

CHAPTER ONE

Nature

Home Sweet Home

The torrential storms swept furiously across the American Plains. Tornadoes, raging winds, and hail tore down into the Midwest and the South, ravaging homes, inundating cities, and decimating everything that came its way. Further south, massive hurricanes in Central America and across the globe in Far East Asia arising from the hot oceans ripped through villages and towns, flooding swaths of land. Beneath the waters, explosive ruptures along fault lines in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans produced catastrophic double-digit earthquakes, triggering towering tsunamis that drowned major coastal cities. Tens of thousands of corpses washed up on the shores.

In the Northern Hemisphere, blistering heat waves in Europe and Central Asia persisted relentlessly for weeks, suffocating people inside shelters. Crops were wiped out. Infrastructure was destroyed. Life was paralyzed. Farther down, lethal heat and drought all over North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia had brought hell on earth with temperatures beyond human endurance levels. People ran out of fresh water. Power grids failed. Fuel stations ran dry. Cooling systems broke down. There was no escape anywhere. People were running around like madmen before dropping dead.

Far to the south of the equator, sustained subzero temperatures in the austral regions of the planet froze life. There was not enough heat to keep people warm. Earth's scant energy reserves were running out. The limited forests on the planet had been leveled. Alternative energy sources were absent. All over the planet, food was scarce, with the dwindling cultivable land inadequate to feed the growing population.

Looking up to the sky, the ozone layer was fast depleting. Earth's magnetic field had subsided, thinning its atmosphere and allowing deadly cosmic radiation to penetrate its surface. Life on the planet was exposed to lethal radiation from outer space. Cosmic debris pierced the dwindling atmosphere and bombarded Earth much more frequently, wiping out entire sections of the human population. People were living in perpetual fear of a fatal cosmic hit.

Everywhere one looked, destruction was rampant. Epidemics were widespread. Misery was rife. People were dying of hunger, disease, and disaster. They were looting indiscriminately for food. They were killing each other for survival. All over the planet, it was chaos over chaos. It was misery after misery. It was death before death.