

PREFACE

This is the fourth book in the Future World History series. The story begins in 2024 when Albert Simpson invented a device that changed the world forever. The power module he created replaced virtually every other source of energy in use at that time. The people of Earth no longer needed petroleum to power their vehicles or power companies to supply them with electricity. An unlimited supply of inexpensive electrical power could now be provided anywhere it was needed. The result of this was that money previously needed for energy was now available for scientific and medical research.

During the hundred years following the invention of the power module, we began exploring our solar system and developed the ability to travel faster than the speed of light, enabling us to travel to other solar systems.

While testing the Star Rover, our first interstellar spacecraft, we had our first encounter with an alien civilization. Earth was invited to join a galactic trade group. The invitation was accepted and we began trading with other planets in the group.

Jeffery Whitestone and Debbie, the woman who ultimately became his wife, were in command of the Star Rover. At the suggestion of their new alien friends they visited Procolt 2, an Earth-like planet. While there, they encountered the first non-humanoid intelligent beings in the galaxy. They looked similar to squirrels from Earth, but they were about three feet tall and had small hands with opposable thumbs.

Jeffrey and Debbie liked Procolt 2 so much they decided to build a resort there. While living on Procolt 2, they discovered a strange radiation was altering them. They became stronger and experienced substantially increased

life spans. They also realized the squirrels living there had the ability to learn far faster than any other species in the galaxy. Additionally, the knowledge they acquired was transferred to their offspring at birth.

The resort became a huge success and the population of Procolt 2 grew quickly. Many years later, Vandor, a visitor to the resort, told Jeffrey and Debbie he was from a planet that had seeded the development of all the humanoid populations in the galaxy, trying to create the perfect humanoid. He believed they were on the verge of success. He told Jeffrey and Debbie that they, and some other people from Earth, had the genes that would enable them to create the ultimate humanoid civilization.

In order to do that, a group of humans with the correct genetic makeup would have to live in isolation on a planet at the edge of the galaxy. Eager for a challenge, Jeffrey, Debbie, and a group of six hundred other colonists, were about to leave for the planet they named Janus. That's where this story begins.

THE LAST DAYS ON PROCOLT 2

Debbie and Jeffery were sitting on their sofa looking out at the expanse of Procolt Paradise. Debbie's head was resting comfortably on Jeffery's shoulder. She asked, "Are you ready to leave all this?"

"I know I'll miss it, but I'm ready to try something new. We built this place from nothing, and now we'll have the opportunity to do it all again. But this time it will be different. All the infrastructure will be waiting for us when we arrive on Janus. It will give us a big head start. Having Mystic and her family with us will make it easier."

"I agree, but I think what I'm dreading is the year and a half we'll be spending on the ship getting to Janus. Now we can get everywhere we want to go in a few days. I just can't imagine being cooped up in a ship that long."

Jeffery was about to say something when there was a knock at the door. Debbie got up and opened it. She was surprised to see Vandor standing there. They hugged briefly and Vandor walked in and said, "I wanted to arrive a few days before your journey to Janus begins. Are you ready?"

"We were just talking about that before you arrived. Yes, we're ready," Jeffery replied smiling.

"So, I guess that means you don't own Procolt Paradise anymore."

"We gave 90% of Procolt Paradise to the government and 10% to the squirrels. That way we know they'll have everything they need. We gave most of the funds we had in the Trade Group Bank to William, our grandson, but we did keep about 25% of it for us in case this whole adventure collapses."

Vandor, with a quizzical expression on his face, looked at Jeffery and asked, “Are you expecting the Janus colony to fail?”

“No, not at all, but it doesn’t hurt to be prepared. Anyway, you’ve kept the details about the ship we’ll be traveling on a secret. Since we’ll be leaving in three days, would you like to tell us a little more about it?”

“I want it to be a surprise. I’m positive everyone will be pleased. I will tell you the ship is the largest we have ever built. It has more than a million square feet of living space, ten acres of pastureland for the animals, and another three hundred thousand square feet of space dedicated to making your trip as comfortable as possible.”

“So, every passenger has about two thousand square feet of living space? That’s incredible!” Debbie exclaimed.

“Yes, but the two families in the group, you and Mystic, have larger quarters. The ship will be here tomorrow, and I’ll take you both on a tour.”

“Okay, I’m looking forward to it. By the way, two more people dropped out. We only have twenty-eight alternates left. I was thinking we should take everyone who has volunteered for the mission. I’m sure we could find space for an additional twenty-eight people,” Jeffery said.

“I’ll leave that decision to you and Debbie. You two are in charge.”

“After the ship tour, I’ll arrange a meeting with everyone and we’ll assign the living spaces on the ship. Vandor, do you have a layout of the ship I can look at?”

“I will give it to you after the tour. I will also give you a comprehensive video of the ship’s interior you can show at the meeting. After the meeting, the passengers should probably start loading their personal items onto the ship.”

“It’s going to take a lot of manpower to load all the personal items our people are bringing with them. How can we do that in just a day or two?”

“The ship’s crew will assist in moving whatever the colonists want to bring with them. I’m positive they can handle it. Also, if it takes an extra day or two, it really doesn’t matter.”

Jeffery replied, “You’re right, a short delay is really no problem. How many crew members are there?”

“We’ll discuss that tomorrow too. Can you meet me at the shuttle port at ten o’clock?”

“Of course, Debbie and I are both anxious to see the ship.”

Vandor said, “Good, I will see you tomorrow morning,” and he left the apartment.

The next morning, Jeffery and Debbie arrived at the shuttle port a few minutes before ten. The morning rain had ended a half hour before, and now the day was cloudless and sunny. Suddenly a shadow passed over them. They both looked up and saw a large triangular shaped object high in the sky. As it descended toward the shuttle port Jeffery noticed several things. It was an equilateral triangle. Each side was at least a hundred feet long. The object was solid black with no obvious windows or doors. However, the most surprising thing about it was, it was totally silent.

They continued to watch, totally fascinated by the ship’s appearance. They could now see a round dome on the top of the ship. The rate of descent slowed, and the ship stopped when it was about two feet above the ground. An opening appeared in the side and two men stepped out. The first person was Vandor, but they didn’t recognize the man with him.

The ship had landed, although technically it was still two feet above the ground, about a hundred feet from where Jeffery and Debbie were standing. Vandor and the other man walked over to them quickly. When they were just a few feet apart Vandor said, “Good morning, do you like our shuttle?”

“It’s amazing! How do you make a ship that big silent?” Debbie asked.

“It has a gravity wave propulsion system. As long as the gravity is at least one tenth of Earth normal, the system works flawlessly, and it makes no noise. In space we use a more conventional ion engine.”

“I’ve never heard of a gravity wave propulsion system. Perhaps someone can tell me how it works,” Jeffery said. Then he asked, “Who is the man with you?”

“This is M2046, but he is not a man. He is an android. The crew of your ship is made up entirely of androids. To make you and the other passengers more comfortable, there are both male and female appearing androids. Also, they all are slightly different from each other. They have different facial features and different body styles. Their skin is warm and feels natural, and they blink and appear to breathe.”

“How many of them are on board?” Debbie asked.

“The crew consists of fifty androids. Inside they are all identical. Any one of them can perform any function that might be required. Once you arrive on Janus, you should bring them down with you. They can do almost anything a human can. You might remember, I suggested using them in the hospital as nurses, or as teachers in school.”

Jeffery looked at the android and asked, “M2046, can you explain how the gravity wave propulsion system works?”

“Yes sir, would you like me to do it now? It will take about an hour,” M2046 replied in perfect English.

“No, during the trip to Janus.”

“Yes sir, I will remind you about your request in ten days. Please board the shuttle so we can begin your tour of the Janus Traveler.”

Jeffery said, “Okay.” Then they followed M2046 to the shuttle.

Because of the lack of any exterior features on the ship, Jeffery and Debbie were both expecting the inside to be drab and utilitarian. They couldn't have been more wrong. They stepped through the doorway into a brightly lit room filled with sofas and lounge chairs. The dome from the inside of the ship appeared to be transparent. The view inside was exactly the same as the view outside. The temperature was perfect, and there was a light breeze blowing.

Jeffery turned toward Vandor and exclaimed, "This is amazing! Is the dome transparent?"

"No, the inside of the dome is one large high-resolution video display unit. The image you see is created by several hundred tiny cameras mounted on the outside of the dome. A computer merges the images together to create the display. Please sit down so we can start your tour."