

FROM MARS TO EARTH

Pages: 17

Format: pdf, epub

Language: English

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A trio of short science fiction stories

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First Edition

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Characters in these stories bear no relation to any persons living or dead. Any such resemblance is co-incidental.

THE TIPPING POINT

Brett looked carefully at the information data pod strapped to the sleeve of his suit. He lifted his arm so that he could see the screen and blinked twice to activate the most recent download. These pods were a huge advance on the previous models. No need now to use hands at all, a great benefit on this red planet where they still had to wear protective clothing. Though hopefully that wouldn't be for much longer.

The information he wanted flickered on the screen. Great - the atmosphere had converted as anticipated. They were almost there with the completion of this task.

He frowned a little as he flicked to the sandstorm report. They had a window of about two weeks before the local sandstorms became a full blown incident, sweeping across the whole planet. Though they were well prepared it would be much better to have all the landings from Earth completed before well before then.

He reminded himself that this was a moment to savour, to remember. He smiled at the other members of the team. How lucky they were to be here at the culmination of a hundred years of work, successful work, he reminded himself.

“Hey, guys, come over here.” Annie and Marvin left their task of downloading data from the robot surveyor which was their guide and joined Brett.

When those early pioneers had come to Mars with their ideas of using CO₂ to transform the atmosphere to make the planet habitable again, how many had scoffed at the possibility. No signs of any life had ever been detected, in spite of all their expeditions. For a while there had been hope when the methane on the planet was confirmed as recent, but extensive searching and research had proved fruitless, even at the Martian equator.

Any life there has ever been was long gone, frozen out by the ice which covered so much of the planet or destroyed by the dust storms.

Just as well, really. With so many inhabitants of earth to rescue from the climate warming that was destroying the mother planet, it would be better not to have to share the place with Martians.

In spite of all the problems, the scientists had held their ground, had developed ways of creating an atmosphere, melting the ice, transforming this red planet into something resembling Earth. Ironic really, the very gas that had destroyed Earth had made Mars habitable.

So it wasn't perfect. The people living here at first would have to wear a lightweight filtration system especially during the dust storm period- but that was only a temporary problem.

He gazed up at the blue sky. Clouds were beginning to form, wisps driven across by the lightest of winds. Soon they would increase, cover the whole sky and it would rain. There was every chance now that the crops they had planted would grow: they would only have to rely on what they could bring from Earth for a short time.

All this was not a moment too soon. The predictions about Earth had come to pass: global warming had taken indeed its toll and the resources of the mother planet were exhausted. When he gazed up at the night sky that beautiful green and blue sphere that had once been Earth was now increasingly red where the deserts had advanced or grey as the stormy waters took over large swathes of the planet. Brett shuddered. No, Mars was definitely a better place to be. It was of no matter what happened to Earth: they had a whole new world to live in. *

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