

Screenwriting and project by [REDACTED]

WAY BACK HOME

Pitch bible - 16/02/2018 version

26x24'

PITCH

TWO AVERAGE KIDS
MUST COME BACK TO EARTH
WITHOUT CLUE NOR HELP
EXCEPT THEIR WITS AND SKILLS



WAY BACK HOME

A [REDACTED] cartoon

Media : 2D Animation

Genre : Adventure/ Sci-fi

Structure : Overarching series

Cible : 8-14 years old

Format : 26x24'

SYNOPSIS

Take a guess: What do two simple everyday children, a giant extraterrestrial insect and a Chinese astronaut got in common? Nothing, but they will all be part of the upcoming deep-space adventure "The way back home".

Meet Jules and Julie, two 10 years-old siblings addicted to television shows and laying around, as they are sent to spend the summer holidays with their grandparents in the countryside. One night, while the kids are home alone, aliens land in to discover the region. As they won't leave our beautiful planet empty-handed, the aliens choose to bring back with them a very special souvenir: The children.

Julie and Jules find themselves locked up in a kind of Zoo on another planet. There, visitors from all parts of the galaxy keep flowing to come see for the first time what a Human look like. While all hope seems lost the children manage to escape from their jail. With the help of a strange alien tramp and many more characters, they will cross the Milky Way with a single goal in sight: Reaching Earth to come back home.

Alas, the way is yet long and many dangers await the siblings. From clueless millennial children, Jules and Julie will become responsible self-reliant individuals through hardships and survival. They will also have to find ways to overpass the barrier of communication in a world where human languages are still unheard of, if not downright the ability to speak. This unwanted journey will change definitely the two children, making them stronger both physically and emotionally.

No maps, no translators, no guides, no powers. Adventure, real adventure, is finally back.



MAIN CHARACTERS

OUR HEROES: JULES AND JULIE

Jules and Julie are ten-year-olds kids, like others. Both were born in Lyon in 2002, where they still live with their parents. This story will take them to Château-l'étoile, a village in southwestern France where their grandparents live, as well as their family close and distant. It is a bit like their home away from home, considering the time they have been able to spend there since they were toddlers. Yet all this little world collapses around them, the parents are on the verge of divorce, the Jantel family is waiting for an umpteenth bankruptcy to undo itself, and despite their apparent carelessness, the children are well aware of this. If only they could be far from all of that ...

Apart from the color of their clothes and their names, Jules and Julie each have a distinct character, but neither are they negatives of each other. They are shabby, with the faults of their time, but not asocial either. Contrary to what their description might suggest, they are not the kind of children who are kept apart from the rest of the class, just those who blend in. They are average middle-class children with ordinary problems. Jules and Julie are above all complementary to each other. Facing the challenges that await them they will be able to rescue each other and count on one another. As most spoilt children, Jules and Julie can be petty, whiny, jaded and will need a good pair of slaps, figuratively or in proper sense, to learn humility.

JULES JANTEL



As many boys his age, Jules is passionate about science, adventure and all kinds of discoveries. His most cherished dream would be to become a renowned explorer, but for now he has explored nothing more than his couch. Where he can spend whole days watching documentaries. Make no mistake, Jules is not a "geek" character. No calculator in hand or thick glasses so. He is an ordinary child, more dreamer than he would like to admit.

Jules sees himself as a serious and reasonable person. "Serious" is also his favorite expression. He likes to imitate adults and looks for their company thinking that will make him more mature. Which gives him a scornful and authoritarian attitude of which he is not always aware. More than anything, Jules hates being treated like a child and throw tantrums if nobody notices him. Which makes him look even more childish. A vicious circle then. A fair reward since Jules himself does not pay attention to others. He is a selfish boy who don't take the advice from others and never listens to what is said to him. He is irresponsible because he cannot understand people.

Despite his puny look, Jules loves sports, as long it is on TV. As for the rest, moving a single finger is out of the question. He is afraid when he feels vulnerable or facing a dead end, he believes in luck and bad luck. He hides himself to watch cartoons or to eat sweets for fear of looking ridiculous. His knowledge of things is theoretical, which is normal since he learnt everything from books without rubbing into life. He wishes above all to be respected but will only get respect by learning the sense of responsibilities.

In the immediate future Jules wants only one thing: Growing up as fast as possible to leave his family. The upcoming adventure will fulfill his desires beyond all expectations.

JULIE JANTEL

Julie also is an ordinary child. Like girls her age, she likes to spend good time with her friends, gossip and follow the trend. She has no ideas for her future, however. All of this is far for now, better to enjoy her childhood without thinking of tomorrow.

Julie likes to be a child and that's the problem, she doesn't want to grow up. The adult world scares her, she can't stand reality, so she shelter in magic novels, stories and fashions. Better dream not to see: Such is her strategy. She is not blind so far, she knows that her parents may divorce, she knows she may not see her grandparents, her family, or the Jantel estate again. Which hurts her since she likes all of that. It is precisely to escape this observation that Julie flees the real world. Behind her smiles she is deeply depressed.

Julie sees herself as a nice and friendly person, or at least she would like to be. She pretends to worry about others and to take interest in them out of fear that she will be found selfish (but deep down she is as unsociable as her brother). This character she makes up doesn't fool anyone around her. As a result, Julie looks above all as a hypocrite and her tendency to manipulate people does not makes things better for her image.

Julie is as lazy as her brother. She spends as much time in front of the TV except that in addition she stuff herself with junk food. Which makes her rather chubby, probably another cause for her depression. And what better way to compensate than to eat even more ... Better not to notice her weight to prevent any drama. Julie is afraid to become alone one day, to not be loved or to be trash-talked behind her back. She believes in ghosts. Since she was a toddler, she is convinced of having channeled her ancestors in Château-l'étoile. Maybe she is right.

Above all, Julie seeks love in the broadest sense. She wants to be loved and happy at all costs. But just as there is no respect without responsibility, she will learn that there is no love without being earnest, nor happiness without misfortunes.

Meanwhile, Julie dreams of a different life in a world other than hers. Another wish fulfilled by the adventure that she and her brother will live.



OTHER CHARACTERS

BUG

The unpronounceable name of this 2meters-high alien will remain a mystery for most of the series. Other characters always refer to him as "Bug" because of his insect-like appearance, and since he does not know what an insect is in the first place he has no problem with that.

Bug was on a stop to fix once again his flying dumpster of a spaceship when he came across Jules and Julie for the first time. He was as much afraid as them to see these "limbed worms", as he like to call them, since they were the first creatures of this kind he ever met.

Bug left his own home long ago, he crossed most of the galaxy going from one fast money job to another. Mercenary, poacher and bounty hunter are among his common occupations, but most of the time he simply wanders aimlessly from one planet to another as a bum would do.

The time spent with the kids enabled him to learn slowly human words and language, making dialogue with other characters more and more easy for him. However, his speech is broken and a strong accent remains which makes him difficult to be understood.

"You, do not take that riffle!" becomes "Oo no tak h-shll!" when said in Bug's voice.

His endless days spent in company of Jules, Julie and Wang has also convinced him of one thing: That Humans are crazy.

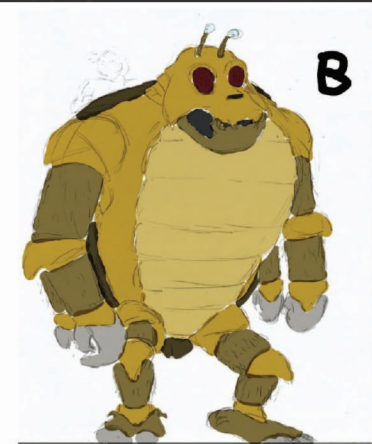
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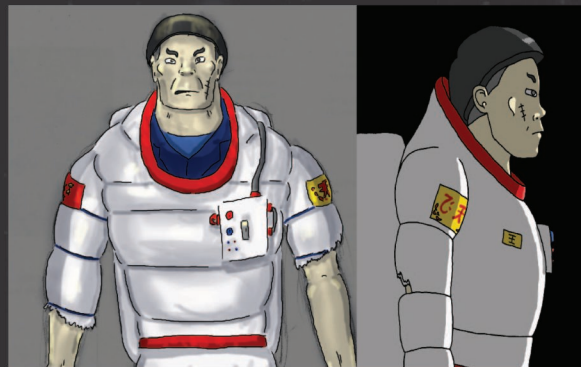


WANG LI-YU

Wang was a Taikonaut in mission around Earth for his country when he got abducted by aliens. His disappearance has been kept as a state secret by the Chinese authorities. Hopefully Wang is not aware of this fact because he spent 10 years in the mines of a faraway planet as a slave. All this time being worked to exhaustion has made him into a strong hardened man and left him with unpleasant memories. Because of this he prefers not thinking too much about the past, and rather focus on things to come. His past life will therefore remain a complete mystery.

Wang built his way to Taikonautship through perseverance, vast knowledge and high mental capacities. He knows how to speak English (French in the original version) without much noticeable accent yet with the same kind of grammar mistakes any other Chinese speaker would make.

It is not clear whether Wang had children, back in China, or not. What is clear, though, is that through the time spent in this journey paternal instincts start growing in him towards Jules and Julie. Consciously or not, he will become their unofficial tutor and will try to protect their life at any given occasion.



ALIENS

THE BLUE-BLUE-BLUES

This wild alien species unable to speak was once leading a great empire stretching through most of the known galaxy. This is why they can still be found in small communities across almost all planets. Some of them take profit of this impressive network to take control of power places in their home-planet, others instead try to stay as stealth as possible and to interfere the least with their environment to avoid danger. Being devoid of any sound making organ, they communicate with light signals thank to seven lanterns they have over their body. The Blue-blue-blues are not evil, neither good, but they have a single goal in mind: The survival of their species, no matter which consequences must be faced in that purpose.

THE SAYAPI

This species of apparently peaceful farmers is endowed with speech (voice) and even speaks a language very close to that of humans. This, of course, is only an impression, the language of the Sayapi actually has multiple sounds inaudible to human ears. Long ago the Sayapi have unlocked the secrets of silence, from that day on they honor it constantly by the name of "Yaman". Adults and children are the same size and it is difficult to distinguish their age by eyesight only. Most of them wear distinctive signs to make it knowable. Their writing is made up of concentric circles overlapping each other. It is difficult to know how far the Sayapi people extend but at first glance they seem to need only their own planet.

THE OMEEA

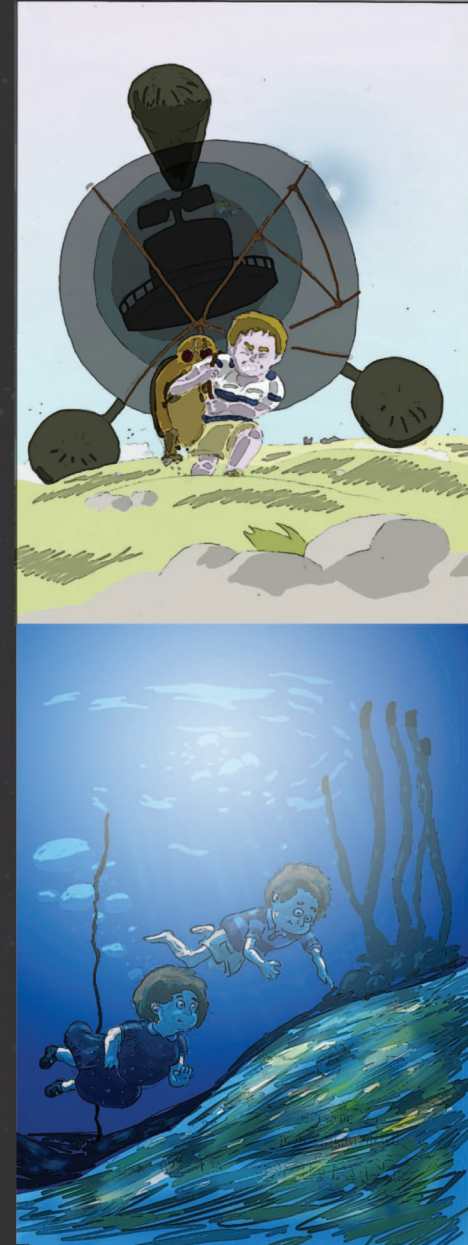
Although they have decided to settle on the seabed, the Omee'a are not sea creatures, they have an apnea limit and a rather low tolerance to sea salt as humans or other animals living on the land. In reality the Omee'a were terrestrial creatures back in the days when their home had not yet become an ocean planet. As a result they had to adapt themselves to cope with the loss of their empire under the waves. They have therefore quickly became expert in navigation and learned to colonize the ocean floor with apparently rudimentary means. The Omee'a also developed all kinds of techniques and teachings to suit marine life, relying more on their bodies than on instruments. They are masters in the art of apnea and live in the hope of becoming one day fully aquatic creatures. Their language has mostly vowels. It is soft to hear but terribly hard to pronounce for foreigners, or Oate'a in that language. These are generally happy-go-lucky, simple and honest people but regarding their spatial neighbors their opinions range from disdain to rivalry. Seeing humans is still new to them, but they will eventually end like many other species in their eyes, among the rank of creatures that exist only to be laughed at.

THE FLOGS

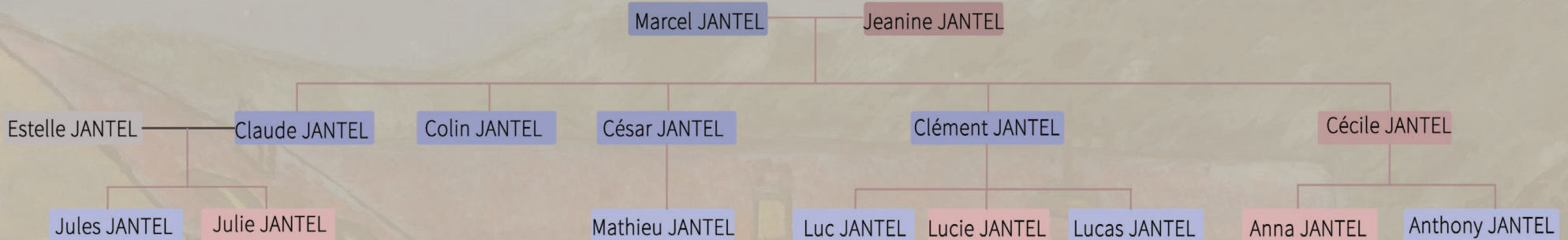
These aliens are the first seen (without spacesuit) by Jules and Julie, during their captivity at the zoo. Because they look like both amphibians and flies, Jules and Julie call them "Flogs" want of knowing their real names. Because they are seen seldom in one or two episodes, the audience will know only little about the Flogs. Impossible for example whether they are peaceful or warlike species. All he knows is that the Flogs reached a sufficient level of technology to build cities and travel in (nearby) space. They also have an audible language and a writing system made of circles, much alike that of the Sayapi. They move in small leaps, such as frogs, and eat with a (flexible) trunk, like flies. They are smaller in size than humans but equal them and even exceed them in strength as in thought. An adult Flog in a stable position measures the size of a human child. Suffice to say that their meetings with Jules and Julie will be face-to-face.

THE RAIDERS

Always hidden behind their spacesuits, this alien species are the poachers of the cosmos. Relics, organs, animals, documents, rare minerals nothing escapes them to supply the most demanding markets. Our corner of the Milky Way has almost no secrets for them. Stealth is their motto on the terrain, they always try to leave the least possible amount of evidences behind them when leaving. Their activities are illegal for most aliens, it must be said that the boundary between people and goods is very difficult to define in the infinity of the universe. In the likeness of Phoenicians, the Raiders opened most trade routes and their travel maps are a closely guarded secret whose only copies available to the public are kept in the Great Library of Planets. And yet, from all of these only three copies have been translated. Not even Humans are strangers to them. They have already flown over Earth several times, observing the light of our cities, movements of our vehicles or shape of our fields. They are the ones who abducted Jules and Julie during one summer night in Château-l'étoile, and so many others before them. Despite all these light-years traveled through and all their knowledge of spacefaring Raiders do actually know very little about the Galaxy. Their world-view is like that of sailors, going from one harbor to another without seeing anything else than the shored of the encountered country. Since the Raiders only stay very quickly on the planets they visit and in the utmost discretion they never established any contact with the natives. They are unaware of their languages, their life, their stories, they ignore what animals populate their planets, what climates are there, not even what they are made of. Hence this disdainful impression that the universe is the same everywhere. As sailors they also are superstitious. Space is for them a mystery concealed behind layers of unknown giving birth to legends, often with a hint of truth at the core. Because of their distance Raiders themselves are a mystery to most other species. Masked robbers coming out of nowhere of whom nobody knows anything does not bode nothing good. As no one took the time to meet them their name is also unknown. Generally they are designated as "Raiders" or "Visitors" and have a fearsome reputation. A deserved reputation however, as they often engage in abductions. Raiders abduct people as a scientist would take a mouse to his laboratory, as a boat would take dolphins for a SeaWorld park, as a child would take snails to bring them home. And this with all that it implies, as it was the case in 1978 on the Billings dam in Brazil.



THE JANTEL FAMILY



MARCEL JANTEL

Last heir of the family vineyard, Marcel Jantel is the grandfather of Jules and Julie and a Castelstellois born and raised. Born in Château-l'étoile he lived the mechanization of agriculture and the change of lifestyle that ensued in the village. The number of employees has been reduced by half and more than once his farm was on the verge of bankruptcy. Today no one is there to retrieve it. His eldest son moved to Lyons to open his own business and none of his other children did seem interested in the case. Neither his grandchildren. Lack of successors, Marcel dreads seeing the family relic bought at his death by all kinds of businessmen. A death that seems increasingly close.

JEANINE JANTEL

Wife of Marcel, Jeanine Jantel met her husband very early, a time when long-term relationships were the norm. She has never left since that day and the two are rarely quarreled during their long life. As her husband, Jeanine went through the last century, with the advantages and consequences involved. The farm is what kept the Jantel clan united, with its abandonment the list tightens increasingly (at family reunions). It is she who fought and is still fighting the last years of her life to keep the family together. But as with Marcel, this weight become increasing tiring with age.

CLAUDE JANTEL (JULES, JULIE)

Claude Jantel is the son of Marcel and the father of the two main characters. Like his brothers, Claude grew affected by the decline of the family farm. Himself being worked by the idea of leaving the village. His wedding with Estelle, his future wife, was the perfect opportunity. He was immediately gone to live with her in Lyon there to open a trade and made her two beautiful children. Unlike their parents, the couple Claude was not as stable. Today, Ms. Jantel and he are at the edge of divorce, and children feel it all too well behind their carefree facade.

COLIN JANTEL

Brother of Claude and son of Marcel Jantel, Colin is the uncle of the two protagonists. Unlike his brother, Colin Jantel rarely left his native village and still lives in the area to date. It is assumed a single and fundamentally individualistic. It all started in the first bankruptcy of the Jantel farm. Colin jumped at the chance to get rid of this burden when entering the local police. He spent more than 10 years, for want of better, which earned him yet today some knowledge of the region behind the scene. Following that, he chained the jobs and women before settling on his own for good. Today, Colin takes care of his bistro in the suburbs (surrounding) of Carcassonne. At the gates of 40 years, he never had a wife or children and does not intend to have. Because his own family life is empty, Colin Jantel closely following everything related to his siblings. Under his solitary outside, he is always ready to lend a hand when it comes to family. Jantel Colin grew up in the shadow of his older brother Claude. He always saw him as his model and, somehow, it's still the case. The disappearance of Jules and Julie awake in him paternity instincts kept asleep for too long that will push him to search for the two children.



CLEMENT JANTEL (LUC, LUCIE, LUCAS)

Clément Jantel is the big brother of Claude. Unlike many of his brothers and sisters, the love life of Clément is without problems. It cannot be said the same of his professional life. He preferred to leave the farm in the hands of his father to sell his own agronomist services to companies. In the 80s he engaged in all kinds of stock market maneuvers that earned him a certain financial ease, for a decade or two. It was during this golden era that he met his wife and had three children: Luc, Lucie and the youngest Lucas. The 2008 crisis has not spared Clément. Today he lives on credit and tries to hide somehow this fact, waiting to find an outlet to work. Fortunately, children are not aware of this, even if they begin to suspect something.

CESAR JANTEL (MATHIEU)

Last brother of Claude, the married life of César Jantel and his wife is unhindered. His love of savings and well-run money allowed César to help saving the farm from bankruptcy more than once. He also is the only one of his siblings who still works there. At home the calculation is the same: One child, it is less spending. The idea was good economically but in itself it is a disaster. Their son Mathieu became shy and withdrawn, from time to time he deigns to speak to Jules and Julie because within oneself he sees in them the siblings he never had. Otherwise, video games are Mathieu's only friends.

CECILE JANTEL (ANNA, ANTHONY)

Sister of Claude, Cécile Jantel is the youngest of the cradle. Because of this she always was the last wheel of the coach, Cécile often lived apart. Left to herself from childhood to adulthood, she became very free but not consistent enough. She changes her ideas as tastes or even husbands. This is why she is now divorced, after throwing her last suitor, raising her two children: Anna and Anthony. Their names also are one of Cécile's fads. They come from what used to be her favorite TV show for a while. Cécile is often absent at home. Her children, like other divorced kids, have been made jaded and spoiled by the constant back and forth between both parents houses. When they see them, Jules and Julie are afraid to end in the same case one day themselves.

THE JANTEL DOMAIN

The Jantel vineyard was built foremost with a privacy concern. A small stone farmhouse, few acres of green vine clinging to the sides of the hills, a small dirt road leading to the main road. Some hedges some grids as a fence. This is the picture of what Marcel affectionately calls "the farm." All nestled in a valley of bushes and thorns, as if lost in the Southern wilderness. Further, some sheds and hangars to develop the homegrown Jantel brew: The "Château-l'étoile", a red Alaric with a strongly earthy taste. Beyond this is the actual farm. Vineyards and olive trees are planted there, alongside some fig trees that recently adorn the whole. A garden nestled between the house and the garrigue, a canopy as a garage, a small iron gate and that's it. The bulk of the Jantel family life takes place in the house itself. Small but charming to see, at least from the outside. Even though it looks old from outside (probably XVII), the interior has suffered the ravages of modernization. Another awkward idea from Clément Jantel. The result: Two huge sliding windows on the rear façade, overlooking the garden. White and smooth soulless walls. Ikea also went through there. Fortunately some period furniture, inheritance of the Jantel, survived the massacre. As the porcelain cabinet of grandma Jantel. The ground floor is tiled with red brick. The first floor inlaid in wooden planks. The ceilings in French style, supported by painted beams.

EPISODES LIST

EPISODE 1 : DISAPPEARED IN THE NIGHT

Two 10 years-old siblings, Jules and Julie, are sent to spend holidays at their grandparent's house in the countryside. Unfortunately one of the grandparents has an accident and must be taken to the hospital while the children await them alone at home for the whole night. That very night while they are alone in the house they get abducted by aliens. The kids are then taken to another planet at the other side of the milky way, where they are locked in a kind of zoo for the greatest amazement of visitors. They later manage to escape from the zoo and leave this planet thanks to some alien space tramp (he looks like an insect, so the kids name him Bug) they met, with the hope of getting back to Earth as soon as possible.

EPISODE 2 : ROAD TO THE STARS

The kids manage to communicate with Bug (who does not speak human) thanks to hand signs. Their spaceship is chased by troops sent by the zoo owners, trying to get the kids back. Meanwhile on Earth a man is wrongfully thought guilty of Jules and Julie's disappearance by the police. By the end of the episode, after the spaceship successfully escapes enemy troops, Bug and the children learnt a few words from each other language.

EPISODE 3 : A TRAITOR'S KISS

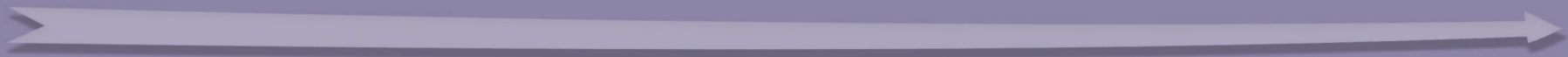
Bug try to sell the two humans on the black market of his homeplanet, in order to make some cash. All his belongings get stolen by a kind of plant-alien, who is vulnerable to CO2. The kids manage to neutralize him thanks to their breath. As an act of gratitude, Bug ask the kids to pardon him, and he make them promise that he will help them going back to Earth. But in order to do so he will need help from his relatives.

EPISODE 4 : FIELDS OF LIGHT

Our three characters are on the way to Bug's birth village when their spaceship run out of fuel. They then roam along deserted roads, in the magnificent landscape of fluorescent prairies glowing in an eternal night. An asteroid falls far away in the distance, the characters realize that they have been lucky for if they landed safely they would have been squashed by the meteor. The next morning, fire from the impact start spreading through the fields, they must take hide themselves in the spaceship wreck as soon as possible to escape the flames. Some strangers join them on the way. After the fire is over the strangers help main characters to fix the spaceship as sign of gratitude.

EPISODE 5 : FAMILY PICTURE

Bug is back in his family. He introduce them to Jules and Julie, who are saw with amazement as they are the only humans ever seen in that part of the universe. Bug has learned some words of human language, which allow him to act as an interpret. Unfortunately no one here knows what is Earth, neither where to find it. However the older of relatives teaches them that a huge library exists somewhere, where all planets of the galaxy are kept on record. The three main characters thank them, then they go back on their quest.





EPISODE 6: SOLAR STORM

Bug's spaceship is ready to work again, he take-off with the kids on the way to another planet. There he will hope to meet old friends of him, who will help him to know more about the library he is searching for. Unfortunately, the three main characters get attacked and seized by slave traders on their way.

EPISODE 7: BY PURE LUCK

Main characters are taken apart on the slave market. Jules and Julie are sold to a rich landowner (let's call him the Master) who show them off to his guests as curiosities of some sort, in his huge mansion. The master has a passion for gambling games, he progressively become more friendly with the kids as he spend time practising his play with them. One day Jules and Julie offer him a bet: If they win they will be allowed to go free again, but if they loose they will be sent away to work like regular slaves. The master accepts the gamble. The kids lose the game, they are taken away under the master's cacklings.

EPISODE 8: THE THREE-SUNNED HELL

Jules and Julie are exiled to the mines of a desert planet scorched by the heat of three suns. They find Bug in the bottom of the mine where he got sentenced to forced labor. A massive slave rebellion happens and the characters manage to escape. They also help a Chinese astronaut (Wang) to escape, who was abducted in space 20 years ago. Jules, Julie, Bug and Wang must then cross the desert, trying to find a way to leave this planet.

EPISODE 9: OUT OF SIGHT

On Earth, the police has set free the man who got wrongfully charged of kidnapping in episode 2, the children's disappearance then become an unresolved mystery. Meanwhile, Jules, Julie, Bug and Wang are spacefaring since monthes on the way to the great library of planets. Once again the spaceship runs out of fuel. They make an emergency landing on the nearest planet, hoping to find help. The ship is crashed, almost ruined, but everyone on board is living and safe. The four characters will have to spend time repairing it. They feel as if they were spied on by someone or something.

EPISODE 10: NIGHT AGAIN

Night never ends on that planet, the sky is starless and soon fog starts appearing. In other words: Complete darkness. The characters feel lost, they try to make contact through their telecommunication equipment, without a single answer. One night, while everyone is sleeping, a huge wild beast enter the wreckage searching for food, it attacks the characters. Bug and Wang try to shoot it down but they get badly hurt and their weapon is thrown away from them. Bug shouts Jules to bring him the weapon but he get caught by the beast doing so. While he is about to be eaten, Jules shoots everywhere with the weapon, out of fear. He manages to kill by accident in the way. All other characters cheer at Jules for his act, he proudly keeps a claw from the dead beast as a trophy. The characters realize that the beast is actually edible (with a strong crayfish taste). They make a nice barbecue out of these kilos of flesh around their fire camp.



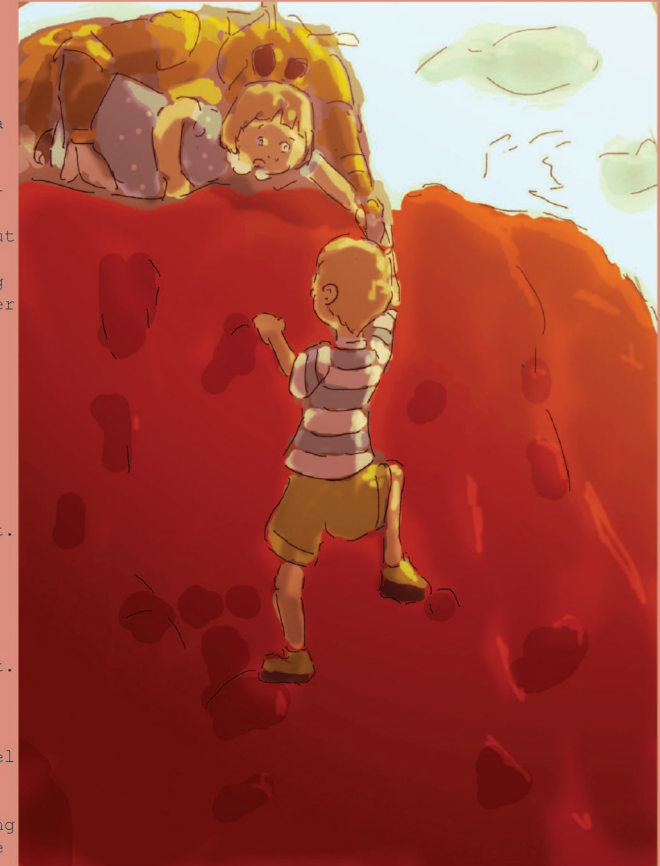
EPISODE 11 : SLUGGISH FEVER

Julie turns ill because of some fruits she found and ate. The next day her condition has worsened, she must stay in bed. Bug tell to other characters that she caught an illness that makes the body and bones progressively more flabby. If untreated, the illness could end up killing her from the moment her vital organs become crushed by her own bodymass. Bug knows how to make a cure for this illness but there is few time left. Bug, Jules and Wang leave the wreckage in search of ingredients for the cure, while Julie awaits them laying alone in the wreckage. A tribe of local aliens (who look like stereotypical primitive people) enters the wreckage, they start taking with them all kinds of objects they come across. Julie is afraid, she tries to hide but she is too sick to move. The aliens notice her, they take her along with everything else they took and they leave the place. When Jules, Wang and Bug come back they notice Julie is missing. They immediately go in search for her, tying themselves one to another to avoid getting lost in the mist. Meanwhile Julie is at the tribe's village. Her condition is so bad they had to keep her inside a cocoon to avoid her death.

Jules Wang and bug walk for two days in the jungle. They come across one of the tribe aliens and take him as an hostage. The hostage leads them to his village. Bug threatens the tribe to kill his hostage if they don't let them get close to Julie, the tribe let him go. He gives the cure to Julie.

EPISODE 12 : ONE OF OURS

Jules, Bug and Wang want to bring back Julie with them but the aliens object. They say that since she has been into the cocoon, it made her "reborn" as a member of their own species, and therefore she must remain in the tribe whether she likes it or not. They also taught her their language made of light signals while she was unconscious thanks to learning-drugs, which now allows her to act as an interpret between the tribe and the main characters. Her new native name is red-orange-red, as a mark left on her body can attest. If they wish to set Julie free, the three characters must pass beforehand a series of tests and feats which will prove them to be as brave as the tribe members. Bug, Jules and Wang accomplish all the tasks required, with much difficulty, and win. Julie is now free to go; the characters are given a fuel supply as a reward. Julie learns the true name of this alien species: The Blue-blue-blues. She also learn that they have "brothers" in almost any planet and that she could get help from these at any moment by simply showing her mark. The four main characters say goodbye to the tribe, they repair the spaceship and leave this planet to continue their quest.



EPISODE 13 : VEGABURN

This more comedy-oriented episode is entirely set in Bug's spaceship. The journey is very long, Jules, Julie and Wang already start feeling the effect caused by sun deprivation on their bodies. When the spaceship get close to an enormous star (which is identified as Vega) the three Humans decide to have a nice vegabath moment in front of the main window. With cold cocktails, swimsuits and even an improvised swimming pool they made by filling half the room with water. Bug does not understand any of what is going but he decides to join them anyway.

The session is interrupted when characters notice that space pirates are coming. They manage to keep the pirates at bay, thanks to weapons, and defeat them before they even reach the spaceship.

By the end of the episodes all of the three Humans are badly vegaburned (which is to say sunburned), perhaps a bit less harshly for Wang. Bug does understand even less of what is happening, the only thing he know for sure is that Humans are crazy.

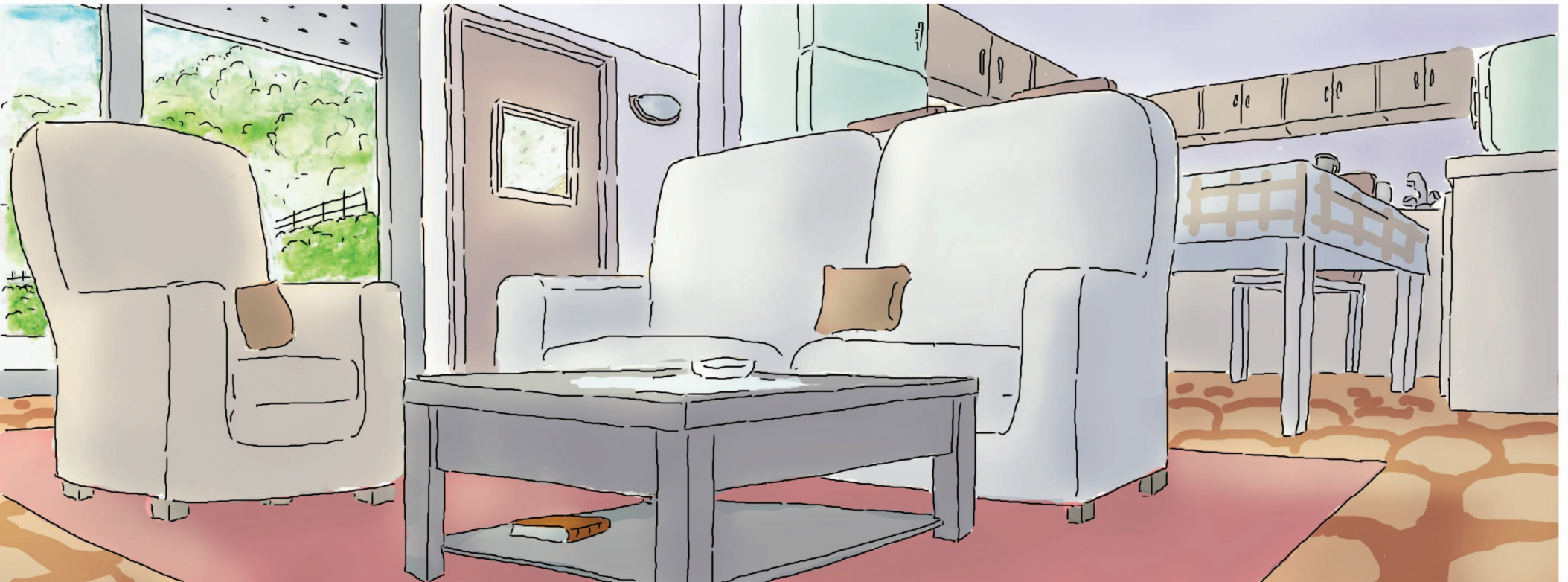
EPISODES STRUCTURE AND NATURE

«Way back home» episodes would preferably follow a mid-size duration, 24 minutes par episode more precisely, as these adventure cartoons of the 80's and 90's decades.

«Way back home» is mostly aimed at children, from 6 to 10 years old. Adults and teenagers can enjoy the show alike but they won't be the intended audience.

Having been a child yourself, long ago, you must remember that kids hate being taken for dumber than they are.

«Way back home» follows a pace, an atmosphere, close to that of french comics. The «Tintin», «Blake&Mortimer» and «Gil Jourdan» of our young years, among others: A pace where seriousness meets good-hearted humor, where realism is never gross, simple yet not simplistic. A pace suited for those who know how to offer their audience quality entertainment.



GRAPHICAL TREATMENT

Visually, we must understand that WAY BACK HOME Will not appeal to the surrealism of American cartoons. The laws of physics are respected in the strictest sense. The sets are not just a backdrop, they are environments in which our heroes struggle, stumble, get sick or take shelter. The shape of the characters obeys Franco-Belgian sobriety, at least for the first drafts. Their facial features are reduced to a few features, but proportions within the limits of reality.

All the visual bias, however, resides in a certain contrast between the level of detail of the main characters, and that of the sets as secondary characters. If you know Scott McCloud's book "The Invisible Art" (1993) you will easily understand the purpose: By instinct, the viewer identifies with the sketches, and merely observes the detailed drawings. The difference between these two cases is a question of familiarity. Draw a schematized insect in a few strokes and the public will see it as a cartoon character. Give him hair, antennae, pores or claws, the viewer will distance himself. Miyazaki, Edgar P. Jacobs and Franquin had perfectly understood this rule for their monsters. One example speaks better than a long speech, take "Tintin": Compare the bear attacking Captain Haddock in "The Temple of the Sun" to the threatening Tintin in "Objectif Lune". In the first case you will see hairs, chops, fangs, retinas, in the second case an air of teddy bear drawn in flat colors. The animal is the same but the impression changes, making you feel more dangerous in one case than in the other.



This is how drawing becomes a key to successfully achieving this desired atmosphere of unpredictability, this permanent impression of advancing on unfamiliar ground. Very detailed decorations, strange animals, extraterrestrials repulsive to the point of seeming unhealthy (even for the most friendly of them) face schematized characters. This is the secret that will transport our audience to another planet, both literally and figuratively.

QUERY LETTER

WAY BACK HOME is not a title that I chose at random. First of all it is short, simple, easy to remember and provides two words to understand the whole purpose of the series. It also summarizes the key theme of this cartoon, that is to say the relation to home and travel.

As a measure of the development of this concept I realized that it was primarily a personal story. In fact my parents were working for foreign affairs, they took me in several countries with them and my siblings. In the trade it is often said that people have seven lives. What is true for the employees is also for their children. Growing up in over a dozen different countries, I had to change friends, home, habits and even language every time. In a sense it is as if I had lived several times. Because of that my sense of identity is still quite unclear. Faced with these changing borders and faces only one thing remained clear: Family, in the genealogical sense of the word.

The essence of WAY BACK HOME, in relation to most adventure stories is that Jules and Julie do not choose to leave. This is not the famous "hero's journey" but rather a back home story, such as "The Odyssey" or "The Wizard of Oz".

In a sense it is also a story of divorce, another significant part of my childhood. The difference here is that children are not separated from their families in terms of time but space. Contrary to the past, one can return to a place, it is only a matter of time. In other words going back home for these children not only means returning to their home, but also finding back their family united as when they left.

WAY BACK HOME therefore deals with a triple return: Back on Earth, back home, back to one's family. The focus in this film is also a matter of returning to the roots. They are embodied here by the grandparents of Jantel family, settled in the home village of the family since decades and centuries.

The relation to language will be another key theme, and even crucial.

"The way back home" is not one of those science fiction stories where the characters have access to automatic translators or worse, where the aliens speak French. Here Jules and Julie must toil to learn the language of their hosts and adapt to their customs if they hope to be understood. Most aliens do not speak French, much of them do not even emit sounds to "talk".

It is in a fairly similar situation that a child living in a foreign country finds himself. When his vocabulary is limited to "hello", "goodbye", "thank you" and a few basic words. The dialogues around him become aimless music, words sounds. The slightest gesture, the slightest daily demand becomes a test solved with big gestures and facial expressions. Because one is deprived of speech and of understanding one feels quickly falls back to animal row. The adult still has a chance, he can speak English and even lost he retains a certain dignity. The child abroad when alone is at best a curiosity, something to show. Learning a language becomes for him a first step toward maturity.

It is a lesson in modesty, I think that deserves to be shared. Talking about languages to children not only shows them the world. It also helps them discover who their neighbors are and, most importantly, who they are themselves.





Children as an audience, are future adults who hate being taken for idiots. WAY BACK HOME will not only be a show that speaks to them but looks like them. Jules and Julie Jantel ape adults in hope of being treated the same as them. They find themselves confronted to real responsibilities: Deserving their freedom, finding something to eat, finding shelter, staying true to their friends, always being on guard to not die, being reliable, knowing how to orientate themselves.

This is a teen before the hour, throwing the two children away from any comfort to make them grow. Physically also: Jules and Julie begin their journey as a wimp and an obese. The adventure will teach them that what they thought to be their personality traits were only defects. Through the work and hardship they will become stronger, more capable. On their return to Earth they are already a Man and a Woman, before even reaching puberty.

Frankly I think the public will first be deeply shocked. Imagine the minor front of his TV. Children like him, behaving like him, in a world like his. Abducted from their homes, deprived of their parents, without any mark, unable to call for help nor going back.

His worst nightmare actually. Oh yes he will be afraid.

But eventually he will want to know how the two characters will get out at each impasse, what problems await them. Because deep down he will think every time "How I would do in their place?".

The more the Jantel siblings will react like normal children rather than as cartoon characters, the more the public will want to live through them. Because thousands of schoolchildren will say to themselves "If it works for them it will also work for me."

WAY BACK HOME becomes more than just entertainment: For a generation of divorced children, isolated, spending more time in front of their screen than with their parents it is a second tutor giving the taste of efforts and desire to get by.

Concretely this means that Jules and Julie will sometimes be selfish, capricious, sneaky, jaded as true brats are. To make them better change later in the story, when they become heroes, but not entirely.

With WAY BACK HOME Space finds back its "last frontier" dimension. No explanations given by any extra character here neither some encyclopedia or guide. No kind of exposure. The two children are alone facing the unknown. Their books are made useless, nothing they have learned on Earth can serve them and even all the adults around them seem as they lost as they are. The Galaxy is too vast to be classified.

The viewer finds himself immersed in the same spirit as that of Conquistadors discovering America six centuries ago. Behind every wood, every hill, every rock hides a danger or at least a surprise waiting to happen. The map is empty, you must draw it yourself. He finds himself giving names to everything crossed in order to avoid losing his path. Sometimes the scenario will chew this work, the rest of the time it will be up to fans coming up with nicknames themselves.

What good leave Earth to find it elsewhere. The aliens of WAY BACK HOME will not be a parody of human society. Science fiction is a genre that all too often tend to show space sailors, neon colored fast-food and three-headed cowboys in a futuristic or exotic setting. In other words, to do again in space universes that could already work here. It's quite a shame because it is the only genre finally giving the opportunity to have something new under the sun.

Of course, making a model of society or biology back from scratch would almost be unfeasible. One will probably notice similarities with some civilizations or some earthly creatures. What is certain is that aliens in this series have a way to work of their own. Their characterization comes from their adaptation or maladjustment to the environment in which they live, in the organic sense. A "terrestrial" species living under the sea, for example, will have to invent ways to breathe artificially. Most creatures will be treated in first degree.

The environment will not be the only criterion for characterizing aliens. Many will be reminding of animals such as insects, molluscs or amphibians. In short: pests which are not particularly seen as endearing by most people, when not as repulsive. Their facial expression stays neutral most of the time, regardless of the side with which they stand.

Faced with beings from another world, without any sympathy bond, whose emotions can not be guessed, the viewer feels a sense of discomfort and above all suspicion. Even when the relations are good Jules, Julie and Wang are unable to know when their new neighbors will raise the hand or devour them on the spot. For them and for the viewer vigilance is required at every moment. The closest example I could think of to portray that impression is Ghibli studio's movie "Spirited Away".

There again, the desired goal is a is a feeling of progression into unknown territory, which is proper to Adventures stories , in the REAL sense of that word. The mere gest of greeting a passerby may be as well be a chance for relieve as to sign one's own death warrant. No way to know until you try.

Imagine Hernan Cortes in Mexico in 1519 facing the Totonacs. Hundred issues trot in his head gripped by panic: "Who are these people whose face, tongue or morals have never been seen or heard by anyone so far? Are they even human? Must I meet them? if Yes how?". It is by crossing that first step to establish an alliance that the conquest of the Americas as we know it began.

Or imagine again a man lost in a foreign country. His car broke down, he has to walk to the nearest village to seek help. In the village no one speaks his native language: How will he explain his problem? By drawing? By the mime? By imitating the sound of a car? This is the whole challenge that Jules and Julie Jantel will have to face during their adventure.

Being abroad means above all being a foreigner yourself. And the two children will understand that they have to watch out for everything they do if they want to avoid trouble.

"The way back home" remains faithful to a cornerstone of science fiction cliches: Each planet has its own biome and its own kind, at first sight. It is of course a facility solution, for writing purposes but also for the viewer. Remembering better each episode if each one corresponds to a different planet and setting.

This is a family-oriented cartoon dealing with serious things like violence, hunger or disease without seeking that humor or that gratuitous provocation proper to "adults" shows. The public is still primarily children, although an older fringe could take taste. In the end, "The way back home" stays quite close to the spirit of old Franco-Belgian comics like "Alix", "Gilles Jourdan" or "Blake and Mortimer". Often down to Earth but never vulgar, at least not for free.



