so upset, Andreu," he said, trying to do something, without really knowing what was happening or what he was doing. A sudden change in the boy's expression told him he had hit the nail on the head. "Calm down, Andreu. Together we'll make Hispania a better place." Another sudden change in the boy's expression, this time one of fury, indicated to the general that he had put his foot in it badly, but since he didn't know what, he decided to play dumb to see if he could end the situation as quickly as possible and return to the hostel safe and sound.

In the end, Andreu was arrested, but our General Sanders, seeing him as an older, respectable man, only imposed a fine of three hundred euros. They told him that if he paid immediately, he would be entered into a raffle for a car, and that if he didn't, they would have to arrest him. Faced with this offer, the general decided to pay immediately and in cash, regaining his much-valued personal freedom to explore the limitless possibilities offered by this unsettling planet called New Hope, but this time with zero euros. He was back to square one.

That gave him an idea of the enormous potential of THE DRUG, so, after using his knowledge and combat experience to raise some money by committing thefts, which he considered an act of survival for which his years of training had prepared him, he was only doing what he had been trained to do: Survive and fight in

a hostile environment. "Adaptation is key" was repeated over and over again without ceasing.

He started dealing drugs to earn a little money while he figured out the best way to contact Earth and ask for help.

Meanwhile, on Earth, several terrorist groups knew about the secret project and were trying to destroy it. One of them managed to infiltrate the facility with the goal of planting explosives and bringing down the entire complex, as they believed it posed a threat to all of humanity and that, should anything go wrong, it could mean the apocalypse. After entering and holding everyone at gunpoint, they saw that the machine was completely destroyed. They were told that it had sent General Sanders to New Hope and then had completely self-destructed, and that for the time being, there was nothing they could do. Upon hearing this, the terrorists began to debate among themselves, saying that it would be a waste of resources to destroy everything and that, anyway, "those guys" were already screwed. The terrorist leader explained to the complex's scientific director that they were a modest, newly formed terrorist group, and that they couldn't afford to waste all those explosives on something that, in the end, wasn't going to make much sense anyway, since the machine had become a beautiful sculpture of molten metal. So they were going to pack everything up, he said, and leave, but not before threatening them that if they ever rebuilt the machine, they would come back and tear it all down, this time for real.

## NEW HOPE

### - CHAPTER 2 -

New Hope's intelligence services began to suspect the neighborhood's new senior drug dealer. After several inquiries, they also began to suspect that he was General Sanders, and that he came from the planet that New Hope scientists had dubbed "piece of excrement" after discovering that it possessed artificial structures and was therefore unlikely to be colonized simply because it was already inhabited. After building and detonating the teleportation machine, they decided to try to manipulate General Sanders to obtain more information. Since he was an army veteran, they devised a plan.

They knew that some days the general would buy a coffee at the corner café. So they planned the following: While the general was buying coffee, a passerby would pretend to have a heart attack. At that moment, the waiter would drop everything and rush out to help the person, forcing Sanders to leave the café as well. "At that moment, we'll fly a helicopter overhead," the Hispanic intelligence officer said firmly. "And at the same time, there will be some kids nearby throwing firecrackers, oh, and people nearby shouting too." If all goes well, that scene will transport him back to his days of combat on the front lines, where he had

that he would fight for his survival and that every decision could be his last, and then we would see how he acts, and his military experience in a real environment. Everyone in the room stood up and began to applaud compulsively. "Bravo!!! He's an excellent leader! He's an excellent leader...!!!" The cheers and whistles multiplied in the room, until one of those present took out his service pistol and began firing into the air, accidentally hitting one of the fire sprinklers, and thus forcing the evacuation of the room.

All the people of Earth held their breath, awaiting news of Project New Hope. After mistakenly sending General Sanders, the scientists and everyone involved decided it was too risky to send anyone else until they heard from him. His sacrifice would allow humanity on Earth to encounter another, perhaps more advanced, civilization and thus propel its expansion throughout the cosmos. The entire world awaited news of the general. Everyone wanted to know what New Hope held, what higher teachings those beings from such a remote and mysterious civilization might impart, and what alliances and collaborations could be forged.

8 a.m., Hispanic time.

Commander Sanders was in his usual coffee shop ordering a cappuccino with two sugars from the waiter when a passerby collapsed. The waiter, surprised, threw his coffee against the wall and ran to help the man, Sanders following him. A helicopter flew low over the buildings at that moment, the roar echoing through the street. Explosions and people screaming began to be heard. The general, stunned, thought it was because they had made contact with Earth and were at war, so he punched the waiter in the face, knocking him to the ground, and then threw a

He kicked the man who had supposedly suffered a heart attack in the head, and finally ran away at full speed, only to be stopped by a patrol of the Mossos d'Esquadra that was at the end of the street.

– He certainly has combat experience

Everyone in the room nodded at once, as if guided by invisible common threads.

"We know you have a great sense of duty, Mr. Sanders," the agent told him.

As he walked around the table, he ran his fingers along its polished surface. "But that won't exempt you from a hefty fine, in addition to the appropriate compensation." The officer didn't believe a word he'd said about Sanders' sense of duty, nor did he have any idea why he'd said it, but since he had nothing to lose, he was just throwing out random things to see if he'd get the cat out of the bag and spill the beans.

At that moment, two men in suits and sunglasses, which they never removed, entered the police station. They went into the room where Sanders was sitting in a chair behind a simple rectangular plywood table with chromed metal legs. They were from the Spanish intelligence service. Upon entering, they gave the policeman a cold look, and he left the room, closing the door behind him.

"As far as we know, Mr. Sanders," one of them said, "you have no one here to ask for help." The agent longed for the days when he could light a cigarette in situations like this and blow the smoke in the criminal's face, which would undoubtedly have added more drama to the scene.

"No one," he continued. "Not family, not friends, not acquaintances; the only people he knows are..."

Four small-time drug dealers with whom he does business in his drug dealing, which we know very well. - At that moment, the agent placed both hands on the table, putting his face in front of the general's - You're alone, do you hear me, Sanders? Alone! You're alone, Sanders! Alone!! Alone!!!

The agent froze in the same position, teeth clenched and lips slightly parted, staring intently at Sanders, who couldn't help but notice the incredibly swollen vein on his forehead, the result of immense anger. Sanders was speechless; his years of military training had more than prepared him for situations like this.

Meanwhile, the citizens of Earth held their breath, awaiting news of the new impromptu pioneer who was going to unite all the inhabitants of Earth with another civilization at the edge of the universe, contributing immeasurably to the progress of humanity and its expansion throughout the cosmos.

Finally, the general, with the pension he received after leaving the psychiatric hospital, was able to rent a small apartment where he initially lived peacefully. But the intelligence service

The Hispanic community suspected he might be secretly communicating with Earth, so they used undercover agents to convince their neighbors to create as much chaos as possible to prevent him from communicating. What they didn't know was that, aside from the fact that Sanders couldn't communicate with Earth in any way, there was a much more advanced civilization elsewhere in the universe that was incredibly intrigued by the whole story and was quite successfully trying to read Sanders's thoughts. He was constantly thinking about breaking his neighbors' legs, and they were getting extremely angry.

"We should scorch both planets with trillions and trillions of megawatts of laser beams and be done with it," said one of the aliens, sipping from a small metal cup what would be the equivalent of an alien lemon chamomile tea.

"Calm down, Tom, there's no point in getting nervous, the chamomile tea will make you feel unwell," his companion told him.

The two little gray men continued standing side by side, watching a gigantic screen on a wall of the enormous ship they were in. The general was visible inside his...

at home, with noise-canceling headphones on your head

"Definitely," he continued, "but you know how things work."

– Yes, we wouldn't bore you.

- No, it doesn't depend on the two of us...
- The idiots haven't come down from the trees yet.
- Relax, Tom, drink your chamomile tea before it gets cold.

In the following days, the general tried to avoid his usual bar, as the bartender, with a black eye, looked at him defiantly, which gave him a very bad feeling. One day, he saw some old men behind a fence watching some construction work, and he could also hear them.

- A little blood, damn it! That's not work!

He was pleasantly surprised to see the commitment those retirees had to the progress and future of the country, or territory as they called it. He approached them and congratulated them personally, shaking both their hands. "For Hispania!" Sanders shouted. "For Hispania!" the retirees shouted back. "Get to work, damn it!" Sanders then yelled to the workers. Discipline and a love of work are universal values, he thought. "Fuck you, junkie!" came the shout from the scaffolding.

After that, he said goodbye to the two retirees and left with a smile, thinking that perhaps he could adapt well to this new and mysterious planet, and make contact with Earth soon.

That civilization was more complex than Sanders could have imagined, but he was prepared to do whatever it took to complete the mission, even give his life, both his own and that of anyone else necessary, because his career and reputation as a soldier were at stake, as well as the honor and future of Earth. Afterward, he went to the park, where he had arranged to sell a few grams of THE DRUGS so he would have something to eat that day. A warrior has an obligation to do whatever it takes to survive and continue the fight, he thought. He had served in Afghanistan and Iraq, from the comfort of the air-conditioned cockpit of his fighter jet, but this was a completely different situation, and he had to adapt to complete the mission and take Earth and humanity to a new level in their relationship with beings from extremely advanced civilizations like Earth's, thus contributing to the development of humanity, both on Earth and on New Hope, toward a noble and beautiful destiny of mutual support and collaboration. "Whatever it takes," Sanders thought to himself, "whatever it takes..."

End.

