



BLUE DELTA BOOKS

RETURN TO EARTH

JENNIFER LISS

CHAPTER 1

BIG MYSTERY

Andon Lee let the door slam shut as he left school. He cringed when he stepped outside. Zera's three distant suns had already set. A large green moon was rising. It lit up the dry, sandy planet.

“Oh no,” Andon mumbled. “I’m late again.”

The temperature had notably dropped. He zipped up his coat and faced the cold.

Andon was used to the chilly temps on his home planet of Zera. The three suns were far away. Humans had built an indoor city long ago.

Sometimes they went outside. But they didn't go often. This was just their way of life. It was all Andon knew.

He quickened his step. School trams had stopped running two hours ago. That meant a long jog. Andon's parents always wanted him home for dinner. But today he had a good reason for being late.

Once a year, teens were invited to the Space Center. There, they presented research. Those with the best projects were offered jobs.

Andon had a dream. It was to work for the Aliens Unit of the Space Center. He had been getting ready. His project was important.

There was a big mystery. It was called the Dead Planet Effect. Andon was researching it. Sometimes a planet was healthy. Its life force was strong. There were no signs of trouble. Suddenly, the planet would die.

Was this a big deal? Andon thought so. Most Space Center scientists did not. Andon's parents were among them. They said some planets just had short life spans.

But other scientists did not agree. Some thought alien attacks were behind the Dead Planet Effect. Humans could not see the attackers. But they were powerful. Somehow, they could destroy an entire planet. This only took days.

The attackers were called Unknowns. Were the Unknowns real? No one knew for sure. There was no proof.

Andon wanted to know the truth. He would not feel safe until he did. Hundreds of years ago, humans had left Earth. Since then, they had lived on Zera. It was a healthy planet. But what if that changed? What if something happened to Zera? The thought bothered Andon. In fact, it scared him.

He spent all his free time researching Unknowns. Finally, he had discovered something. He thought it was incredible. Andon hoped those at the Space Center would think so too. In just a few days, he would go there. Then he would present his work.

Now Andon rushed home. His parents were waiting. He smelled dinner when he walked in. But his parents weren't eating.

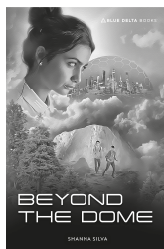
"I'm sorry I'm late," Andon began. "But I have a good excuse. I just figured out—"

His mom held up her hand. "Sit down."

Andon studied her face. Was she mad? Then he realized she was smiling. His dad looked happy too.

"We have something very important to tell you," his dad said.

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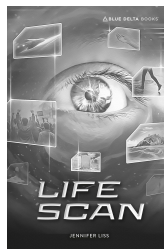
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SCIENCE FICTION

RETURN TO EARTH

On planet Zera, Andon's dream is to work for the Space Center, just like his parents. He is convinced that something is destroying planets, and he wants to find out what it is. When Andon's family travels to Earth, the journey puts them in more danger than they can imagine. Can Andon discover the true danger lurking? Or will it be too late for Earth and the people of Zera?



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