

# Legacy

*Liam Richards*

‘AREN’T THEY BEAUTIFUL, Sam?’

‘What?’

‘The moons, they’re so pretty.’

‘Oh . . . yeah, it—they sure are, buddy.’

‘And I can see the *Legacy*! It’s so small . . .’

‘It had to move, Riley. There were too many meteoroids.’

‘I liked it when it was closer. It’s harder to find in my telescope now.’

‘Hey, do you mind if I use it for a second?’

Riley giggled as I lifted him out of his chair. I made rocket noises as I swung him through the air and laid him down on his sleeping bag. He struggled to catch his breath through the laughter. I ruffled his hair.

‘Houston, Eagle has landed; mission successful. Welcome home, Eagle. I’ll be right back.’

‘Roger that.’

Since I bought the telescope for his fourth birthday a few months back, Riley and I had spent every Friday camping out on the second floor balcony at home, staring up at the moon and the stars. I adjusted the eyepiece and leant over to look through.

‘Can we go for ice cream tomorrow, Sam?’

‘Eagle, that mission is a go. How many scoops are you gonna get?’

‘You mean I can have more than one?’

‘Of course you can, only the best for our number one astronaut.’

‘Can I have three scoops?’

‘Why stop at three? I was thinking more like, five or six.’

‘A hundred?’

‘That is an affirmative Eagle, a hundred scoops.’

‘Wow! You’re the best, Sam.’

On the horizon, bright blue pillars of light lanced away from the ground and into the black of the night. They were the last of the evacuation shuttles. What they were all going to do once they’d reached the safer depths of the solar system was beyond me, but I doubt the people on board cared. They’d all just be glad to be away from here. Politicians, scientists, the wealthy . . . anyone deemed important enough to save would be aboard the *Legacy*. Earth would be merely a speck in the distance and the moon long since gone from view.

‘How come we don’t get to go for a ride in the shuttles, Sam?’

‘Because we have to stay and take care of Earth, while the others go and take care of the *Legacy*.’

‘So we’re like Houston?’

‘Roger that.’

‘I wish we could go to the *Legacy*.’

‘Yeah . . . me too, buddy. Me too.’

Critically analysed for the highest likelihood of survival, the *Legacy* was a load of bullshit. As soon as the lunar colony had sent word of the imminent collision, the space station departed for the depths of the solar system. Not one ship was sent to rescue anyone. They were left to die. Just like us.

Of all the shuttles readily available on Earth, only enough were sent to transport those deemed to have the highest chance of maintaining our species. It was clinical, analytical and cold. There was time to make double trips, to increase the amount of people and resources saved, but the world government had said the risk was too high. What was the point in preserving the human race if we left behind our humanity?

Yet, despite the gravity of the situation, Riley found the whole thing exciting—found the lights and extra satellites in the sky to be beautiful. He was so full of love and emotion; that which the *Legacy* lacked.

‘Why are all the fireworks the same colour?’

‘They’re from the moon, Riley.’

‘Why? Are they having a party?’

‘No, buddy, it’s the lunar colony. They’re saying goodbye.’

‘Where are . . . where are they going?’

I stepped away from the telescope. In the makeshift tent we'd set up on the balcony, Riley was drifting off to sleep. He'd barely managed to yawn out his last question. I climbed into my sleeping bag next to him and stared out into the sky.

'Hey, Riley?'

'Yeah?'

'I love you, buddy.'

'I love you too, Sam.'

Through the gap in the sheets I could see the moon. It looked a lot closer than yesterday; all five chunks of it. It was impossible to tell where the asteroid had impacted. It wouldn't be long now. Smaller pieces hurtled towards the Earth but burned up in the atmosphere—they really did look like fireworks. Riley was right, they were beautiful.

Farther away, I could see the light of the evacuation shuttles congregating. Their straight, blue beams were now a solid, stationary glow. They were wrong. All of them: the politicians, the scientists, the wealthy; they weren't the human race's legacy.

I rolled over to look at Riley, and wrapped my arms around him.

We were.