

Zecular

By Bilal Hussain



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Written & illustrated by

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Chapter 1: Goodbye



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The earth was cracked. The sun blinded me. My feet thudded on the hot, dry sand. I leaped through the air and before I knew it, I was in the spaceship.

Inside was a table, with three small cups of water. It was all we had left. I sat beside the window and looked out. These were the last seconds I would have on Earth.

Or at least that's what I thought...

With tears in my eyes, I said goodbye to Earth, not knowing whether I'd ever see it again... I looked down at my small house, and I saw my mum walk out, searching for water.

Humans didn't look after the Earth properly.

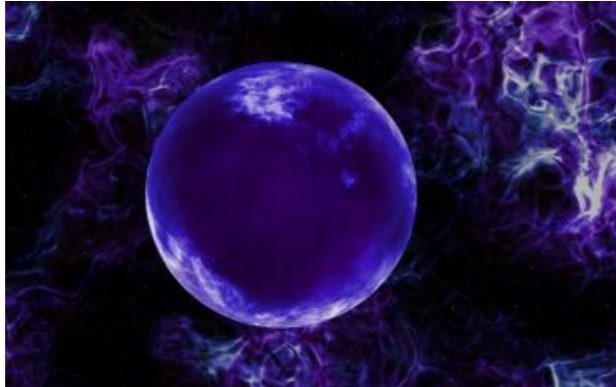
Only a few people were allowed on the spaceship; we had to leave everyone else behind, so if we found water we could bring it back.

If we survived, that was...

The spaceship's engine started to roar, and I felt it shake. I gulped. What had I gotten myself into? The engine roared again, and I quickly put my seatbelt on. The space suit was so itchy. As I looked out of the window, I saw there was a big

area filled with plastic bottles and bags. To my horror, it was where the river used to be.

Chapter 2 : The Find



We flew up and, before I knew it, Earth was gone.

I could feel the fear rising in my body. I started to sweat. My heart hammered in my chest.

I saw everything go black and I closed my eyes.

This has to work, It's our only hope to save humanity.

I must have dozed off, because I was woken up by people cheering. The planet Zecular had been spotted. It was real!

The spaceship jolted, and landed with a thud.

I gripped the ladder with my sweaty hands.

“Are we safe to walk out?” I heard a man ask.

Climbing down, I looked around, noticing how beautiful it was. It was covered in soft grass with big trees as tall as a giraffe.

We decided to split up and go in different directions, which later proved to be a mistake in many ways.

After wandering through the lush undergrowth for what seemed like hours, we came upon what we were searching for.

“Water!” I heard a man shout.

My heart started banging harder in my chest.

“Where?!” I asked, running down a hill covered with lots of grass. I saw the beautiful, shiny lake, shimmering and glittering like diamonds.

“No way...!” I shouted excitedly, running towards it. The ground shook beneath me. I slipped and fell on my back.

That was when I saw a big, terrifying shadow in front of me.

My heart missed a beat.

Chapter 3 : The Dragon & The Alien



There, in front of me, was the most horrifying dragon you would ever see. It was red and it was spitting fire in all directions.

It was standing over the lake, preventing anyone from getting any water.

At this point, I felt like I was going to cry. I ran as fast as my little legs could take me. I heard the dragon roar and start moving towards me.

Suddenly, the dragon reached for me and threw its giant hand over my shoulder and lifted me up into the sky.

“LET GO OF ME YOU BIG-” I screamed, before being flung on the floor.

“Where is everyone when I need them!?” I wondered.

The dragon grabbed my leg and started to pull it.

“My water...” it growled between huge flames of fire.

“Aah!” I screamed, as I felt myself being hurled through the air.

I landed with a splash in the cool, clean water. The feeling of water touching my skin made me more thirsty.

Without wasting a second, I started swimming.

I swam to the other side of the lake, and saw a horrifying green, slimy creature sitting calmly on the side.

To my horror, it was exactly how I had pictured an alien to look like.

“Very helpful.” I grunted sarcastically as I collapsed onto the grass and fainted.

Cool and delicious drops of water in my mouth woke me up.

As I opened my eyes, I was greeted with the sight of the alien holding a glass of water.

It looked worried and not frightening at all.

“Thanks I guess, but could you be a bit more helpful? I mean, I need water... but I have bigger problems right now- AAA!”

The alien had flown up into the sky, holding me. I shivered with fear, but then a bolt of anger flew through my spine. I was angry. Very, very angry...

“Let me go,” I hissed through a heavy nosebleed, “Please let me go! All I wanted was water!” The alien looked confused.

“If you needed water...” He looked back at the dragon and then at me.

“You should have just asked! We are well aware of the dire situation on Earth and wanted to help but humans have never seemed friendly enough.

We could not risk being killed or Zecular being attacked by humans. You should have been more patient! We would help you, but you tried to steal from us!” I looked at my feet, shocked and ashamed.

Then, I stood up. I was about to fight back and defend humans.

“Don’t fight back..” said a familiar voice.

I turned around.

Chapter 4: Will to the Rescue!

My friend , Will, who had come on the mission too, was holding me back.

The alien carried on, “I thought we could help you,” it said coldly, “But I don't think you deserve it.”

I looked at Will. “Give us the water,” begged Will, “We are going to die, don't you understand?”

The alien looked at us. “Fine,” he said, “I'll help you... we were going to use our dragon, Gromsburg, to protect our planet. We used him to stop you. I guess you can have the magical potion to grow the plants back on Earth.”



“Here's a map.” He gave us a map. It felt soft and old.

“Thanks...” said my friend Will, “Let's go.”

Will grabbed my hand.

“Wait!” said the alien as we were about to leave, “I need something in return.”

We paused. We didn't have money on us, and we knew that's what he was going to ask for.

But we were wrong. It wasn't money he was after. It was a promise.

“Humans are not known to be keepers of their word. No planet in the galaxy trusts humans. How can we?”

Look what you've done to the Earth! We need you to promise you won't touch our planet ever again.

The potion that we shall give you will grow trees within a day; rivers will flow with sparkling water again and the plastic will say farewell to your poor planet.” he said.

“We promise! We will never harm your planet. All we want is your help to survive this crisis. Please help us!” I said.

“Ok, follow the map and be careful. It will take you to Woghot the Wizard. He's expecting you and will have the potion ready.”

I could see the confusion on Will's face, matching my own.

“I guess we just follow this then...” whispered Will, holding the map up nervously.

Chapter 5: The Adventure Begins



We set off through the dense dark trees, and I had a terrible feeling that we were being watched.

I heard rustling of leaves behind us and looked around, with my heart pounding. Nothing.

We ventured deeper and deeper into the forest for over an hour.

Will we ever find Wizard Woghot? Or was it a trap...?

It was becoming almost impossible to find our way through the tangled branches of ancient trees.

I couldn't shake the feeling of being watched and stayed close to Will.

I wished the rest of the crew were with us. Where had they gone? Had they left us behind?

We thrashed our way through and then came to a clearing.

Chapter 6: Wizard Woghot



There, in front of us, was the most beautiful cottage I had ever seen.

Behind it I could see a sparkling lake. There were trees heavy with fruit all around it.

We checked the map and realized we were at Woghot's house.

We walked up the path glittering with diamonds instead of stones.

Now I realized why the alien wanted humans to never set foot on Zecular.

But we made a promise not to steal and we would keep that promise. We had to.

As we reached the door, it flung open.

There was no one in sight.

We walked through and there was a round table, on top of which perched a glass jar with blue liquid inside and a note which read:

*"Poor Earth is so cracked and dry,
Greedy humans need to fly,
Zecular is so beautiful and wealthy
So the humans decided to be stealthy,
Went to Zecular and stole,
Thought they were sly as a mole,
Splitting up was a mistake -
How many hours would it take?"*

*A strong promise has been made,
Our trust has been truly gained,
Spill this potion on the Earth,
And wait for its great rebirth.”
- Woghot.*

As much as we wanted to meet Woghot, we knew we were short on time. I grabbed the jar and the note and we raced out of the cottage.

Chapter 7: Back to Earth



We raced back through the forest and found the alien waiting for us in the same spot.

“Found it?” he asked us, “Then you should be on your way. Your people are not safe without water for too long.

Here, take this as a gift.” He handed Will and me one wooden bottle of water each.

“Thank you so much!” exclaimed Will,

“For everything,” I added.

He smiled back with glittering black eyes.

We turned and raced back to the spaceship.

The rest of the crew cheered in delight and relief as we explained the adventure we had.

Now we just had to make it back in time or else it would all be in vain.

So we put our seatbelts on and said goodbye to Zecular, Earth’s best friend.

In years to come, I would never quite remember how we made it back in time or how in two days the rivers flowed again and forests were full of lush, green trees.

It all happened so quickly.

Humans will forever be grateful to Zecular, but I cannot stop wondering if Zecular asked Earth for help, would humans be as kind?

Would the Zeculians make it back to their planet safely as we did?



We hope that you and your family and friends enjoy the book that you have created.

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SWITCHED ON!

With the Earth facing a big drought, Will and I set off on a impossible mission to save humanity.

With only hours to live, we set off, soaring into the sky.

Will we find help and make it back alive?

Or is this the end for Earth...?