

Chapter 3

The first man on Earth

Once comfortably re-established in the Haalis, the relaxation room previously described, Thao began her strange recital.

'Michel, 1 350 000 years ago precisely, on the planet Bakaradini of the constellation Centaur, a decision was made by the leaders of that planet, following numerous conferences and reconnaissance expeditions, to send inhabited vessels to the planets Mars and Earth.

'There was a very simple reason for this: their planet was cooling down internally and would become uninhabitable within 500 years. They thought, with good reason, that it was preferable to evacuate their people to a younger planet of the same category...'

'What do you mean by 'the same category'?'

'I will explain later, to do so now would be premature. Going back to these people, I must tell you that these beings were human - very intelligent and highly evolved. A black race, they had thick lips, flattened noses and frizzy hair - resembling, in these ways, the blacks now living on Earth.

'These people had inhabited the planet Bakaradini for 8 000 000 years, in co-habitation with a yellow-coloured race.

'To be precise, this was what you call on Earth, the Chinese race and they had inhabited Bakaratini for about 400 years prior to the blacks. The two races witnessed numerous revolutions during their time on the planet. We tried to provide relief, assistance and guidance but, in spite of our intervention, wars broke out periodically. These, along with the natural disasters occurring on the planet, served to thin the ranks in both races.

'Finally, a nuclear war broke out on such a grand scale that the entire planet was plunged into darkness and temperatures fell to minus 40 of your degrees Celsius. Not only did atomic radiation destroy the population, but cold and lack of food accomplished the rest.

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'It is a recorded fact that a mere 150 black people and 85 yellow people survived the catastrophe, from a population of seven billion black and four billion yellow humans. A register of survivors was taken just before they began to reproduce and when they had stopped killing each other.'

'What do you mean 'killing each other'?'

'Let me explain the whole situation to you and you'll be able to understand better.

'First of all, it is important to explain that those who remained were not, as you might expect, the leaders, well protected in specially equipped shelters.

'The survivors, comprising three groups of blacks and five groups of yellows, had come, some from private shelters and others from large public shelters. Of course, at the time of the war, there were many more than 235 people in shelters: indeed it is believed there were over 800

000 in all. Following months of confinement in the darkness and intense cold, they were eventually able to risk going outside.

'The blacks ventured out first, finding almost no trees, no plants and no animals to speak of, on their continent. It was a group, isolated from their shelter in the mountains, who first knew cannibalism. Because of the lack of food, when the weakest died, they were eaten; then, in order to eat, they had to kill each other - and that was the worst catastrophe on their planet.

'Another group, near the ocean, managed to survive by eating the only living things left on the planet, which were not too contaminated, that is, the molluscs, some fish and crustaceans. They still had unpolluted drinking water thanks to very ingenious installations enabling them to obtain water from incredible depths.

'Of course, many of these people still died, as a result of lethal radiation on the planet and from eating fish which were filled with radioactivity.

'Much the same course of events occurred in the yellows' territory; so that, as I have said, 150 blacks and 85 yellows remained, then finally, deaths resulting from the war ceased and reproduction began again.

'All of this occurred, in spite of all the warnings they had received. It should be said that before this almost total decimation, both the black race and the yellow race had attained a very high level of technological advance. The people lived in great comfort. They worked in factories, private and government enterprises, offices - just as happens now on your planet.

'They had a strong devotion to money which, to some, meant power and to others, wiser, it meant well-being. They worked on average 12 hours per week.

'On Bakaradini a week comprises six days of 21 hours each. They tended to the material rather than the spiritual side of their existence. At the same time, they allowed themselves to be duped and led in circles by a structure of politicians and bureaucrats, exactly as is happening now on Earth. Leaders fool the masses with empty words and, motivated by greed or pride, they 'lead' entire nations towards their downfall.

'Gradually, these two great races began to envy each other and, as there is only one step from envy to hate, eventually they hated each other so much and so completely that the catastrophe occurred. Both possessing very sophisticated arms, they achieved their mutual destruction.

'Our historical records show, then, that 235 survived the disaster, six of them being children. These statistics were recorded five years afterwards, and their survival is attributed to cannibalism and certain marine life.

'They reproduced - not always 'successfully' as it was not uncommon for babies to be born with horribly misshapen heads or ugly weeping sores. They had to endure all the effects of atomic radiation on human beings.

'One hundred and fifty years later, there were 190 000 blacks - men, women and children, and 85 000 yellows. I speak to you of this 150 year period because this was when both races began to re-establish and when we were able to help them materially.'

'What do you mean?'

'Just a few hours ago, you saw our spacecraft stop above the planet Aremo X3 and take samples of soil, water and air, did you not?' I nodded. 'Then,' Thao resumed, 'you watched as we quite easily annihilated a mass of giant ants as they attacked the inhabitants of a village.'

'Indeed.'

'In that particular case, we helped those people by intervening directly. You saw that they were living in a semi-wild state?'

'Yes, but what happened on that planet?'

'Atomic war, my friend. Always and eternally the same story.'

'Don't forget Michel that the Universe is a gigantic atom and everything is affected by that. Your body is composed of atoms. My point is, in all galaxies, each time a planet is inhabited, at a certain stage in its evolution, the atom is discovered or rediscovered.'

'Of course, the scientists who discover it are very soon aware that the disintegration of the atom can be a formidable weapon, and, at one moment or another, the leaders want to use it; just as a child with a box of matches is driven to set fire to a bale of straw in order to see what will happen.'

'But, coming back to the planet Bakaratini, 150 years after the nuclear holocaust, we wanted to help these people.'

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'Their immediate need was food. Still they were subsisting essentially from products of the sea, resorting occasionally to cannibalism to satisfy their omnivorous yearnings. They needed vegetables and a source of meat. Vegetables, fruit trees, grains, animals - all that was edible had disappeared from the planet.'

'There remained just enough inedible plants and bushes to replenish the oxygen in the atmosphere.'

'At the same time, an insect, resembling in some ways your praying mantis, had survived and, as a result of spontaneous mutation caused by the atomic radiation, had evolved to gigantic proportions. It grew to about eight metres in height and had become extremely dangerous to the people. In addition, this insect, having no natural predator, reproduced rapidly.

'We flew over the planet locating the whereabouts of these insects. This was a relatively easy task thanks to technology that has been at our disposal since time immemorial. When we detected the insects, we destroyed them so that, in a short time, we had exterminated them.

'Next, we had to re-introduce livestock, plants and trees on the planet according to the species known to have adapted climatically in specific regions before the catastrophe. This too, was relatively easy...'

'It must have taken years for such a task!'

A large smile lit up Thao's face. 'It took just two days - two 21-hour days.'

Faced with my incredulity, Thao burst into laughter. She, or he, laughed so heartily that I joined in, still wondering however, if the truth was being stretched somewhat.

How could I know? What I was hearing was so fantastic! Perhaps I was hallucinating; perhaps I had been drugged; perhaps I would soon 'wake up' in my very own bed? 'No, Michel,' interrupted Thao, reading my thoughts. 'I wish you would stop doubting in this way. Telepathy itself should be enough to convince you.'

As she uttered this sentence, it struck me that, even in the best planned hoax, it would hardly be possible to bring together so many *supernatural* elements. Thao was able to read my mind like an open book, and proved it over and over again. Latoli, simply by placing her hand on me, had produced such an extraordinary feeling of well-being, I must acknowledge the evidence. I was well and truly experiencing an extra-extraordinary adventure.

'Perfect,' Thao agreed aloud. 'May I continue?'

'Please do,' I encouraged.

'So, we helped these people materially; but, as so often when we intervene, we did not allow our presence to be known and there are several reasons for that.

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'The first is security. The second reason is a psychological one; if we had made these people aware of our existence and if they had realised we were there in order to help them, they would passively have allowed themselves to be helped and would have felt sorry for themselves. This would adversely affect their will to survive. As you say on Earth: 'God helps those who help themselves.'

'The third and last reason is the main one. Universal Law is well-established and is as strictly enforced as that which controls the planets revolutions around their suns. If you make a mistake, you pay the penalty - immediately, in ten years time, or in ten centuries time, but errors must be paid for. Thus, from time to time we are permitted, or even advised, to offer a helping hand but we are formally forbidden to 'serve the meal on a plate'.

'Thus, in two days, we repopulated their planet with several pairs of animals and re-established numerous plants so that eventually the people could raise the animals and cultivate the plants and trees. They had to start from scratch and we guided their progress, either by dream or telepathy. At times we did it by means of 'a voice coming from the heavens'; that is to say, the 'voice' came from our spacecraft but, to them, it came from 'heaven'.'

'They must have taken you to be gods!'

'Exactly so, and it is in this way that legends and religions are established; but, in cases as urgent as that one was, the end justified the means.

'Finally, after several centuries, the planet was almost as it had been before the nuclear holocaust. All the same, in some places, deserts had been definitely established. In other spots less affected, the flora and fauna were easily developed.

'One hundred and fifty thousand years later, the civilisation was highly successful but, this time, not only technologically: happily the people had learned their lesson and had also evolved to a high psychic and spiritual level. This occurred in both races and the blacks and the yellows had developed strong bonds of friendship.

'Thus, peace reigned on the planet, for the legends remained quite clear; many of them recorded in writing, so that future generations would know exactly what had provoked the nuclear catastrophe and what its consequences had been.

'As I said earlier, the people knew that their planet was going to become uninhabitable within 500 years. Knowing there were other planets, inhabited and uninhabitable, in the galaxy, they mounted one of the most serious exploratory expeditions.

'Eventually, they penetrated your solar system, first visiting Mars which was known to be uninhabitable and which, at that time in fact *was* inhabited.

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'The human beings on Mars had no technology but, by contrast, they were spiritually, highly evolved. They were very small people measuring in height between 120 centimetres and 150 centimetres, and of Mongoloid type. They lived in tribes, in huts of stone.

'The fauna on Mars was scarce. There was a kind of dwarf goat, some very large hare-like creatures, several species of rat, and the largest animal resembled a buffalo but had a head like a tapir. There were also some birds and three species of snakes, one of which was quite venomous. The flora was also poor, trees attaining no more than four metres in height. They had too, an edible grass that you might compare with buckwheat.

'The Bakaratinians conducted their research, realising soon that Mars was also cooling down at a rate which indicated that it would no longer be inhabitable in four to five thousand years. In terms of its flora and fauna, it was barely rich enough to sustain those already living there, let alone cope with an emigrant mass from Bakaratini. Besides, the planet did not appeal to them.

'Thus, the two spacecraft headed for Earth. The first landing took place where Australia is now found. At that time, it should be explained that Australia, New Guinea, Indonesia and Malaysia were all part of the one continent. A strait existed, about 300 kilometres wide, exactly where Thailand is now found.

'In those times, Australia possessed a great inland sea fed by several large rivers, so that diverse and interesting flora and fauna flourished there. All things considered, the astronauts chose this country as their first immigration base.

'I must say, to be more precise, that the black race chose Australia and the yellow people established themselves where Burma is now - here too, was a land rich in wildlife. Bases were quickly set up on the coast, on the Bay of Bengal, while the black people constructed their first base on the shores of the Inland Sea in Australia. Later, further bases were established where New Guinea is presently located.

'Their spacecraft were capable of superluminal¹ speeds and took approximately 50 of your Earth years to bring 3 600 000 black people and the same number of the yellow race, to Earth. This bears witness to the perfect understanding and excellent association between two races determined to survive on a new planet and exist in peace. By common agreement, the aged and infirmed remained in Bakaratini.

'The Bakaratinians had explored *all* of the planet Earth before establishing their bases, and were absolutely persuaded that no human life existed before their arrival. Often they thought they had located a humanoid form of life, but on closer inspection, realised they had made contact with a species of large apes.

1) "superluminal speeds" - speeds that exceed the speed of light. Original text "super-light speeds" (Editor's comment)

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'Gravity on Earth was stronger than on their planet and it was quite uncomfortable initially, for the two races, but eventually they adapted very well.

'In building their towns and factories, they were fortunate to import from Bakaratini, certain materials which were very light and, at the same time, very strong.

'I have not yet explained that, at that time, Australia was on the equator. Earth rotated on a different axis - taking 30 hours and 12 minutes to complete a rotation, and achieved a revolution around its sun in 280 such days. The equatorial climate was not as you will find it today. It was much more humid than now, for the Earth's atmosphere has changed.

'Herds of huge zebras roamed the country, in company with enormous edible birds, referred to as 'dodos', very large jaguars, and another bird measuring almost four metres in height, which you have called Dinornis. In certain rivers, there were crocodiles up to 15 metres in length and snakes 25 to 30 metres long. They, at times, nourished themselves on the new arrivals.

'Most of the flora and fauna on Earth was totally different from that on Bakaratini - both from a

nutritional and ecological point of view. Numerous experimental farms were established in an endeavour to acclimatise plants such as sunflower, maize, wheat, sorghum, tapioca and others.

‘These plants either didn’t exist on Earth or else existed in such a primitive state that they couldn’t be consumed. The goat and the kangaroo were both imported, for the immigrants were quite partial to these, consuming them in great numbers on their planet. They were particularly keen to raise kangaroos on Earth, experiencing enormous difficulties however, in acclimatising them. One of the main problems was food. On Bakaratini, the kangaroo fed on a fine, hardy grass called *arilu*, which was totally unknown on Earth. Each time the Bakaratinians tried to grow it, it died, attacked always by millions of microscopic fungi. So it happened that the kangaroo were hand-fed, so to speak, for several decades, as they gradually adapted to the grasses on Earth.

‘The black race persevered in its endeavours and finally succeeded in growing the plant, but it had taken so long that the kangaroos no longer required more than their new pastures. Very much later, some arilu plants took root and, as there were no animals to eat them, they spread throughout Australia. They still exist under the botanical name *Xanthorrhoea* and the popular name “grass trees”.

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‘On Earth, this grass grows much taller and thicker than it did on Bakaratini, but that often happens when species are introduced from other planets. This plant is one of the rare vestiges of those distant times.

1) "grass trees" - original text was ‘black boys’. This term is currently avoided in Australia due to the racist connotation. (Editor's comment)

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'It indicates, by being found only in Australia, along with the kangaroo, that the Bakaratinians remained in that particular part of the planet for a very long time before seeking to colonise other parts. I am about to explain this, but I wanted first, to cite the examples of the kangaroo and the *Xanthorrhoea* so that you might better understand all the problems of adaptation these people had to overcome; of course, it is only one small example among so many others.

'The yellow race had settled, as I said, in the hinterland of the Bay of Bengal. Most were in Burma where they too, had established cities and experimental farms. Principally interested in vegetables, they had imported from Bakaratini cabbages, lettuce, parsley, coriander and some others. For fruit, they brought the cherry tree, the banana and the orange trees. These last two were difficult to establish, for the climate of the time was generally colder than it is now. Thus, they gave some of the trees to the blacks who, by contrast, had enormous success with them.

'In the same way, the yellow people had far greater success in the growing of wheat. In fact, the wheat from Bakaratini produced enormous grains, around the size of a coffee bean, with ears measuring up to 40 centimetres in length. Four varieties of wheat were grown and the yellow race wasted no time in establishing a very high production level.'

'Did they also bring rice to the planet?'

'No, not at all. Rice is a plant absolutely native to Earth, although it was greatly improved by the yellow people on its way to becoming what it is now.

'To continue, immense silos were constructed and soon, commercial exchanges began between the two races. The black race exported kangaroo meat, dodos (which were prolific at the time) and zebra meat. In domesticating the latter, the blacks in fact, produced breeds that were equal in taste, to kangaroo meat and more nutritious. Trade was carried out using Bakaratini spacecraft, bases for these vessels having been set up all over the land...'

'What you are saying, Thao, is that the first men on Earth were black and yellow. How is it then, that I come to be white?'

'Not so fast, Michel, not so fast. The first men on Earth were, indeed, the blacks and the yellows, but for the moment I will continue to explain how they organised themselves and how they lived.

'Materially, they were successful, but they were also careful not to neglect the construction of their immense meeting halls, in which they practised their cult.'

'They had a cult?'

'Oh yes, they were all Tackioni, which is to say, they all believed in reincarnation; something in the way present-day Lamaists do on your planet.

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'There was much travel between the two countries and they even combined efforts to explore deeper into certain regions of Earth. A mixed group of blacks and yellows landed one day, on the tip of South Africa, now called the Cape of Good Hope. Africa has changed very little since those times - apart from the Sahara, the north-eastern area and the Red Sea, which didn't exist then. But that is another story we will get to later.

'At the time of the exploration, they had already been established on Earth for three centuries.

'In Africa, they discovered new animals such as the elephant, the giraffe and the buffalo, and a new fruit that they had never before encountered - the tomato. Don't imagine Michel, that this was the tomato as you know it today. When discovered, it was the size of a very small currant and very acidic. The yellow people, having developed great expertise in such things, undertook to improve the tomato over the succeeding centuries, just as they did with rice, until it became the fruit you are now familiar with. They were equally surprised to find banana trees that, at first sight, resembled those they had imported. They had no reason to regret their efforts however, for the African banana was practically inedible and filled with large seeds.

'This African expedition comprised 50 blacks and 50 yellows, bringing home elephants, tomatoes and many mongeese, for they soon discovered the mongoose to be the mortal enemy of snakes. Unfortunately, they also brought with them without realising it, the terrible virus which is now called 'yellow fever'.

'In a very short time, millions of people had died, without their medical experts even knowing how the sickness had spread.

'Since it is mainly spread by the mosquito, and since there are many more mosquitoes in equatorial climates where there is no winter to reduce their numbers, it was the blacks in Australia who suffered most. In fact, they counted four times more victims than the yellows.

'The yellow race on Bakaratini has always been superior in the field of medicine and pathology; nevertheless, it took many years before they discovered a remedy for this curse, during which time hundreds of thousands died in terrible suffering. Eventually the yellow people produced a vaccine that was immediately made available to the blacks - a gesture that reinforced the bonds of friendship between the two races.'

'What were they physically like, these blacks?'

'When they migrated from Bakaratini, they were about 230 centimetres tall - their women too. They were a beautiful race. The yellow people were smaller in size, the average man measuring 190 centimetres and the women, 180 centimetres.'

'But you said that the present-day blacks are the descendants of those people - why is it they are now so much smaller?'