

PLANET X91

THE NEW EARTH

Book 9

CHAPTER ONE

JOSH GREETED the morning sun, standing at the entrance to the Piper spacecraft. Seeing Florian sitting on the grass near the rock pool he strolled over.

“Couldn’t sleep either,” he quoted, stepping next to her.

“You’re right. I’ve been too busy thinking about today,” replied Florian. “Take a seat.”

Before Josh could nestle his back against a rock, she began to speak on what she’d been thinking about all night.

“In a few hours, the colony will land. Our adventure, not to mention trying to survive alone on this planet will come to an end.”

“Yes.”

“You don’t sound too convinced.”

“I’ve grown accustomed to waking each morning wondering what surprises are in store for us.”

“Surely all we’ve gone through is over?”

“This is a new Earth. We haven’t ventured off this island yet. There’s no way of knowing what’s out there.”

“I shudder to think,” whispered Florian.

Seeing Clay emerging from the spaceship Florian and Josh kissed while he walked over.

“Stop teasing me,” he scolded. “I’ve lost the competition. Josh, you won.”

“How come you don’t seem too upset?” questioned Florian.

“In a few hours, the colony will be standing in this field. I’ll be able to have my pick of young ladies.”

“Clay Silver sometimes I feel so frustrated talking to you,” snarled Florian.

“What did I do?”

“Nothing,” advised Josh.

“All you think about are girls.”

“Florian, being a girl I thought you’d understand. Think about this. We don’t have to make tough decisions on how to survive anymore.”

“I don’t share your enthusiasm,” jeered Florian.

“Thanks to the time travel machine we’ve found out the three of us run the colony,” advised Clay.

“Which brings you back around to the subject of girls,” giggled Florian.

“Exactly,” replied Clay. “How soon will the colony touchdown?”

“Two hours, twenty-three minutes” reported Josh.

Glancing at his watch Clay muttered. “It’s now six. The colony will be in time for an after-breakfast snack.” Drowning out his fellow team members’ chuckles he continued. “On a serious note, I have a strange feeling something might go wrong.”

“I too have felt the same thing,” blurted Florian.

“Let’s hope all goes according to plan and you two are wrong,” advised Josh.

A bright light materializing near the hatch leading into the Piper spacecraft caught the three-teenager’s attention.

“I think Doc. Henry wants a word,” mentioned Josh.

The three teenagers stood in unison and made their way back to the ship.

“Henry, what’s up?” questioned Florian.

The hologram smiled. “Miss Fawkes it’s a nice morning,” he started. “Josh Quinn, I bid you a good morning. Clay Silver, I have said good morning to you already.”

“Morning Henry,” blurted Florian. “I again ask what’s up.”

“The colony will be arriving soon.”

“You’re a bit slow on take off this morning,” hinted Florian.

"I sense something might be amiss."

Clay stared at Henry through slits.

"What have you done?"

"Nothing," he replied. "I am merely stating I have picked up an irregularity."

"Can you be more specific?"

"No."

"I hope this isn't another test," barked Florian.

"All testing has been done. This is something new."

"Tell us more."

"I'd like to. However, I can't."

"Or won't," quizzed Josh. "You're a hologram. I order you to tell us."

"Don't start the medical emergency rubbish again either," hissed Florian.

"Your warning is duly noted."

"The three of us are waiting for an answer," soothed Clay.

"I can't understand what I'm sensing. The object of concern is invisible."

"How large is this invisible thing?" asked Florian.

"So scientific," taunted Clay.

"I have no idea," reported Henry.

"I think Henry's programming has blown a circuit," snorted Clay.

Henry studied the faces of the three teenagers staring at him. Instead of talking he remained silent.

"Are you going to say something?" asked Clay.

"Like what?" Henry questioned.

"A comment might be well timed," explained Josh.

"There is nothing more I can add at the moment."

Henry vanished leaving the teenagers staring at the hull of the Piper spaceship.

"We'll have to be on guard. If what Henry said is accurate we'll have our work cut out for us," warned Florian.

"Forget what he's moaning about," remarked Clay. "I'm going to enjoy greeting the new arrivals."

"Only the female kind," giggled Florian.

"Very funny," growled Clay sarcastically.

"I've already mentioned all you ever think about are girls."

"I'm sixteen. It's part of being a human male."

Josh began walking off towards the middle of the grassland. Florian saw him move and set herself to follow. Clay grabbed her by the arm, forcing her to stay. Reeling Florian in, he stared at her nose to nose.

"Let Josh go do what he's planning. Why don't you and I go for a walk along the beach? When the colonists arrive, there will be too much noise to even have a quiet walk."

Florian easily broke free of his grip. "We should go see why he walked off."

Following at a distance, Florian and Clay closely watched Josh walking around in circles staring at the grass. Finally, curiosity overtook them.

"What's wrong Josh boy?" asked Clay.

"There's work to do," he commented.

"Such as?" questioned Clay.

"We have to make sure there are no hidden rocks in the grass where the shuttle is going to land. I also want to pinpoint the exact location of the landing site. When I'm back on the Piper's bridge, I'll send the coordinates to the USS Lock."

"How long will it take to collate the longitude and latitude?" asked Clay.

"I've collected the numbers already," he responded.

"Good. I vote we sit on a sand-dune overlooking the sea. It might be our last chance for some peace and quiet."

"I'm not voting," hinted Florian. "I'll race you two."

The boys needed to sprint to keep Florian in their sights. By the time they were close to the sand-dune, Florian had made herself comfortable sitting on the sand and was staring at the sparkling blue sea.

"What on earth are you looking at?" Clay puffed sitting next to her.

"I'm watching the waves."

For over five minutes the three teenagers remained quiet. Still engrossed in her thoughts, Florian finally spoke.

“This is the new Earth,” she whispered. “We have finally arrived at a new home. We will never see the original earth again.”

“I guess so,” replied Clay. “Now you mention it I feel a little sad.”

“Same here,” echoed Josh. “Florian’s right we have to view planet X91 as our home. We have to defend it using every ounce of strength and technology we have at our disposal, come what may. We fought hard to keep the original earth from turning into a wasteland. We did succeed for a time. We have a second chance to get it right. At the end of my days, I want to look back over my life and say I did what I could to make this place a home for all who come after me.”

“So diplomatic I feel like vomiting,” jeered Clay.

“It’s a good philosophy,” quoted Florian.

“Just sit and enjoy the peace,” hinted Clay.

“What about the girls you’re going to meet?”

Clay gently slapped Florian on the leg. “Till they arrive I’m going to enjoy the quiet. The moment they’re here I’m going to take my time in picking the perfect mate.”