

A World Created

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Foreword

In a hidden laboratory, nestled in a high valley of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, scientists readied the Isaac Goddard Cellular Screen for viewing. The screen was a scanning electron microscope; a machine which projected images of cells at an amplification and clarity never achieved by the more primitive microscopy. The scientists were studying reproductive cells, specifically human ova during unification with the spermatozoa.

Since the genetic wars of 2038, nine years before, such study and experimentation would have needed to take place in secrecy. These same wars had caused the release of gene altering substances into the food chain and water sources resulting in worldwide sterility. Those, whom war had not destroyed, were now hopelessly facing extinction. Unable to procreate, man had reverted to anarchy, and senseless slaughter prevailed as if to hasten the process. Rabid bands of suicidal bent pillaged and killed, burnt and destroyed. Scientists and intellectuals were targeted in reparation for their part in the catastrophe. Madness and pestilence stalked the cities, and flowed out into the countryside. Safety was a transient thing. With no future to work for, to plan for, man had decided to end it with a bang.

The scientists of the Goddard Foundation, or simply God's Club, as Liann and others irreverently referred to it, fought valiantly to find a solution. They searched for a way to arm the human gene, a way to instill within the cell a genetic integrity.

Honor Rae Goddard, MD, CM, D.Sc., and Ch.E. (chemical engineering), daughter of Isaac, wearily pulled her heavy, auburn hair up from her neck, and blew air

upward from pursed lips. It's hotter than when God first made light, she thought.

Catching her eye, Liamm winked and grinned. "I love you," he mouthed, thinking of the love they had shared that morning, of the passion and fire of this woman. "Dearly Beloved, I'd like a dozen children by you," he thought tenderly. He held up six fingers, and flashed them at her twice. She released her hair in a fall of new, copper pennies, and grinned back. "Me too," she whispered, and blew him a kiss.

Honor was thirty-three years old; a child prodigy, she had been working with her father, Isaac, since she had been big enough to climb up on a stool and view a petri dish. "Nearly twenty years," she thought wryly. She had already made a name for herself in biochemistry when the war struck, and a stunned world woke to no tomorrow. She was as renowned in her own field, as her illustrious father in his.

Honor levered the Chemical Degaussing Gun into position, guided by the picture on the screen, and carefully aimed it at the ova and spermatozoa cells. The gun, her own invention--would in effect if all went well--form a chemical girdle around the cell nuclei inducing a neutralizing field. It was hoped the field would be permanent thus nullifying the gene altering substances. The substances, although of chemical origin, appeared to have a magnetic field of a type heretofore never encountered by Goddard Foundation scientists. They believed the gun would establish an inherency in human genes once again enabling human reproduction. Scientists were hopeful they might even be able to save a number of mammals; those of most importance to man. Experiments on animals in the laboratory had been

promising so far. The gun had worked as hoped, but permanency or inherency was not yet determined. One pair of rabbits had indeed produced a pregnancy, but the fetuses spontaneously aborted and were malformed. They had no recognizably viable reproductive organs.

"Count down please," Isaac ordered quietly.

"Ten, nine, eight," a voice began, a slightly breathy quality giving it an unfamiliar overtone of anxiety. Whose was it? Liamm's, realized Honor. "Oh my love! Oh blessed God make it work for us," she prayed silently. She desperately wanted to have Liamm's children, to see the world set aright, to know that man would endure-- "though God knows why," she thought bitterly. She sighed, remembering colleagues who had perished on the move from Grove City Labs to their present, well hidden location. Sweet Joanna of the laughing eyes, raped and tortured; Johnathon, tarred and feathered and set afire, for no reason except that he was both black and a scientist.; old Benjamin, who had worked so closely with her father for so many years, who had dandled her on his knee. Commanded to dance, he had stood there in dignified silence, unmoving, his white hair blowing in the soft, summer scented breeze. The mob had shot his legs from under him, and tossed him on a rubbish heap to bleed to death. The others had been forced to watch from the cover of an abandoned building, helpless because to reveal themselves would mean the failure of their project to save mankind. "Are we worth it?" she wondered. "Stop it! Stop it!" she told herself sternly. "Don't think about it!"

The voice went inexorably on, "three, two." Honor's finger tightened on the switch, "one, zero." She pressed the switch.

There was a sizzling crackle and a flash of light, bright even through closed eye-lids. An incredible ACK, ACK, ACK..., produced by a thrashing cable, escalated into a

thunderous crash. "My God! What's happened?" thought Honor frantically. She felt she must have blacked out for a time.

She drifted, feeling oddly dislocated; why was it so dark? Her body didn't have any substance, where were her hands, her arms, legs? She was tenuous, stretched out, weightless. She could see through herself. "How can I see through myself when it's so dark?" she wondered inanely. She called out voicelessly for Liamm and her father; she couldn't hear herself. There seemed to be no walls, nothing. "I'm dreaming," she thought. "No, this is real; where is everyone, where is this place, what am I doing here?" Panic curled in her stomach; she gagged, retching dryly. Her body was now immense growing ever more tenuous.

Overwhelmed, in growing horror, she screamed silently, "NO! NO! Liamm! Father!" Desperately she fought against the void, making a wrenching effort to steady herself, to think. Obviously she wasn't in the lab; distantly she spied a pearly glow of light. She yearned toward the light, and surprisingly, effortlessly began to drift closer. Dimly, through the glow, she saw familiar star patterns, and a blue and white, swirled, glass marble. "Earth!" she gasped. "OH GOD! Oh God! Oh god! Oh, ooh!"

Her mind reeled, curling small and tight in a dark corner, whimpering and wailing. The glow was growing dimmer, smaller; a door closing, closing on earth. "Too much, too much, am I dead? No," she rejected the idea. "That is the earth, my earth, and it's in another universe. I'm in a different universe, I'm in another universe--not earth's. I'm dithering. Oh God!" she thought. "It's true. Strange, so strange! Oh, oh, it's closing"! She suddenly flung herself determinedly at the rapidly closing rupture,

and--was thrown back with considerable force. Stunned, she thought, "What am I going to do? This universe isn't even formed yet. There's nothing here! No planets, no stars! It's primeval, inchoate dust in a void. The stuff God created the earth's universe from," she realized. "But how did I get here? The gun! It had to be the gun! It had malfunctioned, but why? How could it have shot her off into a totally different universe? Or a new universe, is this even a universe yet?" Her mind reeled. "The gun had performed perfectly up until now, why this time? Maybe God really was fed up with mankind, and had decided enough was enough." She felt herself blacking out, losing consciousness. It was too much to grasp, her mind wanted a rest.

Just before the final descent into utter blackness, just before the final closing of the rupture between the universes, a malignant presence, an insanely raving being, rushed past her twisting and shoving at her meager defenses, rending and tearing at her mind. Gibbering, darkly hating, it tore off into the void. An instant and it was gone. Her numbed mind sank cowering into darkness.

Honor Rae dreamed...

Dreamed she swam in a vast sea of energy. She grasped the energy with her mind and created suns and their planets and moons. She flung them across the sea and rejoiced in their beauty. One planet drew her in particular; it was the most beautiful of all. A name insinuated itself into her mind--Vesperia. A lovely evening star; it drifted around its sun turning slowly trailing a shining moon. Honor Rae dreamed she floated above this lovely vision among roiling clouds and gusty winds that tossed her up and down in a wild ride. It's a roller coaster, she thought and played until she tired and saw what was needed. All was water below her and she

separated the waters. Dry land appeared. She walked upon the face of Vesperia. Where she walked grasses sprung up and flowers, trees; the world lived. She plucked fruit from the trees and ate and delighted in the sweet taste of this world. Then it seemed to her that her body had healed itself and she was pregnant. She gave birth to Liamm's children. A multitude of fine, strong children leapt from her womb and peopled the world.

Honor Rae dreamed she had woken and found the dream true. She called her children together and bade them build for her a stone house with vast rooms. She dreamed that she transported the house to the fourth planet of the sun, the evening star of Vesperia. She installed laboratories and placed strange and marvelous machines in them. There she created various and wondrous peoples to live upon Vesperia, to fill her lands and seas. She delighted in her creations and kept watch over Vesperia and its peoples.

For a little while in her dreams she had forgotten Earth and her father and Liamm, but evil came to Vesperia and with the evil, pain. She turned in her deep ages-old sleep and awoke to find her dream reality, and wept. Sorrowing, she descended to Vesperia to her children. Ever mindful of the fate of Earth, she disciplined her people and taught them to fight the evil.