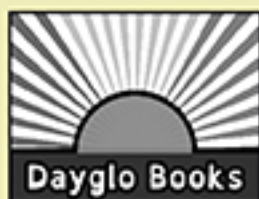


Gone Astray

Three Short Stories

Three Unanswered Questions

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Published by

Daylo Books Ltd, Nottingham, UK

www.daylobooks.co.uk

0020-15-1012-01

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Cover artwork & illustrations by
www.valentineart.co.uk

Typeset in Opendyslexic
by Abelardo Gonzales (2013)

Printed by in England
by Printondemand-worldwide, Peterborough

Distributed by Filament Publishing Ltd, Croydon

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PURPLE NIGHT

CHAPTER 1

Jojo stayed until the last seconds of the last minute. She was watching the setting suns flare in the glittering atmosphere. They cast glowing shadows across the trembling ice.

Streaks of gold, crimson and tangerine melted together with pink, pale green and deep violet.

As the last of the three suns dropped below the horizon, Jojo shook herself out of her reverie.

She had stayed longer than she had meant. Perhaps too long. She had first felt a slow, barely perceptible ripple in the ice. It had now become a strong, rhythmic shudder.

She was sure she still had plenty of time to get to the bunker. Their subterranean bolt-hole was far below the unstable surface of the planet.

Jojo hoped it was strong enough to weather the oncoming devastation. Everyone's lives depended on it.