

Amelia's Amazing Space Adventures



BOOK ONE:

# Amelia, the Moochins and the Sapphire Palace

by Evonne Blanchard

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*For my husband, Kyan,  
and my daughters, Lydia and Gwendolyn.  
Many, many thanks for your constant  
support and encouragement.*

*EB*

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# Contents

1. A Present That Wasn't	1
2. The Quest	9
3. Next Stop, The Moon	17
4. A Moochin Meeting	25
5. A Locked Palace	35
6. A Sweet Finish	43



# 1.

## A Present That Wasn't

“Eight. I am eight today. Amazing!” Amelia sprinted downstairs.

“Can I have some of your presents?” asked her little sister, Charlotte.

“Nooo. Mom, Charlotte’s trying to steal from me!”

“Now, no arguing, you two!” said their mother.

Amelia rushed through breakfast. Soon after bits of wrapping paper lay between books, a dress, and a new pair of swimming goggles.

The last gift was a square box covered in silver paper. Amelia tore open the paper and lifted up the top flap of the box.



“Who’s that from?” asked Amelia’s mom.

“Err, let me see. Oh, it’s from Aunt Janet.” She pulled out a book.

“Oh look, it’s all about butterflies. I love butterflies!”

“Is there something else in there?”

Amelia put her hand inside the package and pulled out a second present. “Oh wow. This is strange!”

“It’s a stuffed animal,” chirped Charlotte.

“I’ve never seen a cuddly look anything like this...Is it supposed to be some sort of purple octopus? But it’s only got three tentacles instead of eight. And why did they put hands at the end of them? And look, it’s got two skinny pink legs as well.”

“Flamingo legs!” Charlotte beamed.

“And squashy yellow feet and green toenails! Weird!”

Her mom peered at the toy. “Very strange! I wonder who came up with that?”

“Did it just—? Mom, I think it just winked at me!” Amelia looked again, but this time both of the toy’s large purple eyes stayed wide open.

“Really? Well, does it come with batteries? Maybe that made its eyes move,” her mom suggested.

Amelia turned the toy over, but there was no battery compartment or anything else to explain the wink. And why did the toy feel so warm? Really too warm to be a stuffed animal...

Later that night, Amelia lay awake in bed thinking about her birthday, especially her strange gift.



A wriggle. Something had *wriggled* at the end of her bed. Amelia sat up and saw that her purple octopus present was upright and glowing, its large purple eyes lit from within.

“Oh, I thought you might be asleep,” said the creature in perfect English, but with a funny little accent.

Amelia was speechless. It talked. It was alive?

“Err...wh-wh...Who are...Wh-what are you?” she stuttered.

“My name is Uglesnoo, and I’m from Pluto,” the creature replied. “You know, Pluto? The planet? It’s in our solar system.”

“What...Do you mean that you’re an alien? A real alien!”

“Well, I certainly don’t think of myself that way. But I suppose I am to you.”

Amelia bounced up and down. “This is so exciting. I got an alien for my birthday! What planet are you from again?”

“Pluto, the furthest-away planet, but of course the most important!”

“Oh yeah,” said Amelia. “I remember the solar system, sort of!” Earth in blues and greens, Mars all red, then Pluto, a tiny little planet, the furthest from Earth. “Well...err...What are you doing here?”

“Ah, good question,” replied Uglesnoo. “Well you see, I’m an interplanetary trader—”

“A what?”

“It means that I travel from planet to planet in the solar system, trading stuff with different aliens. For example, the Magolytes’ jeweled eggs from Mars are in great demand everywhere. And as for the Venutons’ bliss bubbles, well—”



“Oh, that sounds so exciting!” said Amelia, jumping about.

“Well, it’s not a bad life,” Uglesnoo agreed. “Unfortunately, I lost my spaceship yesterday. And I was tired, so I wandered into an Earthling’s house for a snooze. I fell fast asleep on the sofa. The next thing I know I’m being thrown in a box and then a book hits the top of my head...”

Just then, the walls started to shake. A growling rumble grew louder and louder. Uglesnoo clapped his hands over his ears.

“That hideous noise—what is it? It sounds like a horde of stampeding dragons. You don’t still have dragons on Earth, do you?”

Amelia sighed. “That’s my sister, Charlotte. She’s a huge snorer! She wakes us all up with her racket!”

“*ZZZZzzzzsnort, SNORT. ZZZZzzzzsnort, SNORT.*” The rumbling thundered through the house.

“How awful for you. Most unfortunate. It must get in the way of a good night’s sleep.”

“It does. We’ve tried everything, but nothing works!”

“Pity, pity,” said Uglesnoo. “Now, where was I? Oh yes, a book on my head...So I became a present. Your present. But I can’t stay your

present. In fact, I have to go. I have rather urgent business on the Moon.”

“The Moon? Our moon? Do you mean you’re leaving...to go to the Moon?” said Amelia sadly. “Well, will I ever see you again? You were my most exciting present.”

## 2.

### The Quest

Uglesnoo squirmed, then a smile grew on his face. “It would be handy to have a companion. This...this task...Well, I have something very important I have to do.”

What could a space traveler from Pluto possibly need her help with, Amelia wondered. “What task?”

“My big sister Noolong got very sick recently. She came down with a sleeping sickness, but a terrible one.”

“Oh, I’m so sorry. But she’ll get better eventually won’t she?” said Amelia.

Uglesnoo looked at her with pained eyes. “Not necessarily. The only cure is a repelling crystal from the planet Neptune.”



“Well, at least there’s a cure! How do you get an, err...a repelling crystal?”

“That’s the thing. They’re extremely expensive. I tried to negotiate with Queen Neep—she and her husband are the rulers of Neptune, you see—but she insisted that I get everything on this list.” Uglesnoo pulled out a crumpled blue note. “Only once I have acquired absolutely everything will she give me a repelling crystal.”

He handed it over to Amelia. On it were a series of strange symbols. “Err, Uglesnoo, I can’t read this,” she said.

“I forgot. It’s written in Plutonian,” he said. “I’ll translate.”

**Barter Requirements for the Sum of One Repelling Crystal from Neptune:**

- Earth - 5 Boxes of Dandelions*
- Earth’s Moon - 10 Boxes of Moo-Bons*
- Venus - 20 Bliss Bubbles*
- Mercury - 5 Pairs of Flying Shoes*
- The Sun - 40 Jars of Snapperjack Honey*
- Mars - 20 assorted Jeweled Eggs*
- Jupiter - 10 Blazebolts*

- Saturn - 1 Portable and Fully Stocked Satsut Apothecary*
- Uranus - 1 Vial of Future Air*
- Pluto - 1 Creation Vacation*

Upon list’s completion, return to the planet Neptune to receive one repelling crystal.

Amelia’s eyes widened as Uglesnoo read. “That seems like a lot for one crystal,” she said.

Uglesnoo nodded and rubbed his eyes. “That’s not the only bad news. This sleeping sickness...It gets worse, and quickly. I have only two weeks to get everything on this list before...”

Uglesnoo stopped and choked. He blinked his wet eyes at her before finishing, “Before she slips into an endless sleep.”

“You-you mean if you get this crystal to her in two weeks, she’ll recover, but if not...that’s it?”

A nod from Uglesnoo. “So you see, the situation is urgent, very urgent. But if I had an assistant, these tasks would be more bearable. I already have the dandelions, but it’s such a big list. I wonder, would you...Do you want to come along?”

“You mean go to the...err...actual Moon with you? But that’s so far away. What about my mom and dad? And my baby sister? And isn’t it dangerous out there in outer space?”

“Oh nonsense. I travel throughout the universe and I’ve never had any trouble. Well, apart from that foot-singeing business on Mars,” Uglesnoo said offhandedly. “Oh, and there was the time my ship took a direct hit from a blazebolt...But that’s nothing,” he trailed off, noticing the alarm on Amelia’s face.

“Well, I’m not sure...” began Amelia.

“Hmmm. It’s possible we could find a cure for your sister’s terrible snoring while we’re out there. We have lots of medicines out in outer space. The Satsuts of Saturn are brilliant at curing diseases. I trade medicines with them. We have a lot of the same illnesses out there as you do on Earth, you know.”

“Really?”

“Yes, well, colds, flu, stomachaches, measles, sun withers...”

“Sun withers? What’s that?”

“It’s when your fur starts to fade...”

Amelia giggled.

“Oh, silly me. You don’t have any fur. Well, you don’t have to worry about that one, but if you come to the Moon with me, we can ask the Moochins if they have a medicine that might help your sister.”

“The Moochins?” repeated Amelia.

“Yes, the creatures that live on the Moon.”

“How many other aliens are out there?”

“Oh, heaps. The universe is chock full of them. So, do you want to come with me to the Moon?”



“That would be really exciting...It would be amazing if we found a cure for Charlotte’s snoring,” Amelia pondered. “It wakes Mom and Dad up a lot, and they get so tired. But I don’t know...It still seems a bit scary.”

“Nonsense. I’ll tell you what,” said Uglesnoo. “This trip to the Moon can be our experiment. I’ll have you back by morning. And if you don’t want to visit any more planets after that, that’s fine. It really

would be nice to have someone with me, though. I am under terrible pressure here.”

“Yes, I can see that. Well, all right, then. I’ll come with you.”

“Great!” said Uglesnoo. “Get dressed and we’ll go and find my spaceship.”



# 3.

## Next Stop, The Moon

They crept out the front door, closing it quietly. Uglesnoo led the way through the garden and into the field, behind Amelia's house. After a few minutes, he came to a sudden stop.

"I don't see anything—Ouch!" Amelia cried as her head hit something hard.

"Ah, I see you've found my spaceship!" said Uglesnoo.

He took out a thin blue cylinder and pressed a button on the side of it. There was a *whoosh*, and the spaceship revealed itself. It was a small, shimmering, scarlet craft with a glass-domed roof. Seconds later, a purple door opened and a rickety metal staircase tumbled out onto the ground.



Amelia stared in awe. “Unbelievable!”

Uglesnoo grinned and patted his spaceship. “She’s somewhat small, but she’s very fast. We’ll be on the Moon in no time.”

He then hurried a worried-looking Amelia up the steps and into the spaceship. “No time to lose. Belt yourself in.”

Amelia sat down in a squashy purple chair. Straps shot across her body, holding her in place. She gazed in wonder. Nearly every surface was covered in computer screens. Below were rows of fluorescent buttons, inscribed with foreign symbols. She swiveled around. The rear end of the spaceship had two padded areas. (Beds or sofas? Amelia wondered.) Lastly, there were cupboards and some eccentric-looking machines.

She turned back around just in time to see Uglesnoo hit a button. The door closed, and he pressed several more buttons.

The last lit up a small screen. On this screen were several planets and millions of sparkling stars.

“See, that’s the solar system,” said Uglesnoo, gesturing to the screen. “Here’s Venus. That’s Mercury. And there’s Mars...” he said, pointing to various planets. “Time to plot a course from Earth to the Moon.”

Uglesnoo picked up a pen attached to the screen. He drew a yellow line from the Earth to the Moon. Then he pressed a final button, after which he rushed to the other squashy chair.

Nothing happened.

Then there was a shift. The spaceship pulled to the right. It arced upward. It fell downward. Then the spaceship pulled to the left.

“What is going on?” cried Amelia.



“Just gaining momentum,” Uglesnoo reassured her.

The spaceship swung in wider and faster arcs until it completed a circle, followed by another one, all the while going faster and faster and faster. Finally, there was a huge, roaring blast-off! They rocketed up into the sky. The spaceship tore upward at an amazing speed, spinning wildly. Amelia suddenly felt very sick.

Uglesnoo noticed her pale face. “Oh my. You’re looking very queasy. We’ll be there soon enough. Tell you what. I’ll sing you a few songs to cheer you up!”

A few seconds later, Amelia wished he hadn’t tried to make her feel better, as Uglesnoo’s singing sounded like the shrieking of a deranged seagull.

Oh no, he can’t sing. At *all*, she thought. He’s awful. Really awful! How do I get him to stop? Oh, wait a minute, the spinning is slowing down now. Ah, that’s better.

“Nearly there,” said Uglesnoo. His shrieks stopped too.

Amelia, recovering from both the sickness and the singing, looked outside. “We’re here already? I thought we’d just set off.”

“I told you she’s super-fast!” Uglesnoo patted the console of his ship proudly.

“I can’t believe I’m actually going to land on the Moon!”

“Yes, thrilling, isn’t it? Ah, now prepare yourself for landing.”

Amelia looked out of the glass-domed roof as their bright scarlet spaceship descended. Below them lay the Moon, all gray and full of craters. Seconds later, they hit its surface with a thud.

“Okay, before we get out, two things,” said Uglesnoo. “First, put this on. This will let you understand and speak Frognog.” He handed her a bright green spongy object.

“Frognog?” Amelia asked.

“The language of the Moochins,” Uglesnoo replied, “the creatures that live on the Moon. That’s who we’re trading with today. Their Moo-Bons are legendary. The most delicious thing in the universe!”

“But what do I do with this thing? How does it attach...?”

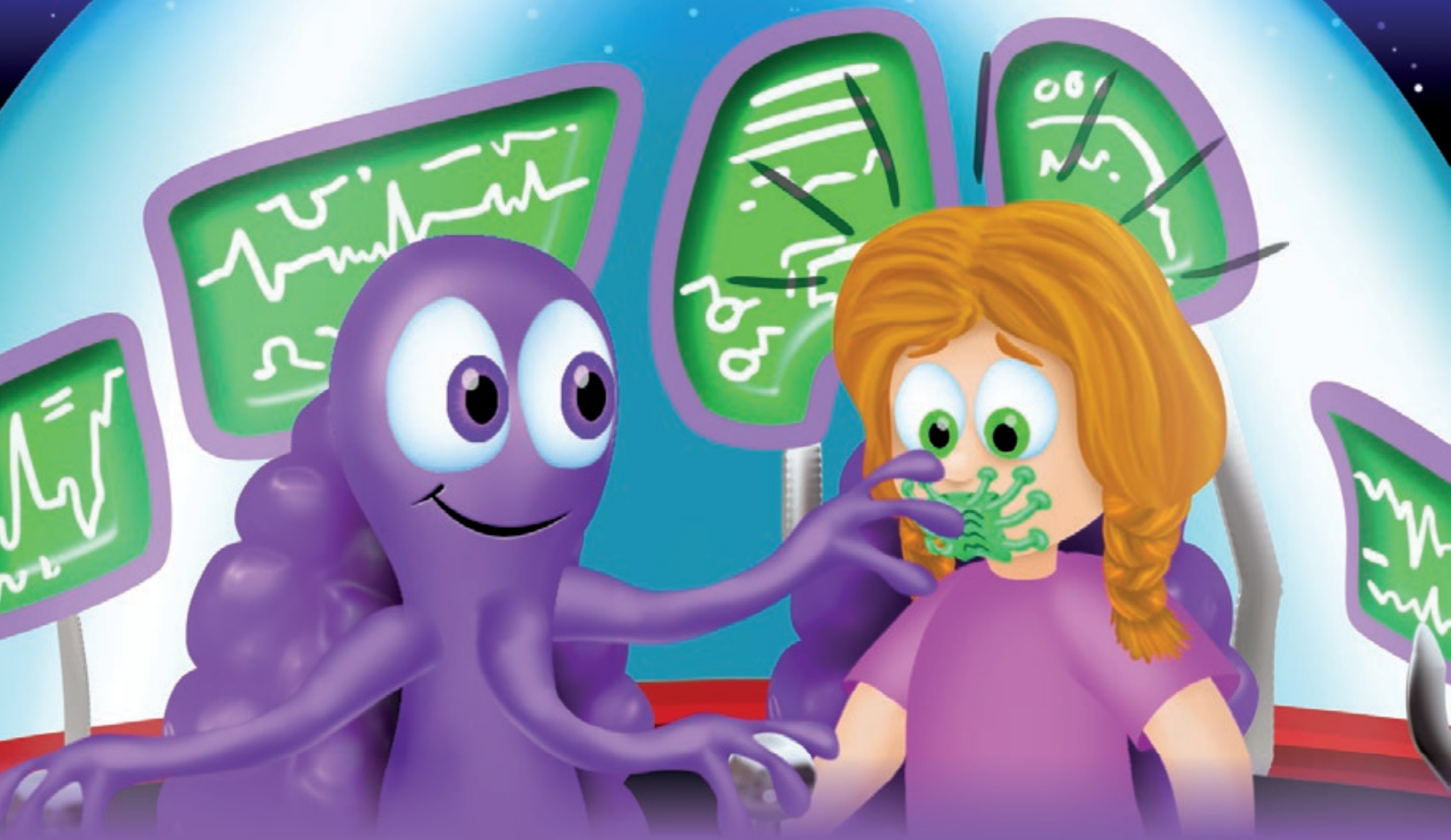
“Just put it up to your mouth. You’ll see.”

Amelia moved the green sponge to her face. Suckers sprang out. It stuck solidly to her mouth.

“Ah...ah—What is this? What’s happening to me? *Flmmm, flmmm mmm!*”

“Calm down, calm down. Jumping Jupiter. It’s an IGT, an intergalactic translator. They make them in the Andromeda galaxy. Don’t worry—the Klingon effect doesn’t last long.”





As he spoke, the sponge disappeared. A few moments later, all that could be seen was a mesh of faint green wires crisscrossing her teeth.

“There, you’re set. You’ll be able to understand any alien language now. Now for the next part.” He handed Amelia a translucent yellow globe. “This is so you can breathe on the Moon. Quite useful, that. Ha! You need to put it on your head, you know,” he said as Amelia stood with the globe in her hands.

“Oh, sorry. Yes.” She placed the globe over her head.

Uglesnoo tightened its neck straps, then pressed a few buttons. “*Hydrogen*, no, *nitrogen*, no, *helium*, no—not unless you want to sound like a Smurf! Ah, here it is. *Oxygen*. That’s what you need to breathe.” He hit the final button. “There, all set. Now where are the boxes of dandelions? I have several to give to Queen Neep and a few extra. I’ll just take the one box to trade with the Moochins. Okay, are you ready to walk on the Moon?”