

bet the next time we go for a walk, it will be a different experience than it is today.

**ELWOOD THE TREE:** Yes, I'm sure it will be. I'll tell him to hurry back to you if he passes this way again.

**AMALIA:** Which way did you say he went?

**ELWOOD THE TREE:** [*Pointing.*] That way. But you'd better not go after him.

**AMALIA:** I'll be fine, especially now that I've been warned about Boris the Beaver and his Popsicle stick jokes.

**ELWOOD THE TREE:** If you insist on going, stay on the trail beside the creek and turn back before the sun sets. If you start noticing fireflies, then it's time to turn around and head home. Whatever you do don't follow the fireflies. All they do is dance. They're a lot of fun, but they won't be able to help you find your way home. If anything, they'll lead you deeper into the forest.

**AMALIA:** Thanks. What did you say your name was?

**ELWOOD THE TREE:** Elwood. Elwood the Tree. I know everyone in the forest, so if you run into trouble, just let it be known that you're a friend of mine. In the meantime, I'll try to spread the word that you're on your way.

**AMALIA:** Thanks, Elwood. See you again soon.

[*AMALIA ventures into the forest.*]

## Annie Jump and the Library of Heaven

Reina Hardy

### Seriocomic

**KJ:** 14

**ANNIE:** 13

*KJ enters, holding a flashlight.*

**KJ:** Pete—yo, P.T.! Can you even believe this shiz? I almost peed. Pete? Where are you?

[*ANNIE, wearing a hard hat with a light on it, stands up, seemingly out of nowhere. She's been fiddling with some electronics.*]

**KJ:** Who are you?

**ANNIE:** I'm the electrician.

**KJ:** Aren't you a girl?

**ANNIE:** Excuse me?

**KJ:** No, I mean . . .

**ANNIE:** What are you, twelve?

**KJ:** I'm a sophomore in high school. I'm a little short for my age but it's temporary. I haven't grown into my feet yet.

**ANNIE:** Oh. I'm a freshman.

**KJ:** Also I skipped a grade.

**ANNIE:** Me too. [*She bunkers down and gets back to work.*]  
I've never seen you before.

**KJ:** I'm new in town this summer.

**ANNIE:** And you're hanging out with Pete and those guys?

**KJ:** We were pranking somebody. I'm, kind of like a tech guy—so my contribution was pretty crucial to the success of the project.

**ANNIE:** What did you do?

**KJ:** I sent a fax to Christopher Jump.

**ANNIE:** Oh yeah. Dr. Alien.

**KJ:** I guess he's like, a legend in this town. Has this crazy website asking for e-mails from little green men, and everyone laughs at him but he's just like, whatever, "I Believe." Is he actually a doctor?

**ANNIE:** He has a doctorate. Psychology.

**KJ:** Whoah. Legit? That's amazing. 'Cause he's, y'know . . .

**ANNIE:** Crazy?

**KJ:** Yeah. So did you hear the name of the alien federation? Association of Stellar Serenity Healing Across Time Space.

[*ANNIE thinks for a second.*]

**ANNIE:** Asshats?

[*KJ cracks up.*]

**KJ:** I can't believe he didn't notice! I still gotta think of the perfect song for Dr. Jump to sing to the aliens.

**ANNIE:** How about the Barney song? Y'know—I love you, you love me, we're a happy . . .

**KJ:** Happy family? OMG, that's perfect. You're a genius.

**ANNIE:** Uh-huh.

**KJ:** So, you're from around here? You're like, a Strawberry?

**ANNIE:** I guess so. Can you do me a favor and make sure this is grounded?

**KJ:** Eh. Uh. I'm not really good with wiring.

**ANNIE:** I thought you said you were a tech guy?

**KJ:** More computers. Programming, software, that kind of thing. But I can try to . . .

**ANNIE:** Don't stress. I've got it.

[*KJ shines his flashlight on ANNIE for a second.*]

**KJ:** This is so weird.

ANNIE: Hmm?

KJ: You are definitely a girl, but . . .

ANNIE: What?

KJ: Nothing. You're just surprising, that's all.

ANNIE: Surprising in a good way, or a bad way?

KJ: Good way. Definitely a good way.

ANNIE: What's your name?

KJ: Oh, shiz. I totally forgot. I'm not nonfunctional or anything, just a little weird sometimes. I'm Kenneth Jerome Urbanik. My friends call me KJ. What's your name?

[ANNIE stands.]

ANNIE: I'm Annie. Annie Jump.

## Annie Jump and the Library of Heaven

Reina Hardy

### Seriocomic

ANNIE: 13

ALTHEA: 13 to 15

*ANNIE is sitting outside, looking at the stars. A small, round object drops out of the sky and rolls to her feet. She picks it up. It's a pool ball. The eight.*

ANNIE: . . . the heck?

ALTHEA: That's mine, you know.

*[A very pretty, nicely dressed teenage girl with a good deal of attitude has appeared.]*

ANNIE: What?

ALTHEA: That thing you just picked up. It belongs to me.

ANNIE: Um . . .

ALTHEA: Do you understand American English? It's mine.

ANNIE: It came from the sky. [ALTHEA gives her a look.  
ANNIE withers.] Do you want it back?