

# A New Planet to Call Home

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## Chapter 1

# Out of the Pod

It was dark when I opened my eyes. I had been dreaming I was on a spaceship, flying across the universe, and for a moment I didn't know if I was awake or asleep. I tried to call out for my guardian, Olag, but no sound came from my mouth. It wasn't until I heard the recorded message, "This sleep pod will open in ten seconds," that I remembered ... I really was on a spaceship, flying across the universe.

The door to my sleep pod flew open and, thankfully, Olag was right there in front of me.

"You're awake, Okadi!" he said, hugging me and helping me out of the pod at the same time.



“Am I the last one to wake up?” I asked, looking around to see a crowd of people standing about.

“You are. But it’s good timing,” said Olag, pointing to the window. “Because we’ve just had our first glimpse of our new home planet, K22!”

I rubbed my head. It felt a little sore, but that’s apparently what happens when you sleep for ten years. Everyone on our spaceship had been kept in a frozen state in our sleep pods while we travelled across the universe to our new home. This meant that when we woke up, we were all exactly the same age as when we left.

I gazed out the window at the planet below. It was strange how much K22 looked like our home planet Faya, which made me feel happy and sad all at once.

The reason we were in the spaceship was because Faya’s sun was dying, which meant Faya was slowly burning up. When Fayan scientists realised this centuries ago, they began sending out robotic space probes to try to find another planet to live on. One of the probes finally came back with good news about a planet the scientists named K22.



Not only did K22 look like Faya, but apparently there were life forms there that were almost identical to us. The main differences were that those life forms had five fingers, while we had three, and they had fur on their heads, while we had none.

Like us, those life forms had taken over their planet. They had created cities and made vehicles that travelled on land, sea and air. However, compared to ours, their technology was old. K22 was similar to Faya many hundreds of years ago.

As I stared at K22, I could hear Olag and one of the engineers talking as they checked a map. The engineer said that usually we would circle the planet and scan it completely before landing. But because our spaceship had been damaged during the journey, we needed to get to the ground as quickly as possible.

“Are we going to land in the middle of a city?”

Olag asked anxiously.

“Our scans show the city is empty,” replied the engineer. “They also show that there is a large open area to land on and materials nearby that we can use for repairs. So, this seems like the best place for now.”

Just then, the voice of the pilot came over the spaceship’s communication speakers.

“Please strap yourself into a secure seat, ready for landing,” she said.

Suddenly, I started to feel nervous. We were actually about to arrive at our new home. What would it be like down there on K22?

## Chapter 2

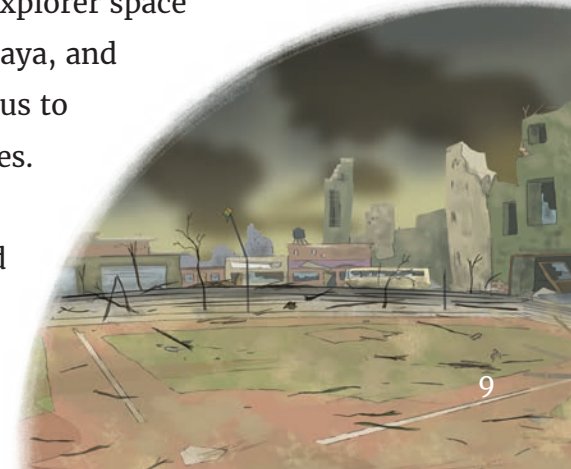
# Exploring K22

The atmosphere was thick with cloud and the ride was rough, but the pilot landed our spaceship with barely a bump.

When I looked out, I could see we were in the middle of a sandy open area. Dotted around us were what I thought must be dead trees. They looked similar to the ancient dead trees that could still be seen in some places on Faya. At the edges of the open area were lots of empty-looking, rundown buildings.

I turned to Olag. “What happened to this place? It looks so different from the images taken by the space probe.”

He shook his head. “The universe is so big. It took many years for our explorer space probes to return to Faya, and then many more for us to journey here ourselves. It seems that some disaster has occurred in the meantime.”





Just then, my friend Komot appeared beside me, grinning. “I think it looks interesting out there,” she said. “And I can’t wait to go exploring!”

“Well, you haven’t changed at all in ten years,” I said, giving her a big hug.

We had to wait while the engineers did some air testing to make sure it was safe for us to go outside. Once we were given clearance, Komot, her brother Humm and I went down to the storage area to retrieve some air-propelled hover-scooters. We used our hand prints to turn the scooters on, and in no time at all we were out riding around the surrounding streets.

It had been grey when we landed, but now the sun was coming out from behind the clouds and I began to notice signs of life. There were green shoots springing up from cracks in the road, and tiny furry creatures scuttled away as we passed by.

Finally, we stopped in front of a large building that looked different from the others. It seemed important in some way. There was some kind of writing or symbols on the front of it, but we had no idea what it meant.

“Apparently, the space probe didn’t record the language of the local life forms,” said Humm, sounding annoyed. “It would have been very useful.”

“Shall we look inside?” I asked.

After checking over the building with his 3D scanner for anything dangerous, Humm declared the site was safe and we went in.

