

# SONIA'S AMBITION

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The Oliquin Chronicles

*A Short Story*

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## Sonia

*I can't do this.* Sonia Quinn Oliver, entrepreneur, business mogul, and ex-CEO, sat on the couch in the living room of her luxurious mansion in California's Silicon Valley. It had been less than a month since her official retirement from QuinnTec Industries, the family business she'd spent her life expanding and developing into a multi-billion-dollar corporation. *I'm already bored out of my skull.* She stared across the room, watching Micah, her husband of thirty-four years, engrossed in a football game on the holodeck. He still held his position as CFO, but that was mostly for show. There wasn't much real work for him to do anymore.

*I could go out to the barn and ride.* But riding around and around in an arena didn't hold the appeal it once had for her. And going on any kind of trail ride was a joke. She'd have to load the horse in the trailer, then drive three or four hours in traffic to the closet park that still allowed horses. *Couldn't even take Chester.* Her Australian Shepherd would have to stay home because of the leash law. Sure, she'd seen some riders try to manage two reins on the horse along with a dog on a leash. More often than not, the dog'd get loose, or the horse would freak out. *Or both.* She chuckled, remembering the day she'd galloped off to catch a loose gelding after his frantic owner limped in the other direction in search of her dog. Venturing off the riding trail for a little adventure, or just an escape from the mundane, could land a hefty fine. So, the end result would be a dull ride on a dusty, usually overcrowded, trail she'd ridden dozens of times already. Then back on the road for the three- or four-hour drive home. *No thanks.*

Heaving a big sigh, she slumped back on the couch. *What has this world come to?* With humanity sprawling from horizon to horizon, there isn't a place on Earth that hasn't been discovered and explored. The only way to get exercise, unless you're a professional athlete, is at the gym. *Talk about boring.* In truth, the best developed muscles of this generation are in fingers and thumbs.

Sonia considered her world to be overpopulated and congested. And she was convinced that the surge and rapid spread of viruses in recent generations is Mother Nature's—or God's?—way of correcting that problem. But humans have a way of confounding Mother Nature with vaccines, medical advances, and other safeguards preventing sickness and extending our lives far beyond what, perhaps, our creator originally intended.

Even if she could find a place on this world with room to breathe, there was still the problem of ultra-convenience. With everything and everyone available virtually—*no, literally*—at your fingertips, it left too many people with too much time on their hands and nothing to break the monotony of their day-to-day existence other than unproductive, unnecessary, and often harmful activities.

"I want to sell the company," she said to Micah.

"Mmm-hmm," he replied, without taking his eyes off the game.

"Alexa, turn off the holo," she said.

The images above the deck disappeared.

"Hey!" Micah said, looking at her, "What?"

"I said, I want to sell the company."

"Why? We don't need the money."

“Oh, but we do, my dear.”

“Listen, I know you’re bored, Sonia. But it’ll get better, you’ll see.”

She ignored his complacent argument. “Alexa, play video of SCS colony landing,” she called out.

The video monitor came on with a news story about a group of people who’d left Earth in a starship, were transported across the galaxy, and successfully landed on a habitable exoplanet where colonization had begun. The story even included a few distorted images of the colonists in their new home.

A representative of the Space Colonization Syndicate, the organization that sponsored the project, commentated, “Communication with the colony was achieved by depositing a series of repeater stations in strategic locations during their twenty-year journey to the planet. Unfortunately, that contact was lost after only a few early transmissions, presumably due to failure of one or more of those stations.”

“Most people are calling this a hoax, you know,” Micah said. “Propaganda fabricated by the SCS to support their cause.”

“And what do *you* think?” she asked him.

As if to corroborate his claim, an infomercial about the SCS immediately followed the news story, expounding their mission to support, fund, and organize more of these colonization enterprises.

“I think we should put the game back on and forget about all of this,” Micah replied.

“That wasn’t an answer.”

“So? What? You want to take the money from the sale and fund one of these missions? To colonize another planet, light years away?”

She grinned. “Exactly. It’s almost like you read my mind.”

“Sonia—”

“Listen Micah,” she interrupted, “what is the alternative? We stay here, live out our retirement, doing what? Fighting traffic back and forth to the kids place to see our grandchildren? Taking vacations where the only difference between here and there is a change in the weather? Riding around and around in a sand-filled arena? Sitting at home watching the holodeck? For the next—what?—twenty or thirty years?”

“Why wouldn’t we just join a mission that is already funded?” he asked.

“I checked into that,” she said. “They only recruit young people. They don’t want old fogies like us. And you know me, I want to be in charge. I don’t trust anyone else to get it right.”

“It’s liable to take twenty or thirty years just to get a ship built.”

“Seven or eight actually, nine at the most,” she said.

“Then you have to get th—”

“I don’t want to argue about it,” she said. “Can’t you just support me in this? It’s not like we haven’t ever talked about it before. Remember? You liked the idea then.”

“Yes, dear, I remember. But that was before I dreamed it might actually be possible within our lifetime.”

“Think about it,” she said. “To be the first to step foot on a planet, the first to explore it, the first to taste indigenous plant life, to see life unlike anything on Earth. Tell me that doesn’t excite you. Tell me that isn’t a more thrilling outlook for our retirement.”

He laughed, then joined her on the couch, taking her in his arms. “You my dear, are an incredible woman. I live for times like this, when you remind me why I fell for you all those years ago.”

“So, you’ll do it? Talk to the board about going public? There’s no time to waste.”  
Laughing again, he held her at arm’s length. “First thing tomorrow.”

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And so began *The Chronicles of Oliquin*. A world first populated by the colonists who risked everything to join Sonia’s mission on a journey through space in hopes of finding a better life for themselves and their descendants.