

# THE TOURIST THAT NEVER LEFT

BY LISE VERVACKÉ

**FOR THE WEEKLY INTERVIEW, WE DECIDED TO LOOK FOR A SPECIAL CITIZEN AMONG US, BETTER KNOWN AS THE TOURIST THAT NEVER LEFT. SHE TRAVELLED FROM HER HOME COUNTRY, WOMANIAN, TO EQUALIA FOR FUN. BUT WHEN SHE GOT HERE, SHE DECIDED TO STAY. IN THIS IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW, WE FIND OUT WHY.**

**Hello, Kelly Anderson. How are you today?**

I'm great actually, I just got off work.

**Great! Could you introduce yourself to the readers, please?**

Yes, no problem. My name is Kelly Anderson. I'm 25 years old and used to work in a local shop but now I'm spending my time educating the youngsters among us, here in Equalia. I have three sisters back home. My parents are divorced and my dad left the country. We don't really know where he is.

**And home is where exactly?**

I'm from Womanian.

**But you never went back?**

No, I stayed here in Equalia. I think almost five years ago. I had planned a short visit because my sisters and I were travelling around the world. We were supposed to stay here for six days and then leave again. But I fell in love with this place and decided to stay.

**Do you miss your family?**

Yes, I do! I miss them a lot but they understand why I moved and are very supportive of my choice. They visit sometimes, too. So, I wouldn't really say that I'm homesick. I just miss having them around to talk. But I have made a lot of great friends over the years. I'm not lonely if that is what you think.



**What made you decide to stay in Equalia?**

Well, when I first arrived, I fell in love with nature. It is so calm and peaceful here when you walk around, I couldn't believe it. And then, I met the locals. Such loving and caring people! Everybody walks around with a huge smile on their face. You can feel that they are happy and feel confident to be themselves. And everyone here is treated the same way! That was a new thing for me. Men having the same rights as women? I love it!

**Can you tell me what the differences are between Equalia and your home country?**

First of all, equality. Like I said before, men being equal to women is not the standard in our country. We also have a dictator. And that is a big change for me because here people can get elected as a leader. I think that's a good thing, that way things don't remain the same. In the five years that I lived here, there were three different leaders, each with his/her own vision to what should be better. In Womanian, Blair Looper has been the leader for years. Nothing really changes over there.



**Besides the government, what is also different?**

I'm talking more about living situations and such. A big change for me was living in a commune. At home, we have our own space with the family. Strangers stay out of it or they get arrested. So the mentality 'Everything that is mine is yours.', was something I had to get used to.

Also because of that mentality, there aren't really strangers. We live together, cook together, sleep together, so everyone knows everyone. What also helps with my job because I know the living conditions of my pupils. I know who their parents are and that makes it so much easier to understand the children.

What I also had to get used to was the standard income you receive when you work. In my home country, when you have a higher education, you earn a bigger salary. I think because the Equals receive the same amount for whatever job, the crime rate is very low. I feel like jealousy doesn't exist because we share our belongings. Nobody has a feeling that they are entitled to have something because they have a higher education or are doing a harder job.

**How did the locals treat you at first?**

Oh, they were lovely! They still are! The local population welcomed me with open arms, even when I was just the tourist for those six days. They treated me like I was one of their own, respected my choices and boundaries and made me feel right at home. They gave me the chance to integrate myself in the community like I wanted to be.

**Do you think you will stay forever? Or are you planning to go back to Womanian?**

That hasn't been on my mind. For the moment, I'm not planning on leaving. I want to see what the future has in store for me, whether here or somewhere else. I like to follow my instincts and find it fascinating where it takes me. So perhaps over 10 years, I'm one of the oldest in Equalia or one of the youngest in Seniora. We'll see!

**I would like to thank you for this interview!**

No problem, I really enjoyed talking to you!

