

## *A Child Named Earth* – excerpts - sci-fi novel about Earth's mother planet

### Prologue

The universe whimpered. It was a tired, weak moan, the shudder of it rippling through the vast void in the form of electromagnetic radiation.

The shudder washed over incalculable millions of galactic clusters, most of which consisting of hundreds of billions of suns and trillions of planets. It spread through brilliantly hued gaseous nebulae, each variably stretching for hundreds of light-years. It moved the quasars, pulsars and black holes, undulating all dark energy and dark matter. Everything. . . . .

### Chapter 1

“If you like what you’re doing so much you want to die for it, and take a lot of people and the movement with you, than ignore what I’m saying and keep doing it.” Selvina had never been one to mince words, and especially right now with the FIST pricks trying to crawl up her ass. They had her bio signal on file and may even be in the neighborhood trying to get a fix on her.

To the apprentice her words were like little hot knives thrown from a harsh alien world. The reality-synthesizer implant in the base of his skull processed out some of the sharpness of the words, but they still sliced into his softer, personally patterned consciousness.

He thought-adjusted the synthesizer settings to modulate further inflowing audio into something more concordant with his mental construct, but the words were stuck there like little splinters of smoldering dissonance. He started to delete the words; a

common action if you don't like what you're hearing; thinking of it like exorcising little demons from his world. But, oddly, he hesitated. . . .

The words had barely passed Selvina Erasan's lips when the explosion occurred. They heard a massive thud, and saw the wall bend inward a couple of feet before it disintegrated.

The blast threw them 30 feet to the back wall of the room. Selvina only lost consciousness for a couple of seconds, but when she came out of it she couldn't tell how long she had been out, and had difficulty getting her bearings. She cursed herself for not wearing the headpiece and gloves of her suit. At first, in her stupor, she thought she must be paralyzed, as she couldn't move - then realized it was just her Duraplas armor suit. The one-piece suit covered her body below the head and instantly galvanized when receiving a hard blow.

Thinking, *de-energize*, into the sensor in the collar of the suit, the practically impenetrable duranide lining became flexible again. The softer plasma skin on top of the suit had been ripped in several places, revealing the dark, now fully malleable metal underneath. . . . .

## Chapter 2

The two were flying in a SHUTE tunnel on the outskirts of the city proper, about 200 feet above the warehouse district on the eastern side of the megalopolis of Skryxen City. It was late afternoon and Skryxen's big red sun was on the horizon, bathing the city in ruby iridescence. The strong late summer breeze from the desert to the south was blowing in silica flecks, which, catching the sun, gave the atmosphere a bronze sparkle. The warehouse district below them stretched for approximately ten-miles to the east, all the way to Skryxen River. On the other side of the river was the *ergo* section of the city, which went on as far as the eye could see. The exhaust fumes from the centuries old ergo

machines palled that area, in stark contrast to the relatively pristine higher-class *pashos* side they were on.

Sheba's attention was out three-hundred-and-sixty degrees, and at the moment she had her instruments set for a monitoring surveillance of ten miles. She had the capability of detecting out thousands of times that, but hadn't recently had an occasion to use anything greater than the ten-mile radius.

She loved looking at the city with the silica-sparkle atmosphere, and decided to get a more expansive view of it, so focused from a point ten miles up. From that height the buildings, shuttle tunnels and roads appeared like the modules and conduits of one of the old, giant motherboards that used to run the city. More aptly, with the glowing varicolored serpentine tunnels crisscrossing the city in a huge labyrinthine matrix, and the colorful mega-structures of the downtown area running up through them, against the background of the perfectly patterned streets below, it appeared an adolescents' piece-together toy city of the gods. Which is exactly what it was—there were seven such “gods.”

Her attention was suddenly drawn to the flyer of the ship. Stripe's rarely distant, sun-drenched smile had broadened a bit. As subtle as it was visually, it drew her full interest. It wasn't really the roguish grin or striking face that attracted her at that moment – it was the unmistakable presence he had suddenly taken on. It was a bit like taking the cover off a small quasar – you couldn't see the radiation but the energy emanation was undeniable. She found it infectious...but was also apprehensive. That presence was often a precursor to him doing something outrageous or dangerous, both of which he was no stranger to and managed with equal aplomb.

They had only known each other for a few weeks, but in that time they had grown attuned to each other in an intimate fashion far beyond a mere carnal relationship. She sensed the relaxed restraint he was putting on the palpable energy he exuded was

something like a ten-inch circumference duranide cable momentarily holding a battle cruiser to the ground. What was he about to do? . . . . .