



Part of the first prize winning sci-fi short story at the Trivium Publishing in 2017:

## Quéiiija

I have seventeen degrees.

From quantum physics to aeronautical engineering to exo-terraforming.

And now my biggest problem is: Where am I going to find a pair of trousers for tomorrow?

Clarification.

I have seventeen real degrees. But in all, I have thirty-two diplomas of diverse educational, trainings and courses to pin up on my former dormitory-room wall. At the moment, I'm particularly annoyed by the excellent rating for ETT-XL, the special extreme survival training course, because it prepared astronauts for so many things, except for how to get a pair of trousers for tomorrow.

Clarification.

Not for tomorrow, but already for the day before yesterday would have been too late. But since I have searched every corner of my thirty-two qualifications in vain, none of them contains the answer to the question, the problem also will live on from tomorrow, until the last few shreds of this theoretically wear resistant, indestructible, eternal, radiation- and heat-protecting, kevlar-titanium-nanocarbon wonder-cloth will be zipped off me in a single ruffling of Quéiiija's feathers.

Under the cover feathers of Quéiiija I sit in an incredibly soft, airy, warm, springy bed of neck feathers. I pull my head in, because the wind, at about two hundred kilometres per hour, can be murderous even in its tepid form. I wrap my - slowly up to my thighs bare - legs around the throbbing, hot neck, which, without any kind of scientific dissection, makes it clear that Quéiiija is warm-blooded. Or rather a warm-inside-liquid, who knows if it's blood at all? I could analyze it in the lab, of course. But even the possibility of finding the lab is at least forty thousand kilometres behind us now, and with every estimated day is circa another thousand kilometres or so further away. Well, plus that would require a drop of blood as well... and it's unlikely that Quéiiija would give it voluntarily.

I rest my foot on the cylindrical base of the feathers that start at the shoulder. Being very carefully not to slide down accidentally. Because the pens are made of a material of incredible hardness, with edges like Japanese samurai swords, ranging in size from twenty centimetres to four metres. They can inflict terrible wounds at the slightest careless movement. And care is not one of Quéiiija's basic qualities. He crouches and smoothes down his feathers as I try to climb off him. But he's unpredictable when he will suddenly shake his whole crown of feathers because getting an itch. In such cases I protect my neck the most. I've seen what he can do with a single wing flap. It can slice through waist-thick tree trunks.

If they are trees at all.

After the first few splits, due to the thick liquid that oozed out of the trunks - which tasted like honey and was edible - made me suspect something like grass. But I was to find out bitterly that whatever they are, they are harder than beech, and very uncomfortable to sleep in between the pieces.

The kevlar nano-wonder has withstood every test planned for hundred years forwards, that ever we have devised on Earth. Due to the first exo-bird feather, on the other hand, made it surrendered in a few months.

Clarification.

Hell knows, in how much time.

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<https://triviumnet.hu/termekek/utazok/>

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