

LOST IN A DETAIL

EYES ON THE STARS – FEET ON THE GROUND



STORYBOOK



Prologue

"What do you mean, destroyed?" Her eyes gazed at me with such innocence that, for a moment, the words caught in my throat. It seemed the time had come.

"Well, my dear, that is part of a long story. Do you want to hear it? It's called the story of the lost planet".

"That is a very sad title for a story".

I remembered how I had reacted in just the same way when my mother asked me that question all those years ago. For a moment, I lingered in that memory, but the expectant gaze of my daughter gently pulled me back to the present.

"You are right, this is a sad story. A story of downfall, of loss. However, this is also a story of impressive inventions, of hope and connectedness. This is a story of farewell and a new beginning."

I walked over to the bookshelf and reached for a handwritten notebook, long coated in dust. Gently brushing it clean, I revealed the title and held it out to her.

"This book was written by your great-great-grandfather Isai. It contains some of his most important memories."

She sat down right next to me, leaning on my arm, just as I had on my mother's when she told me this story 30 years ago. I drew in a deep breath, feeling the warmth of her cheeks against my arm. Then, I began.

The Story of the Lost Planet

Introduction

What I am going to tell you took place on a planet we called the Earth, which was also known as the blue planet. For billions of years, it was a beautiful planet filled with vibrant life. But at the time I lived there, there was nothing left of its original shine. The air had become polluted, the forests had disappeared, and the oceans were no longer teeming with life. But even though our planet was in danger no one really cared. It was a world full of people with strong beliefs but no unity. Our species managed to ruin everything in less than a hundred years. And in the middle of it all was I, an eight-year-old boy who didn't understand what was actually happening around him. I have grown old now. My memories are slowly starting to fade. Therefore, I decided to write down my experience. Not only do I want all my descendants to know about what mankind did back then, but also how in the end we were able to learn from our mistakes and to grow closer to each other. I want you who reads this to retell my story to every new generation, forever, as my legacy. The memory of the lost planet must never be forgotten.



Chapter 1 – Colliding Satellites

Every day there were news reports about earthquakes, floods, droughts, poverty, hate on governments and civil wars all over the world. People suffered. No one was spared the consequences. Yet, the relentless pursuit of power and strength at any cost could not be wiped from the minds of humanity. Everyone sought to be in control of this planet, heedless of the fact that soon there would be nothing left of it. One day, two satellites collided. Two powerful nations accused each other of a deliberate attack and refused to accept that it had been an accident. This incident led to devastating consequences. Instead of worrying about the catastrophes on our planet, they preferred fighting. A ruthless and brutal war destroyed even the last remnants of the once beautiful planet. With it, the last hope for a bright future was gone. The world lay in ruins and ashes.

Chapter 2 – Mars is too far away

As a little boy, I was particularly fascinated by our solar system. It consisted of eight planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Some of them were ten times bigger than our planet, but Earth was the only one on which intelligent life was detected. I always wished for books on astronomy for my birthday and for Christmas. Every evening, I went out to the backyard with my telescope, losing myself in the mesmerizing dance of the stars.

One evening, while watching a TV show featuring stunning new high-resolution images of the planets in our solar system, the broadcast was suddenly interrupted by breaking news. The news anchor reported on a conference where the world's leading experts confirmed that life on our planet would soon become impossible. Within the next one to two years, we would all succumb to the consequences of the devastation. We had all considered such thoughts before but hearing them spoken with such finality struck us deeply. There was no turning back now, no hope for healing or redemption. We were lost.

My father and I were sitting there, unable to move nor speak. I was able to break free of the numbness first. Trying to help, I ran to my tiny bookshelf and grabbed all the books about astronomy I had gathered over the last couple of years. In my mind, the idea of moving to another planet started to form. My father entered my room just as I had opened the page with the red planet Mars.

"Mars is my favourite planet in the solar system. Don't you think we could perhaps move there and start anew?"

"Mars is too far away, son. It's not as simple as packing our bags and flying there."

My father spoke slowly and stopped my enthusiasm. In his voice still lingered the weight and despair that had previously left us motionless.

He stared into the void, his hands running through his hair.

In this moment, someone knocked at our door. First, father did not move, but the person persistently kept on knocking. My father turned around and slowly walked towards the door. He cautiously peered through the window. Then, without a word, he opened the door and stepped outside. I heard someone talking to him. I crept over to the window to listen in.

"I swear that it is true. Your family has been chosen by coincidence to be part of an evacuation plan. My family will be there too. It is of great importance that you keep quiet about this. In one hour, you will be picked up by us. Please be on time. I am so glad to have you there by my side."

My father paused for a moment. Then he turned back toward the house. In his eyes, I suddenly saw a spark again, a hopeful fire. He stepped through the door, knelt beside me, and said: "Pack everything that is important to you, but only as much as you can carry. Then wait here again". His voice sounded determined and full of hope. We would be rescued. We were given an opportunity.



Chapter 3 - The last sparks of the blue planet

I was lying in my mother's arms. We both could not get our eyes off what we were seeing from this spaceship. At this moment, we were leaving behind everything we knew. I was feeling comfortably warm and terribly desperate at the same time. These were the last sparks of the Blue Planet. This was possibly the last time we were able to see it. We lost it and it was our own fault. We lost our right to live there, and we realised that we had never been in control. One last time our old home lit up the universe.

I remembered playing outside with my friends and my parents, how I liked watching birds chasing each other. It always reminded me of a dance when they all flew over our house. I thought of one particular day, when I was lying in the grass in our garden. There were two red kites. One was sitting on a branch while the other was trying to impress her. He did everything he could, he danced, he flew high up and straight down again. After a while, the other red kite just flew away. So, the dancing red kite chased after her, trying to get her attention again. For a short while they were out of my sight, but suddenly they returned, together. The two red kites circled each other and flew up and down together. They have found a way to connect with each other, to set aside the initial struggle and allow closeness and love to prevail. This connection now seems, in hindsight, to have been the secret to successful coexistence. The people on Earth, however, collectively rejected this option. As a consequence, the red kites too were now going to die because of our decisions.

I tried to think again of the graceful dance of the two birds and ran that scene over and over in my mind. It helped me to keep this planet and its inhabitants in good memory, before they were extinguished forever. The Blue Planet, that had become the lost planet.



Chapter 4 – All I have left is a ship and one last hope

More than a year had passed and all the while Planet Earth was disappearing further away. We were heading to a foreign galaxy, not knowing whether we would ever arrive there. The atmosphere on board of the spaceship alternated between hope and despair. Many of the passengers became nervous. Nobody dared to talk about what would happen if we never arrived at a new home. We were doomed to wait and hope.

I was often standing at the biggest window on the spaceship, staring into the nothingness out there. It reminded me of when I used to watch the stars with my telescope in the backyard at home. Now I was much closer to them than ever before. It helped me not to lose my joy. One day, my parents joined me. For a while we were just staring out the window together, nobody said anything. My father ended the silence:

“Son, never give up hope. This right now might be the hardest challenge in your entire life. Keep glancing, remain full of confidence. Do not get affected by those losing their mind and sinking into despair. Your mother and I will always have your back.”

A chill ran down my spine. I was overwhelmed by the warmth and optimism in my father's words, who usually sticks strictly to the facts, making him seem distant and hard to approach. I nodded and kept looking outside. Inside I was smiling and I indeed felt encouraged. I felt strong again and I was determined to help the crew find a new home. All we had left was a ship and one last hope.

While the ship was sailing, suddenly through the melancholy and doubt, a glimmer emerged on the horizon. In the distance, a faint light was twinkling...



Chapter 5 – Go on to new Horizons

I woke up early on that day. The glimmer I had spotted some weeks ago had grown into a large gleaming fireball in the distance, as big as my hand. We were heading towards it. When I opened the door of my room, I heard excited conversations in the hallway, discussing the luminous point on the horizon. We must have come much closer to it because people were talking about shapes that could be seen on it. Excited, I ran to the big window I had always used as a lookout. That is when I saw it. A big, colourful ball. I could recognize some shapes and colours. It was an astonishing view. A message crackled through the speakers. Our captain announced that we had finally found a suitable planet for colonization. Our measuring instruments had shown viable conditions on the planet, and we were about to land. The excitement among the passengers was obvious.

The ship adjusted its course toward the new world. When it drew closer, the sight that greeted us was breathtaking. Lush green forests were stretching as far as the eye could see, with sparkling rivers and towering mountains in the distance. This planet seemed untouched by the troubles that had befallen Earth.



Chapter 6 – Eyes on the Stars, Feet on the Ground

Our group had decided to settle at this shore together. The long journey had brought us very close to each other. I had the impression that we had become less demanding and our need for power and control had given way to a need for community and closeness. My parents and I had decided to build a tree house near the beach.

One night, I was standing at the shore of the huge sea this planet was home to. I liked standing there while the waves were gently washing around my feet. The cool water felt very pleasant, and the waves sounded calming to me. A feeling of safety arose in me, as if I were being cradled and caressed by the arms of the sea. Although we had been living here for a few weeks, it still fascinated me that there were three moons orbiting our new home, as well as other planets visible to the naked eye. We had actually made it. I stared at the sky full of awe. From my place in the water, I could see the light of the candles through the branches, that made our tree house look like a glowing oasis. Suddenly I spotted the silhouette of my father walking slowly towards me. He stopped right next to me in the water. For a long time, he just stood there and said nothing.

“Eyes on the stars, feet on the ground,” he said. “That is exactly what I had wished for so hard. Our wishes were granted to us, and I am so grateful that I get to share this with you and your mother.”

He cleared his throat and began to stretch his shoulders and his neck nervously. But then he put his arm around my shoulders and finally he pulled me towards him and took me in his arms. This was the very first time he had ever held me like this, and I could feel a great weight lifting from both his and my shoulders. He cried with joy and gratitude, and I felt a great warmth that I had rarely felt from him before. Everything felt so much lighter as I stood there, held in his arms. This long and arduous journey brought us closer together than ever before. This really felt like home. We kept looking into the night sky for a long time. He did not let go of his embrace. This was the most beautiful gift that had been given to me since the arrival on this new planet.



Chapter 7 – What do you mean, destroyed?

I closed the book, put it aside and glanced at my daughter. Only now did I notice that she was clinging my arm very tightly. Tears were rolling down her face from her big eyes. I took her in my arms and felt her hugging me tightly.

"I am very sorry for Isai that he had to wait so long for this moment. I'm glad we like each other so much, Mum."

My daughter's words overwhelmed me. It made me realise again that from the moment Isai was allowed to experience the gift of closeness through his father, a curse that had previously been passed down from generation to generation was finally broken. Instead, a feeling of warmth, appreciation and love emerged in our family. In fact, our whole society seemed to be going through this very process. The loss of our old homeland and the death of millions was a terrible toll. The people who were allowed to flee paid this back by creating a new world where community, self-determination and equality were the supreme values. New generations could not even imagine how it could ever have been different.

"We are very lucky to still be here and for the first time in the history of human beings it seems that people are getting along with each other. This book your great-great-grandfather Isai wrote has played a big part in holding the new world together. Do you agree that it is very important to keep telling this story to every new generation, so that no one ever forgets what we left behind us and what we committed to?"

My daughter nodded. Then she stood up and ran straight to the shore, took off her socks and stood with both feet in the cool sea water. I hurried after her.

"This is the place Isai was describing in his book, isn't it? Can we watch the stars like Isai did, mum?"

I felt her right next to me, holding my hand, and I knew she understood.

