

EXODUS EARTH: A LOVE STORY

by

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Thanks to all my family and friends for their patience and understanding.

j.s.

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In The Beginning

Six-year-old Lizzy was holding her mother's hand. Alberta stood with her other three children on the parched, cracked dirt in the backyard of their home. They were looking at the stars. The meteor showers had passed but they still stared at the twinkling stars in the darkened sky.

Lizzy broke the silence. "Mama," she said. "Is that where we are going to live?" Alberta bent down and looked Lizzy straight in the eyes and lifted her up. Alberta pointed to a bright star in the East. "That might be your home someday Lizzy." Then, she pointed to the North. "That might be Elliot's home." She pointed to the West this time as she looked over to her eldest son. "That farthest star you can just barely see in the Galaxy might not even be a star. It may be the largest Space Station in the Universe. It may be Walter's home some day." Walter just looked at his mother, then upward and said, "Things are too quiet up there. Something's not right." "But mama," asked Lizzy. "Where are you and Alicia going to live?" Before Alberta could answer her, Alicia spoke out. "I'm not going to live in any of those places Lizzy. I'm going to fly all over the Universe. My home will be my space ship. Would you like to be my Co-pilot?" Lizzy yelled out, "sure, when can we go?"

Alberta said it was passed their bedtimes. They had been outside nearly an hour watching those shooting stars. She was glad Lizzy hadn't pursued the other part of her question. By the time all of her children get their educations, she would be too old to be evacuated. There are already new restrictions in place and they seem to be changing for the worse every day. Her primary mission is to get her children educated so they can have excellent opportunities in the Space programs. It will be the only way they could properly

leave this dying planet. The other way out she didn't want to think about – yet!

The days passed quickly. The Earth days soon amounted to Earth years. Two of her children had entered different Space Academies. Alicia never lost her desire to become a pilot. Walter was almost finished with his schooling. He wrote a very good term paper titled “*The Care and Feeding of Robots in a Deep Space Environment.*” Walter's favorite subject was Robot Technology.

Elliot was studying the Space sciences as they related to rotating and fixed positioned Spaced Stations. He had hoped to further his studies while working at a Space Station. He would be graduating soon.

Lizzy was just graduating from high school. She was only 16 years old. She was the smartest in her class. She had already been accepted to one of the Space Academies. She never forgot the question that her sister asked her that night watching the falling stars. “Would you like to be my Co-pilot?”

Lizzy took flying lessons in her spare time. She wanted to be a Space explorer, or a Space Marshall, or a Space Police Detective, possibly working undercover, or even a Co-pilot for her sister!

The Powers

What was left of the world of Earth had to concentrate its powers. The largest Governments were the only ones left to survive. The United States, the Soviet Union, and China now dominated most everything. There wasn't much left. These three major powers controlled the remaining manufacturing, the meager agricultural businesses, and the Earth's dwindling natural resources.

The manufacturing facilities were going at maximum speed. This was essential. The United States was building the only thing they could under these dire circumstances. They were manufacturing the Robots. China and the Soviet Union were producing the Space Transport Vehicles. What was left of any Private Enterprise sectors were only picking up the very small pieces left behind. The primary objectives were to furnish the combined Space Industry with whatever was necessary as soon as possible. The survival of the human species was of the utmost importance. The only place left to go for survival was into Outer Space.

The Earth was dying. This fact had been ignored until it was almost too late. Everyone now knew of its fate, as well as their own. Impending doom was now visible on the horizon. It was all around them! It was too late for anything else except escape. The Earth was dying quickly. There was no cure. It is real! The time has come. Some evacuations had already begun. There were only four places that they could go; all of them in Outer Space!

One place in Outer Space was at full capacity and the others were expanding as fast as they could. There simply wasn't enough room for everybody. Some had to stay behind. Restrictions and decisions had to be made.

The Robot and Space Transport Vehicle manufacturing was the top priority. The Earth's natural resources had been depleted. Most of the special materials for the manufacturing process had to be mined from various planets. The Earth's ice caps had melted. Countries had disappeared under the rising ocean waters. People had fled to the mountains. The Human race was a stake! Would it... Could it... survive?

The Chosen Ones

There are presently over 400 billion people calling the planet Earth home. The planet is now dying a not so quiet death. Everyone must leave as soon as possible...one way or another. Only 15 million people have been evacuated so far. Of the only four places to go in Outer Space, one is already at maximum population.

Who makes the final decision? How are the people chosen? Several million people residing in the Far East – in what was once called Japan – have decided that they had rather take their chances by staying on Earth. The island of Japan had been swept away by the rising oceans. Japan had not existed for over 150 years. Several million people in Europe had decided to stay as well. They had relocated to the higher mountain regions of central Europe and Asia. The sick and elderly are not eligible. Any employees working under any Government contracts will not become eligible until the very last hour. Most of these employees are building Robots or Space Transport Vehicles. The same rules apply for those providing the artificial foods necessary to keep the workers alive.

The original 400 billion population figure is now cut in half. Where and when do the rest go? How much longer can the dying planet sustain itself? How much longer can it remain viable?

The planet Earth is dying. This fact cannot be ignored any longer. There is no cure. It is very real. The time has arrived. What would be your choice?

The Robots

The Robots were the builders. They did all of the construction necessary to and for the space stations. While the outside structure was being erected many more Robots were completing a newly assembled structure on the inside. A 100,000 square foot addition could be ready for human occupation in as little as 10 days.

These Robots were not independent thinking machines. They had to be programmed in every sense of the word. When first assembled, these Robots were motionless. They had to be trained according to their color. There were Red, White and Blue Robots. Each color meant a different task. The Red Robots were the high floating ones. They had to catch the long silver beams for the initial base construction. Those 20 to 50 foot long beams were spun and released into the dead of space one at a time from the White Robots. As soon as the Red Robots caught and placed those beams, the Blue Robots installed the special connectors.

These Robots were essential. They didn't have to be fed. They didn't need to sleep. They could work continuously and never complained. These mechanical marvels could carry up to 1500 pounds. Their flat feet allowed them to walk on the 3-inch wide thorium/plutastic beams effortlessly. These Robots could not be manufactured fast enough. There were many Robots at each of the four outposts.

They were very stout in stature, about five feet tall with a square head and shoulders, long arms almost to their knees and powerful legs with huge flat feet. The top of their heads and their wide flat backs held several radiation concentrators. These devices collected and stored the energy needed to operate them. It was their battery packs. The intense radiation was very abundant in the vacuum of outer space.

Also very abundant in the darkness and vacuum of space was Space dust. After every second full rotation of the Space Station several of the Robots at a time were programmed to return to the inside assembly area for cleaning. The space dust had to be cleaned from their eye lens cameras as well as their radiation concentrators. Sometimes, some of the space gunk clung to their metallic-like skins. The duties of all of the Robots were choreography at its very best.

There were also two other types of Robots manufactured in the United States. The Black Robots acted as the Police. The Gray Robots had been programmed for one's personal protection – a bodyguard in a sense. Both types were always fully armed. It was rare to have either at any outpost.

These huge additions to the Space Stations were desperately needed. The evacuations had begun. People needed a place to go as soon as possible. The planet Earth was dying quickly!

The Space Transport Vehicles

The Space Transport Vehicles used throughout the universe couldn't be manufactured fast enough. The mass exodus from Earth was scheduled to begin by year's end. All of the Transport Vehicles were manufactured in the Soviet Union and China. They were equipped with all the newest technologies and were training the necessary flight crews and maintenance personnel as fast as possible. Each Transport Vehicle at this point in time is capable of carrying, and supporting, 200,000 or more humans and huge cargoes for months at a time. Much bigger ones are being designed and built now.

Of the four operational Spaceports, the closest, but smallest, is the Earth's Moon Base. The population of this Moon base was near maximum. A newer version Space Transport Vehicle could make the round trip voyage from Earth in less the 12 hours.

The next closest Spaceport was an orbiting Space Station. It is designated as ISS #2. Most of the time this outpost was jokingly referred to as the "near" Space Station. Presently, this orbiting Space Station was supporting over 750,000 people and was staffed by mostly engineers, scientists, and service personnel. It also contained a small Robot research facility. The round trip from Earth to this Spaceport takes nearly four weeks. It was not a straight flight. Space travel even to this port had far too many dangers.

The next Spaceport was the newest and largest so far. It was located on the planet Mars. Because of certain conditions in outer space, this Spaceport was the most difficult to reach. The weather on Mars was not predictable; most of the time it was terrible. The red dust contained in the

high winds could tear space suits to shreds in mere seconds. Some of the Martian winds, for example, could exceed 300 miles per hour. Despite its harshness, this Martian outpost was filling fast. The 5 million-person capacity would soon be reached. All of the dwellings and research facilities were deep under the Martian ground. The Transport Vehicles sometimes had to hide between the Martian mountain peaks for days until the winds subsided enough for them to land. Special elevators then lowered them deep underground for service and refueling. Mars was a necessary stop for refueling.

Further out, in the far reaches of deep, deep Space, many millions of miles into the galaxy floated another Space Station. It was officially known as ISS#3. It was the largest facility in outer Space so far and getting bigger. The Robots were increasing its size exponentially. Originally, it was only a small research facility. At that time it had only 10,000 people and a handful of Robots. The Robotic engineers and scientists assembled and programmed more Robots as the supply Transports arrived. Now there were over 500 Robots working around the clock. The capacity of this orbiting facility was expected to reach over 25 million very soon.

Only a very few Space Transport Vehicles were equipped for the long journey from the Earth to ISS#3. The voyage takes four months, one way. There were stops along the way. There were many dangers flying this far into – and almost out of – the Galaxy.

The Moon Base

The Moon orbiting around the Earth turned out to be an integral player in the planet earth's survival...for a while anyway. The gravitational pull from the moon was harnessed and captured to keep the dying globe's orbit around the sun, and the axis it spun on, stable.

The protective radiation and ultraviolet shields in the Earth's outer atmospheres had deteriorated beyond repair. The ozone layer had disintegrated centuries before. The polar ice caps that used to help regulate the Earth's temperatures had mostly melted. The rising sea and ocean levels had devastated many large landmasses. The planet known as Earth was dying a not-so-slow death.

The first outpost in Space was the Earth's moon. It was easily reached. The outpost between the Sea of Nectar and the Sea of Clouds had expanded very quickly. It was initially a training center outpost for the operation and care-and-feeding of Robots. It soon became much more. This outpost on the Moon was now home to nearly 1 million people. It was at its capacity. Due to the heavy bombardments of cosmic dust, debris, and the harsh environs of near Space, it cannot be expanded. There was also the fear that when the planet Earth either imploded or exploded, the Moon would be destroyed also.

Many hundreds of engineers, scientists, and researchers often trained at this base. It was the first stop for the Space Transport Vehicles on their way to the other three outposts. The Space Transport Vehicles delivered new Robots, people, and much needed food and supplies. Newly trained Robot handlers and coordinators, as well as brand new and crated different colored Robots were to be delivered elsewhere on