

Earth Resurrected

Cambridge, England 3pm, Sept. 25, 2111.

“Dr. Brigg’s class is super boring. ATM I’m in my den for some real fun,” Ben, a junior at Cambridge University messaged his friend Alex, an engineering student. He laid his feet on his footrest--a stack of trophies from various coding competitions. With a few keystrokes, Ben was deep into his virtual world. After checking out the blueprint of the next generation ePad through the backdoor of the mainframe at Pear Corporation, Ben suddenly had the itch to see what people at the Hexagon were up to. Since the end of the 5th World War, the armed forces led by the Hexagon of the UES (United Earth States) had consolidated their power on Earth. Ben opened the file labeled “Top Secret”: “Unexpected energy from neutrino railgun test on Sept. 15, 2111, moved Asteroid Zeta-239, with a diameter of 15 km, into an Earth-colliding orbit. All orbit correction attempts failed. Impact expected 13:00, Sept. 30, 2111, 10 km south of Maldives. Activate Plan B.” Ben couldn’t believe what he saw.

Another file named “Zeta-239” read: “Sept. 16, 2111. There is no time for further orbit correction attempts. Plan B is activated. President will address citizens at the appropriate time after logistical arrangement is in place to avoid social chaos. All Hexagon senior members and key government officials will receive troop protection and allocation of supplies.”

Ben slumped in his chair in disbelief. It felt like a video game, except there was no reset button this time. He messaged Alex, “Come ASAP.” Alex responded with a thumbs up emoji, left his class, and arrived at Ben’s dorm in no time.

“I need to show you something.” Ben opened the files he had downloaded from the Hexagon.

Alex’s jaw dropped when he read the document. “This is bigger than the one that took out the dinosaurs, and we only have five days to impact?”

“The asteroid will hit and the tsunami will be devastating, even if evacuation in the danger zones is successful. The government can’t wait much longer. If they don’t act fast, we have to spread the word.” While Ben was contemplating the ways to alert others, he shared some thoughts with Alex, “Dinosaurs were not killed by the initial impact, but by dust clouds that remained in the air for years and caused drastic climate change. If we can ‘clean up’ the dust quickly, survivors could restore Earth rather quickly to avoid mass extinction.... But, how do we do that?”

“Ben, I think you’re onto something,” Alex said. “My dad is the director at the Weather Research Center in London for UES. Some of the things they did might be useful.”

“How about the weather weapons and the hurricane diversion system they developed!” Ben jumped in. “They created those jumbo submarines with super-fusion reactors to heat up the water near the path of the hurricane to create a low pressure area to change the course of the hurricane. If we create a manmade super hurricane, we may be able to ‘wash’ the air to clean of the dusts.”

“Exactly, although this has never been done before since there’s never been a need. But it’s possible in theory. Large areas of sustained warm water create enough uplift and low pressure, the same conditions for hurricanes to form. But, we need the vacuum effect to go up 40 km to reach the stratosphere to suck up all the particles. What scale would we need? I better go talk to my dad so he can run some numbers. While I’m gone, you can do some computer modeling, monitor the Hexagon, and watch the news. If no announcement is made by tomorrow night, maybe we should send the alert out.”

Later in the evening, Ben felt asleep after spending a few hours on the computer. Alex’s call woke him up, “My dad likes our plan and convinced the Weather Research Center to act. Get packing. We need to go with my dad for a few days to get this done. I will pick you up in five.”

Ben packed his laptops and a few changes of clothes and rushed down to meet Alex. “I placed a bug in the UES central broadcast station computer to have the news out to the world at noon tomorrow. I’ll call my parents soon, too. Where are we heading? ”

“Dover”

An hour and a half later, Dover.

“I missed you Alex!” Alex’s dad gave a big hug to Alex and turned to Ben, “Is this the computer genius you talked about?”

“Yeah, but let’s get to work. Time is running out.”

“We need to calculate the kinetic energy scaling required to generate hurricanes from our existing fusion reactors. Ben, you can work with our global deployment group to calculate the number and positions of the submarines needed to create enough cleaning effects.”

They worked deep into the night

Sept. 26, 2111

Ben woke up to the news that the government had announced the incoming asteroid and the evacuation plan. “They didn’t even mention the neutrino weapon test!” Ben complained. “That is less important now. At least they approved our plan!” Alex, who had been up for a while, responded.

“The Hexagon even gave us what we need to upgrade the fusion reactors. We now need to quickly help my dad put things in action. We need three days to upgrade the reactors. We will put the twelve jumbo submarines in safe harbors and deploy them after the initial impact.”

Sept. 29, 2111

Ben stayed up all night to watch the incoming asteroid that appeared brighter each hour. The Weather Research Center was prepared for it, though. The warehouse was stocked full of food, enough for all 200 people there to survive a year.

Sept. 30, 2111: Day of Impact

Ben was talking to Alex while he was in San Francisco repairing the malfunctioning hurricane generator when suddenly; the connection fizzed out a bit. On the screen, a giant box said, ATTENTION, THE ASTEROID HAS HIT. The announcement warned everyone to stay indoors and keep calm. About three billion people were estimated to be in the path of the tsunami. People who had failed to evacuate were scrambling to find higher ground.

It took a moment for everyone in the Weather Research Center to take in what was happening. Finally, people snapped back into reality. They checked to make sure the subs were in good condition and insure that no one got hurt. "Alex! Did you see that? Are you okay?"

Oct. 3, 2111

Four days after impact, five hundred million people have perished by tsunami, debris, fire, earthquakes, and the sudden eruption of many dormant volcanoes destabilized by the impact. The air was still filled with choking smog. The sky was darkened by the dust clouds. However, recovery has been started.

"The destruction is horrendous! This is terrible!" Ben stared at the video while messaging Alex.

"It could be much worse, we still have the transatlantic fiber optic cable working," Ben responded. "The subs have moved to position and started to warm up large areas of the ocean. We'll see if they can generate hurricanes. So far, the results are promising."

Oct. 10, 2111

After just one week into the operation, the hurricanes have formed and have been making a noticeable difference. People can see the light of day, and plants now can survive and grow again. People stopped panicking, and social order was somewhat restored.

Feb. 23, 2112

Rebuilding was still ongoing, especially along the Indian Ocean Coasts. Some States, such as Maldives and Sri Lanka, have completely disappeared from the map. However, life goes on. Ben and Alex returned to Cambridge a few days before classes were to resume. Ben decided to hack into the government's files to see what was new. The file titled "Earth Resurrected" caught his attention.

"The man-made super hurricanes saved the Earth and mankind. Two college kids, Alex Kuznetsov and Ben Taylor, used unorthodox methods to help with this effort. They will be rewarded if they promise not to hack into UES computers."

Ben closed the file. He would rather keep hacking.