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We Are The Destroyers

“This is one of the best works of science fiction I’ve read in a very long time. It made me think and had me quickly turning the pages—a rare combination!”

— DORAN H.

“I enjoyed the story of how the society of Syns evolved. I could visualize the story and characters even after I put the book down. I thought about the characters often . . . left me thinking will humans ever learn from their past mistakes.”

— AMY C.

“Unexpected, different . . . it would make a great movie with good special effects.”

— PHIL AND SAMMY W.

“. . . good science fiction . . . a believable storyline, some great imagination!”

— RICK C.

WE ARE THE DESTROYERS

D. K. Lindler

FIRST LIFE PUBLISHING



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We Are The Destroyers

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DEDICATION

*There would be two distinct individuals in my life.
One from this life, K. G. Without him, this book would not exist.
He dedicated the past ten years to allow me to pursue my passion.*

*And the other, from the eighteenth century, a French
writer and philosopher, Denis Diderot, whose ability
with thought and words spirited me forward.*

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INTRODUCTION

Greetings. Sit back. Get comfortable. It is time we bring you up to date as to where you are in the scheme of things. We wish to tell you a story of a journey of discovery. It will be, and can be, everything you wish. So now let's see what your true wishes are.

CHAPTER 1

IN SEARCH OF THE BEGINNING

Ry Sing watched the dark-haired man from across the room. He sat in front of a wall-mounted display filled with star charts. He was in good physical shape nearing his 40th year. His tanned skin evidenced his Maureesh descent. He was born on the island of Mauree in the southern hemisphere, where the atmosphere had thinned over the centuries, creating the bronzed tones of the inhabitants.

His red military jacket was unbuttoned. He may have been in the act of removing it when his attention was diverted by the charts. She smiled at his singular focus. He was unaware that she was in the room with him, waiting for him to turn around. The information she was carrying had been weighing heavily on her heart for some time. It would be a relief to tell him, but that would only make it more real. That's why she had been content to remain unnoticed here in this room, delaying the

moment. But it was time. She could wait no longer. He needed to know about the past.

“Bel’lar.” She said his name softly.

He spun around. “Ry Sing. I didn’t hear you come in.” He grinned.

“Obviously.” She smiled. “I have information about another voyage from a long time ago. It’s time to tell you about it. Will you sit over here with me?” The long sleeve of her pastel-blue silk tunic fluttered as she motioned him to join her.

“Of course.” He leaned back in his chair, stretched his arms overhead, and felt his shoulder muscles flex and then relax. With a sigh, he stood, shrugged out of his jacket, and left it on his chair. The insignia on the chest of his jacket was a cross within a circle with the letters ISOS stitched above it. Then, as an afterthought, he pitched his voice toward the display. “Finish.” The charts vanished as the display darkened.

She watched him pull the shades and sit across from her.

He took her clasped hands into his own for a moment and then sat back. He sensed her reluctance and something else. What was it—sorrow? Something about this old voyage had upset her, and he kept silent so as not to distract her.

Breathing deeply, she closed her eyes and entered a relaxed state, peaceful and at ease. He couldn’t detect any sign of the reluctance or sorrow now. *Her ability to focus must be overriding her emotions*, he thought.

Ten years ago, she had begun to focus within, accessing knowledge and speaking about things she didn’t know she knew. At that time, she spoke of the existence of a planet similar to theirs, one capable of sustaining human life. This knowledge set them on this quest they were on today, in search of the blue-white planet.

She straightened in the chair and began to speak.

“Greetings, Exalted One.”

Bel’lar’s hand twitched at this greeting. He wondered what it meant but remained silent, unwilling to interrupt as she continued.

“We will tell you a story of long ago that will be of great interest to you as you embark upon this glorious journey to this new world. Let us begin. Relax, close your eyes, and you will see what we are about to tell you.”

Breathing in deeply, he relaxed and, within moments, felt himself floating free of his body but unafraid—her voice the only thing penetrating his altered state.

“More than hundreds of thousands of years ago, in the solar system nearest to you, in what will come to be known by the inhabitants of the blue-white planet as the Belt of Orion, there was the Planet of Abundance. Those who lived there could be whatever it was they wished. We want to capitalize on the “be.” Being there was all that was necessary to self-indulge oneself in *being* more than they had ever dreamed of and creating the wealth and prosperity expected. But even with the abilities to have all there was in this physical paradise, significant opportunities remained to alter this wonderful abundance. So as the inhabitants went about their existence on this Planet of Abundance, they began to feel that somehow they were the gods that created that place.

“As time passed they began to use up some of the abundance. A dire future was predicted by their holy men, one in which the planet would become overpopulated and unable to handle the abundance of human beings that would eventually lead to their own destruction. The holy men warned that what you sow you shall reap and so shall it be. Yet the warnings went unheeded. The inhabitants could not restrain the insatiable desire to alter their surroundings by making it better, they felt, than it was.

This continued for thousands of years until, as foretold, the planet reached the brink of self-destruction.

“Then a group of ‘born again’ ecologist holy men conceived a radical plan. They would give this planet a rebirth by setting off a chain of nuclear events around the circumference of the planet.

“Now let’s go to this event. Come with us so you may see and realize what occurred.”

Bel’lar felt a tug on his spirit. Then suddenly he was flying. Disconcerted at first, he let his fear fade away as he listened to Ry Sing’s voice guiding him.

“As we’re getting closer to this beautiful planet, realize you are a bird. A great soaring bird.”

And indeed he was a bird. He flexed his wings in pleasure. He pushed away his incredulity of his altered state and flew.

Ry Sing continued. “See that gathering of many beings down below in front of a platform with a great stone backdrop.”

Flying swiftly, his feathers ruffling in the wind, he saw the massive crowd. He shifted his weight and light glinted on his dark wings as he circled and then flew in closer. *What is that?* he thought.

And Ry Sing’s voice answered, “A temple.”

As he flew in closer, he could see men in blood-red robes arrayed along the edge of the platform. Holy men. He counted twelve. What was this place?

The holy men were attempting to comfort the crush of humanity around this platform. Children were crying. Bel’lar sensed the tension, the fear, the confusion. Some of the holy men were leaning over the platform’s edge, placing their hands on the heads of people who surged up to them for blessing. What was happening? Did these people know what was going to happen?

Two holy men drew back from the crowd and moved to stand near a stone chair in the center of the platform. One turned to

the other. Bel'lar could hear the speaker's voice clearly from his vantage point overhead.

"It has taken many difficult decisions to come to this moment. I hope it will be as the Great One sees it. For it has been written in very ancient scripture that rebirth through fire will heal and sanctify the spirit of this great place and allow the healing to begin."

The listener nodded but didn't speak.

The holy men at the edge of the platform backed away from the people and took up their places on either side of the stone chair. The people nearest the platform sank to their knees, and, as a wave, it spread throughout the congregation until all were kneeling, hands clasped in prayer. Now an air of great expectation and trepidation traveled through the people. They realized, as Bel'lar realized, that what was about to occur could never be rescinded.

Then from behind the stone chair, an exquisite man walked forward to greet the multitudes. He was tall, slender, godlike, with long, dark hair, wearing robes of distinction. These robes caught the light, reflecting many colors and then, at times, it seemed that this man was transparent. Bel'lar felt a stab of recognition but was confused. This man couldn't be familiar.

Ry Sing spoke. "He will be known in the future as the one that saved mankind."

This godlike man raised both arms, palms out, his robes of distinction fluttering in the breeze. His lips lifted in a loving smile; his eyes brightened with emotion. He gazed out over the congregation in silence for a long moment as if committing their faces to memory.

The multitudes stirred, getting to their feet. Calls of "our savior" and "save us, Great One," came from all over the mass of people. The holy men looked at each other and then dropped their eyes, their hands hidden in their robes.

The Great One continued to behold his people as the moments stretched on.

Then, lowering his arms, he walked back to the stone chair and sat, facing the audience. All waited as he remained in deep meditation.

The Great One stood. A long moment passed. The sounds of bodies shifting from one foot to the other, a child's whimper quickly shushed, a collective sigh as the people waited. Then his body emitted a glow, reflecting the sunlight. The glow intensified until he blazed with sunlight engulfing him in its iridescent halo. The energy of the stars focused through this man and streamed down upon the multitudes below. The Great One was now one with this powerful energy.

For one glorious moment, all present were at peace, basking in the benediction that blazed through the Great One. Even Bel'lar, observing from high above, was affected. A sigh of relief rippled through the crowd as they seemed to forget why they were gathered.

Then the Great One strode forward and raised his hands above his head in prayer to the god. The true god he knew. Down in front of him was a device of stone, waist high, cut in the shape of a pyramid. A metallic rod with a crossbar overlaid with a circle projected from the apex of this stone.

Bel'lar heard sharp intakes of breath as the people saw this device begin to glow. The holy men fidgeted, their eyes on their leader.

Then this great religious leader grabbed the crossbar and proclaimed, "As it was in the beginning, it shall be again. And I shall be the one to initiate the new beginning."

He drove the crossbar down into the stone.

Bel'lar hung in the sky, waiting, as all present waited. Then . . . there, off in the distance, flashes of light . . . and a

thunderous roar erupted from underground. The ground shook. A huge cloud shot into the air. The sky turned dark. The great nuclear event that would circumnavigate and destroy the entire planet had begun.

“What have you done!” a voice cried out.

The Great One answered, “I have freed you from your sins.”

“What about our children? They have done nothing. Save them.”

The Great One turned away. He didn’t answer. No one answered the people’s cries.

The Great One and his holy men hurried into the darkened opening into the temple.

Bel’lar yelled, but it came out as a screech. He had forgotten he was a bird. The holy men were leaving the people to die. And he could do nothing but watch. He was gut-wrenchingly horrified, angry. Why did Ry Sing want him to see this? What could this have to do with the journey they would undertake? But most of all, he hated the feeling of recognition. He had nothing to do with this ungodly event. He couldn’t do anything this terrible.

He continued to watch, afraid of what he would see. The terror emanating from the people was palpable, cramping his insides. The people were running in all directions. Some tried to climb on the platform, but it was too late. The holy men had gone inside the temple, and the huge stones of the opening were sliding closed, sealing completely forever. The people outside were left to endure the horror of what had begun.

Bel’lar drew back as a wave of light and wind blew through his existence. He could see other explosions off in the distance. More wind and light, intensifying as it reached him. His being must be disintegrating—how could it not?—but still he watched, holding onto his energy without substance. The platform collapsed, crushing the people nearby. Then another wave of wind

and light blew through everything. The people disintegrated before his eyes. No sign of the platform remained. No sign of the people. It was as if nothing had ever been there—no holy men to have carried out this unthinkable act of religious purification.

His wings pumping, Bel'lar flew straight up into space. Then, leveling off, he looked down. From this great height, he could see the temple engulfed in fire and smoke. The planet exploded again and again. The force of one explosion cleared the clouds from around the temple for a second, and Bel'lar realized the temple was a pyramid. Then he spotted something. From underground, at the base of the temple, an object, a ship, sped out into space.

Suddenly Bel'lar was back in his body seated in front of Ry Sing, his hands clenched, his knuckles whitened, his body rigid. He couldn't stop seeing it. All those people, an entire planet, dead. My fault. But how could it be his fault?

"This chain reaction gave rebirth to the planet," Ry Sing said, "by cutting a rift that spread through the central part of the planet and spewed out its lifeblood. Ash and magma clouded the skies, and, when it finally settled, it buried the Planet of Abundance. Now it is a planet merely suspended in time.

"In the final days of the Planet of Abundance, before the religious purification, the holy men were people of vision and perception. They decided to take the seeds of their existence and transport them. At that time, they did not know of your planet, but they sensed an energy that could sustain life out there somewhere. The holy men left the Planet of Abundance on that final day and journeyed out and found the planet that you call home.

"Now, once again, as you embark on a new beginning, go out wishing that this time the human species will endeavor to understand why they were created. Do you have any questions?"

The horror of what he had just witnessed seemed burned into his eyes. They were so dry he couldn't shed any tears, but his throat was choked with emotion. He wasn't sure if he could recover from this terrible event. He squeezed his eyes tight, trying to awaken his tear ducts. He coughed. Coughed again. "Why, how . . . was this my fault? Why do I think this? And how could it be? Explain." He felt the pressure in his chest and struggled to breathe it out. He cleared his throat.

Ry Sing, still in trance, answered, "You were there, but that happened eons ago."

"How could that be?" he asked. He didn't want to accept this answer. He didn't understand. He was furious and sad and confused. He wanted to hit something but didn't. Not while Ry Sing was in trance. It would startle her.

He clenched his hands tighter. Pain radiated up his arms.

"Hold these thoughts in your heart, and they will be explained as you endeavor to seek the truth. With that, this session is ended." Ry Sing took a deep breath that ended in a sob and then released it. No longer the messenger, she leaned back in the chair. Her long, dark hair spilled over her shoulders. Tears slid silently down her cheeks, but she didn't open her eyes or attempt to brush them away.

He wanted to ask more questions, find out how it was possible that he was there, a participant in that event, but he let her rest. He'd noticed the tears on her face. He wasn't the only one reeling. She was hurting, too.

The aching in his arms caught his attention. He relaxed his hands, shaking them. The pain receded, and he felt relief.

He surveyed his surroundings, waiting for his heart to cease pounding, his equilibrium to return. White shades, gray furniture created sparse, functional space without decoration

in this apartment. Most of his belongings were already aboard the Light Traveler.

Two traveling packs leaned against the wall by the exterior door. Tomorrow was the last day here for him and Ry Sing before they joined the rest of the crew on the ship. They had stayed, savoring this last chance to be alone together before the journey.

His mind cast back in time to how this all had started. Three years had passed since his appointment by the government to captain the starship, Light Traveler. His task had been to select a crew most capable of finding the blue-white planet, and if found, secure it for possible colonization. That's how he had met Ry Sing, this young woman of the Asian race. She had been brought to his attention by an old friend of his father's. He had selected her for this mission because of her considerable skill as a sensitive and healer. Though, he had to admit, he had been attracted to this young woman with long, dark hair and delicate features. Their working relationship had evolved into an intimate, increasingly committed personal relationship. But despite their closeness, she retained an aura of mystery because there was much about her that he didn't know or understand.

He glanced back at Ry Sing. Her chest rose and fell with each breath as she slept. She appeared at peace since she had been able to release this information. His eyes lingered on her face, enjoying her features softened in sleep. Her eyelashes fluttered. She would wake soon.

He got up quietly and crossed to the window. Lifting the shade, he stood there looking out. A haze filled the sky, partially obscuring the sun.

A young man from the apartment next door walked by. Then an older woman. Unlike he and Ry Sing, both of these people had thickened, stocky bodies, evidence of the genetic changes most of the people on this planet had undergone from decades of

eating synthetic foods and breathing the contaminated air. They proudly called themselves Syns, shortened from “synthetics.”

It saddened him to see this, but he knew it wouldn't change. That it couldn't change. The people were addicted to the synthetic foods, and their physical bodies had mutated accordingly. If only they could have continued eating real foods grown organically, things might be different. This journey might not be necessary. But he knew that was impossible. Even if they could eat it, the current population exceeded the supply of organic food and had for many years.

He wondered how many Organs like himself and Ry Sing and the few they knew remained on this planet. Or had they all shifted to consuming synthetics? He hoped not. In his own heart, he knew he could never do this. Seeing what his people, the Syns, had become, it was clear to him that they had once again created their worst fears, and it reaffirmed why this journey was imperative. His resolve to succeed strengthened.

A tone signaled an incoming call. He crossed to the display. “Yes,” he said.

The display filled with the visage of an older, gray-haired man.

“Captain Bel’lar.” It was Ka’aya at the project headquarters. “We are sensing trouble in the Brotherhood of Syn. Your lives are in danger. We dare not wait for the correct rotation. Come at once.”

“I’ve been expecting this. On our way.”

He crossed the room to Ry Sing. He touched her shoulder, but she didn't respond. He grabbed her arm and tugged. She tried to shake him off. He just tugged more, pulling her to her feet. “No more sleeping. We have to hurry. The Brotherhood's coming.”

Ry Sing heard the urgency in his voice and rubbed her face hard, pushing her hair back.

Bel'lar shoved his military jacket into his pack and then pulled on an old brown jacket with a hood. He tossed his pack over his shoulder and took one last look around the room. He knew he would never return here.

Ry Sing wore a similar drab jacket and was struggling to get her pack on. He jerked it onto her shoulders and then linked his arm in hers.

They passed through the door and hurried down the stairs. They were out of sight around the building when they heard the sound of running feet pounding up the stairs to their apartment.

A voice yelled, "Open up."

Something heavy crashed through the door.

They ran.

It was only a short distance to the public rail station, and Bel'lar and Ry Sing arrived without incident. They stood across the street in the shadow of an old tree growing at the corner of a small store. Bel'lar scanned their surroundings while Ry Sing leaned against the trunk of the tree, breathing hard. No sign of pursuit yet. They had easily avoided the guards at his apartment, but he didn't relax. This just made him more cautious. He turned his attention to the station. A white octagonal building with glass walls, it afforded him a clear view of the mass of people queued up inside to board the rail cars. Tall columns held up the portico which shaded the three entries through which many more people were entering. It was nearing midday, and this mob of people would continue for another two hours. Bel'lar noted the rail car filling with passengers and close to departure.

He anticipated problems inside the station but didn't see any unusual security. Yet. Could they slip through in this mass of people? Was the team sent to capture them working alone? More likely it would be just a matter of time before the guards in this station were alerted.

He knew Ry Sing was tired from her session and the run here. He wasn't sure how hard he could push her. He touched her arm, and she straightened and nodded. Pulling her along behind him, they blended in with a large group of Syns crossing the street and joined those waiting under the portico for entrance to the station. Bel'lar searched the crowd again.

When he turned back, Ry Sing was leaning against a column, her eyes closed. Her hood had slipped down over her face, and some of her hair had escaped. Her long hair was a rarity that drew the attention of several women. Thinning hair had become the norm among the population. One young woman touched Ry Sing's hair in wonder while two others watched. Ry Sing didn't seem aware of the attention, but this could get out of control fast. Organs were a rare sight for the Syns, and Ry Sing appeared in distress. The two women offered her pills. This wasn't unusual. The Syns carried various mood enhancers with them at all times because they required frequent doses to function. As Organs, Bel'lar and Ry Sing refused synthetic foodstuff or enhancements, eating only organic foods.

Bel'lar intercepted the women, accepting the pills, nodding thanks to the two women. He put his arm around Ry Sing and tucked her hair back inside the hood. She smiled up at him, unaware of the attention she had attracted. The pills spilled out of his hand unnoticed in this crush of people.

The line began to move, and the people forgot about the Asian woman with the beautiful hair.

Moving slowly, Bel'lar and Ry Sing entered the station building. Once inside, the clog at the entries loosened, and people scattered to board the waiting rail transports. They attached themselves to a family, moving when they moved. The closest guard on the platform was lazy, his mind on something else, and he wasn't paying any attention to the people streaming

around him. Keeping the family between him and the guard, Bel'lar approached the platform, Ry Sing following at his elbow. The open door to the transport ahead would take them to their destination.

Then their path was blocked. A Brotherhood of Syn guard stood in front of Bel'lar. She looked him over, her eyes unfriendly. "Particulars," she demanded.

Bel'lar offered his right thumb and it was read by the guard's small device. Nothing. The guard shoved the device at Ry Sing. Ry Sing extended her hand, careful to keep her head down. This was it. They were going to pass. Bel'lar took hold of Ry Sing's arm.

Then the guard's device flashed *Detain for Inquiry*. Jerking his left arm up, Bel'lar slammed into the guard, knocking her to the floor. Tightening his grip on Ry Sing's arm, he dodged around the downed guard, carrying Ry Sing with him and sprinted toward the transport.

Sirens rent the air. All the Syns lay down on the floor as the doorways began sealing shut. The transport ahead was their only way out.

Erupting from everywhere, Brotherhood of Syn security guards were running toward them. The guard he had knocked down was up, blood streaming down her face from her broken nose, yelling orders to get them.

Ignoring the guards, Bel'lar and Ry Sing reached the edge of the platform and leaped into the air at the rail car. He knew the car doors were secured and the car was beginning to move. They had only seconds. They hit the car with a thud that reverberated throughout their bodies. He grabbed on to the railing at the back of the car and hung on. Ry Sing hung onto Bel'lar. He pulled her around in front of him, protecting her with his body. The car jetted away from the station with

Ry Sing and Bel'lar glued to it from the magnetic force field generated by the transport.

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