



**Fragment książki *Afera nie z tej ziemi* Anny Onichimowskiej przełożył Marek Kazmierski.  
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**HANIA**

**A scandal out of this world!**

Hanna Paper almost ended up behind bars. At least that's where the store security guard threatened to send her. He said the next time she tried anything like that she would end up in jail.

“You can't put kids in prison,” Bulbes said boldly. “He was only joking, trying to scare you a little.” Bulbes is a little ashamed of what Hania has been up to, but is also a little envious. That she's being so brave all of a sudden.

But first things first. This was how it all began:

Hania and Mrs Helenka went shopping. To the supermarket. Hania wanted a candy bar, but Helenka just shook her head.

“Remember what Bulbes' mum told you. You have to eat less sweets.”

Bulbes' Mum is a dentist, and **Hania has cavities in her teeth**. One candy bar is surely not going to cause any more teeth to rot, or so Hania thought, grabbing a candy bar and hiding it in her pocket.

“Did you not know it is wrong?” Helenka asked afterwards.

This was once everything came out in the open and the candy bar ended up in the store security guard's mighty strong hands.

“I did.” Hania answers, shrugging her shoulders. What sort of a question was that?

**EVERYONE knows stealing is wrong.**

“So why did you...?” Helenka asks with a sad face.

Hania doesn't like it when Helenka is sad.

“Please don't tell Dad,” she asks.

It's not that she's afraid of what Dad will do, it just feels unpleasant.



It's best he doesn't know anything about his daughter's troubles with the law.

“I can't promise you that,” Helenka says, shaking her head.

Whenever Hania asks Helenka to keep a secret, Helenka agrees, but not this time.

**Fine, be like that.... Hania begins to feel her blood boil.**

**STUPID candy bar**

**STUPID Helenka**

And now she looks at Bulbes and his expression.

“Have you ever stolen anything?” she asks, and the boy shakes his head.

“You could try,” Hania says encouragingly.

“What for?” Bulbes asks, surprised.

“To know how it feels.”

“I don't want to know...” the boy thinks to himself. Something is up with his friend, he concludes, amazed.

**Hania, not Hania?**

Suddenly, the girl remembers Bulbes' mum's necklace. The one with the red stone in it. She had always thought it ever so pretty.

“You could, for example, steal your mum's necklace.”

Bulbes eyes almost pop out of his head.

“Why would I do that?” he asks, surprised all over again.

“To then give it to me,” although Hania is smiling, her little teeth suddenly seem to Bulbes like the fangs of a wild wolf.

“No!” Bulbes screams, turning on his heels and running away.

As if being chased by something evil.

**Come the evening, he receives a message from Hania.**

HANIA:

If you don't agree,

I am finished with you.



## BULBES

The necklace is hanging in the bathroom on a little white tree, its branches used to hold up coral necklaces. Just a quick tug is needed to pull the one Hania wants loose. Then “Pop!” into his backpack. **How easy it seems, Bulbes thinks to himself, but on second thoughts he is not at all convinced it is all so simple.**

Unable to sleep, he climbs out bed, walks over to his parents bedroom and, cuddling up to his mummy, whispers into her ear:

### **WHAT IS TO BE DONE WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT?**

“A tough question,” Mum thinks to herself.

“Can you tell me a little bit more?” she whispers to her son, because it is easier to talk about tricky things in whispers.

“I can't,” Bulbes sighs sadly.

**“You should only ever do things you will not regret having done later.”**

“But what if you end up regretting something forever?”

“Then in a way that you regret as little as possible.”

**“Can I sleep here tonight?”** Bulbes asks, while **mum wraps her arm around him tightly**, to show she agrees.

Daddy sometimes sleeps in the same bed, but now he is away, working at sea. He is rarely home and is always surprised to find Bulbes has grown so much. “Hasn't he sprouted?!” he then says, looking at Bulbes, and laughs. **Maybe Daddy would know what to do?** Unfortunately, he is so so far away. Not that Bulbes is at all certain Daddy would tell him what best to do.

It's a good thing tomorrow is a Saturday. Followed by a Sunday. No school, no need to see Hania. Any other time, he'd be so, so keen to see her, but now things are different.

Mum has arranged to take Bulbes to see a movie about whales at the local cinema.

“We can also take Hania with us, if you wish...” Mum suggests.

“No, I do not!” the boy shouts.

“And so, they must be quarrelling again,” Mum thinks to herself, remembering Bulbes' earlier question.

The film is beautiful. For over an hour, it is possible to forget all about the world outside. About the



shops which are too expensive, about all those necklaces and especially about Hania.

And even a little later, outside the cinema, Bulbes can still see all those oceans around him, along with the massive whales and mysterious sounds emitted by them.

**Because whales also speak, or rather sing, perhaps?**

Bulbes wonders if his Daddy has ever seen whales in real life and heard their song... It suddenly seems important to him. A lot more important than questions about a stupid necklace. Because when you see something as massive as an ocean, then everything else becomes small and insignificant. Bulbes begins smiling. Eating dumplings with Mum. Then they read a book before going to bed. Bulbes can now sleep in his own bed again, no longer troubled by any bad dreams.