

Includes
the
Backstory

Promised Land

M.A. Laborde

Promised Land

by

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About the Book

In 2025 regular flights to space begin from countries around the world. They carry immigrants who will inhabit the colonies being established there. Back on Earth people carry on with their lives; some become part of the migration, others remain behind.

The first seven chapters tell the stories of some from both groups. Each chapter is set in a different country: the United States, Peru, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Brazil, Ireland, India, and Vietnam.

The story lines converge in the eighth and final chapter, which describes certain events that occur on October 6, 2040, the day when all migration from Earth to space must end, by decree of the governing body of the colonies there. The final lift-offs, synchronized worldwide, are a prelude to those events, which no one in space or on Earth could ever have envisioned.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROLOGUE: Genesis	1
CHAPTER 1: Trailblazing (USA)	2
CHAPTER 2: Communion (Peru)	17
CHAPTER 3: Redemption (Africa)	36
CHAPTER 4: Restoration (Brazil).....	52
CHAPTER 5: Transformation (Ireland)	59
CHAPTER 6: Homecoming (India)	77
CHAPTER 7: Reunion (Vietnam)	92
CHAPTER 8: Exodus.....	109
EPILOGUE: Revelation	121
BACKSTORY: Promised Land, Behind the Scenes	123

PROLOGUE

Genesis

In the earliest days of humankind, the urge to explore one's physical environment was usually motivated by the survival instinct or by simple curiosity. As the millennia rolled on and humans began to venture beyond their immediate surroundings, and as they discovered their neighbors—and their neighbors' possessions—curiosity and the survival instinct soon were overtaken by another motivator: the urge to dominate and ultimately to conquer other people and places.

By 1500 AD the inhabitants of planet Earth routinely traveled in search of new worlds in the hemispheres beyond their own. First they overcame the natural barriers of the mountains and the elements, and then the vast expanses of water, which for eons had separated them from unimaginable terrors—and unimaginable treasures. And the lure of the treasures invariably succeeded in subduing the power of the terrors, at least for those daring or reckless or covetous enough to venture beyond the physical boundaries of their own more familiar world. And once again they sought to dominate and conquer.

And so it was too by the mid-twentieth century, when outer space and its myriad mysteries became a similar lure for previously Earthbound humans. The vast expanses of darkness could not keep them from seeking to explore distant stars in the universe beyond Earth's atmosphere, any more than the water had kept earlier adventurers from setting out for distant lands beyond Earth's horizon.

With space probes and spaceships, first unmanned and finally guided by human hands on-board the ships themselves, the first tentative journeys into space began. Until, by the year 2025, regularly scheduled flights had begun carrying immigrants by the hundreds, then thousands, from Earth to Mars and neighboring destinations.

And just as throughout the eons there have been those who feel compelled to seek out the new and the different, so too have there been those who are content with the old and the familiar. And so it was in 2025. These are the stories of some who left Earth in those days and some who stayed behind.

Not so long ago, the average human lived and died without ever venturing much beyond his or her immediate community. Now, even space travel doesn't seem so farfetched for the ordinary individual in the not-too-distant future. Could that happen as soon as, say, 2025?

What if you had the opportunity to migrate to Mars in just a couple more decades? Could the Millennial New World lure you away from planet Earth, perhaps forever? Would you be among those eager to reserve a seat on an interplanetary spacecraft?

Or would you be content—or resigned—to remain Earthbound?

So much can happen in a generation or two. Some of it ordinary, some extraordinary. Some joyful, some tragic. Some predictable, some less so.

You are invited to step into the lives of a few from different parts of the world—the USA, Africa, and Vietnam among them—who become participants in or witnesses to the historic migration to Mars and beyond. And to equally memorable events right here on Earth.

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