



Explorations: Colony

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Melt – Felix R Savage

Knowledge at Any Cost – Jasper T Scott

The Unsung Heroes of Sublevel 12 – Amy DuBoff

The Failsafe – Ian Whates

Fleeing the Fire – Ralph Kern

The Colony of Imago – Scott Bartlett

Spiderfall – Scott Moon

Colony: Earth – Robert M Campbell

Howl – Scarlett R Algee

A Time and a Space – Nathan Hystad

The Light of Distant Earth – Tim C Taylor

A Change of Plans – Dennis E Taylor

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Explorations: Colony Details

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From Reader Review Explorations: Colony for online ebook

Alexander Branson says

Good collection of short stories

Really liked this collection of short stories. I felt for the characters, as though I was with them. Each story adds more to the overall theme of humans surviving the loss of Earth, something that we may one day have to face. Highly recommend for sci-fi fans.

Connie says

I have read science fiction for over fifty years and I enjoyed this book more than any I have read for a while. Each story has a similar theme, that Earth's sun has been damaged and is soon to destroy all the planets and all life as we know it. Colony ships are sent out to find and inhabit new worlds. The planets they find, the perils they face, the adventures they experience are all different and exciting. Many of them left me scratching my head and pondering possibilities. This is the first in the series I have read. I plan on finding the first three and reading them also. This is sci-fi without the current trend of vampires, zombies, graphic gore, violence, sex or lots of profanity. Very refreshing!

Rhane says

The death of the sun...what do you do?

A collection of short stories around the theme of forced emergency colonization in space. Looks at the end of the world from many different perspectives.

I liked the writing style. Mr. Taylor's handling of the mental, physical, and ethical challenges posed by a slow annihilation is masterful.

Jason says

This is a fantastic collection of short stories from some of the best Indie Authors that are out there at the moment, all based around Colonisation. Although each of the stories are actually separate, several of the stories have a common theme that Earth has had to be abandoned due to an attack by an Alien enemy known as Empyrean that has attacked and destroyed our Sun – our Sun having given its life in defence of the Solar System. Some of the descriptions of this conflict are pretty outstanding. As for the stories, each of them give their own little taste of some Colonisation experience, and there is some exceptional reading following. For those interested, I have included a mini review of each of the short stories, but at \$0.99, there are just too many good stories not to grab this – Enjoy!!

Melt – Felix R. Savage – 4/5 – This was a great start to the anthology. Savage is a brilliant Author who has written some amazing works. In this short, we find a desperate bunch of humanity trying to sort out a relay

point on Enceladus, after Earth finds itself being destroyed by an ever growing Sun. Those being chosen for the new colony ships are chosen by lottery, and that doesn't mean by family group, so families are split up. In the middle of this, the story follows one of the Engineers holding it all together on Enceladus, Gavin, who finds himself entrusted with a young parentless boy, Quinn, who is on a mission of his own. This is an interesting and clever read, much like all of Felix's books, Melt sets the standard for the Anthology.

Knowledge at any Cost – Jasper T. Scott – 4/5 – Humanity find a beautiful world to colonise, almost perfect, with no carnivores, and these lovely little creatures that they name Pommies, small, round, cuddly white-furred creatures with little stubby wings. The world was wonderfully peaceful and beautiful, until humans – and then they decide that they due to that life span and unique nature of the Pommies, they will make great candidates for eugenics experiments – and this is where the story gets really fascinating and a little terrifying. This story shows the darker side of humanity, the lengths they will go to just to get what they want.

However, these things have a way of coming back to get you. This is an extraordinary and interesting read, with a totally brilliant ending.

The Unsung Heroes of Sublevel 12 – Amy DuBoff – 4.5/5 – Amy DuBoff has written a highly entertaining story, but one with a lot of dramatic twists and turns, and some rather thrilling moments. Her 'Unsung Heroes' are in for a very rough ride in order to not just save the day, but to save the ship and all of those that are slowly being awoken after a long trip in cryo-sleep and are now looking forward to a nice party to celebrate the arrival at their new home planet. However, something has gone terribly wrong with the plumbing on board the ship. To start with, it is not too bad, it is only the immediate crew awake, but as more awaken, and they discover how bad the problem is, our Unsung Heroes are in it deep. They not only have to save the party, but now it could be the lives of everyone on board, and you will never guess the cause...

This was both funny, and thrilling, and incredibly well written – absolutely brilliant.

The Failsafe – Ian Whates – 4/5 – In the 4th of the Stories, the crew that is woken each time to check out a planet and see if it is habitable, awaken on their latest round from cryo-sleep to find that there are a bunch of other armed soldiers awake and on their bridge. It seems that when they reached a certain point without meeting the criteria, a failsafe was set off, awakening a group that would choose a planet that was close enough, and that is willing to kill to do it. Thus begins a thrilling chase and mission in which the actual crew frantically try to regain control. The funny thing is that the ships AI actually awoke the others as part of its programming, but then sides with the original crew, giving them the edge and assistance, however things are not all as they seem.

You need to stick with this story to fully understand it and get the most of out, and it's worth it.

Fleeing the Fire – Ralph Kern – 4.5/5 – This starts off as a fast paced action thriller, with Humanity fighting for their very existence. It is a captivating start to the short story and quickly draws you in. You learn that Humanity, all that is basically left, is on the run from these aliens before humanity is wiped out completely. Our only hope is to flee, and flee they do. This is one that you have to read and get to the end, because the ending is brilliant.

It is hard to say too much about this story without giving away spoilers, but the story follows a Commander who goes from being a fighter jock to helping save humanity very quickly. There are other characters that are very cleverly done and give the story a real edge. This would make a great full length story, and I have since gone hunting up Kern's other works as a result – great read.

The Colony of Imago – Scott Bartlett – 4.5/5 – Harriet Vaughn is on board a Colony ship heading to a planet that they one day hope to colonise, again, fleeing a broken Earth. Before departing though, those setting up the cryo-chambers had this wonderful idea of creating a concept in which when they would be sleeping, they would be in a kind of 'lucid' dream, able to learn and live a kind of life, similar to that of the colony they would be inhabiting. This way, they could learn valuable skills on the way to the colony rather than having to learn then on arrival, or learning them when awake and wasting valuable resources. Harriet is a part of this simulation when she learns something sinister about what is occurring in the outside world, and it is up to her to save not only those with her in cryo-sleep, but also the future of the colony that they are heading to.

Bartlett writes wonderful stories with a gifted imagination, and he has used a similar concept of his 'lucid'

dreaming process previously in his 'Powered' series (which was outstanding and well worth the read). This concept is a really fascinating idea, and something that is probably worth considering beyond the realm of Sci-Fi. As for the story – it is part mystery, part thriller, all Sci-Fi, and totally brilliant – excellent reading!

Spiderfall – Scott Moon – 5/5 – This is the story of Jax and Eva and their away team, the two are best friends, but rivals, just a year apart. They are investigating a planet for its worth as far as colonisation. This is an interesting story in that it is not just about Colonisation and again, Empyrean, but there are some strong Political streams running through this short as well. The characters are very well developed in a very short space of time.

Whilst they are trying to decide if the planet is suitable (discovering a totally creepy alien species), they discover something that causes major issues and intrigue for them on multiple fronts.

This was by far one of the most politically stimulating books of the series, and possibly the most involved for the short story that it was. It would make an exceptional series, and as with all of these types of series (as mentioned), I will hunting up Moon to check out his work as a result of this story. Don't miss this story.

Colony: Earth – Robert M. Campbell – 3.5/5 – When I first started this story, I kind of expected something a little different, but it was interesting all the same. It follows John, who was born on an Earth that has been abandoned by most of humanity due to a dying Sol, and thus, a dying Earth. During the war that killed the Sun, some aliens were stuck in system, and one of them ends up crashing to Earth, Grawrn. He and John become friends and the story follows their adventures, I don't want to give away any spoilers.

It was pretty good for a short story, a little bit easy in some parts, and in others it seemed a bit disjointed (we never found out what happens with his parents etc), but overall, it is not a bad story and worth the read.

Howl – Scarlett R. Algee – 3/5 – This is the story of an advanced Scouting Mission to a planet for a colony ship, which is trying to seek the best place on the planet to land. They land in a particular area, and find another ship from an earlier expedition that crashed after being attacked by Empyrean. The advanced crew is made up of several people, one of them has his 9yr daughter in cryosleep with him as a part of his contract, and when they find the ancient crashed ship, he wants to wake her to see it. After she is awoken, she is taken by something, and this is where everything starts to get creepy in this rather fascinating mystery thriller. The story is mainly told by the Captain of the team, and for the most part, the story is very well told and very interesting as it unravels. However, it did not end well, I was really disappointed after the rather intense storyline that played out beforehand, this should have been better.

A Time and a Space – Nathan Hystad – 4.5/5 – This is again one of those stories that you have to stick with until the end, as it does have a pretty cool ending. I really liked the ending as it kind of left it open for a multitude of different possibilities in some aspects, but gave enough so the reader wasn't disappointed.

It follows Clark Thompson, a man on who is desperate to correct a mistake in his past, but at the same time, must take responsibility for a colony that he is required to run. As a result, he leaves the colony to someone else, and follows his heart, and begins an amazing experiment that leads to a pretty amazing adventure. It also has some fairly interesting concepts of paradoxes, vortex's and other phenomena that are fascinating and well explained in the short story available. This was a lot of fun and a great read with an outstanding end!

The Light of Distant Earth – Tim C. Taylor – 3.5/5 – Initially I found this a little hard to get into, but once I start a story, I like to give it a go, and generally finish it to give it a proper chance. I'm glad I did with The Light of Distant Earth. The story is told by a Captain who is obviously in a bad way as he has to be constantly prodded by the ships AI to continue to the story and where he was up to. The story he is telling is about Earth Death and Death Day, two events brought on by something referred to as 'The Blight', a condition so powerful that it can kill planets and suns. There is no cure. But there is hope. This was an interesting story, and to fully appreciate it, you have to stick with it, it is definitely worth the read, don't give up hope!

A Change of Plans – Dennis E. Taylor – 5/5 – A colony transport ship arrives with its payload of colonists and equipment, ready to deploy the colony, only to find that the planet that they have been sent to, which was meant to be a paradise planet, has had some form of catastrophic event, turning it into an ice planet. Those that run the transport ship are not too fussed, they believe it is habitable, and therefore, the Colonists can

stay, but the Colonists have other ideas – and thus begins a very interesting story. Taylor is the author of the brilliant Bobiverse series, and this shows again just how creative and clever he is. This is a wonderful read, with an outstanding ending to the story, and is easily one of my favourites in this series.

This is a must read collection – these are some of the best short stories on Colonisation. As with all of these type of Anthologies, these are great introductions to the Authors if you haven't read them already. If you like short stories, or colonisation stories, this is definitely for you.

Poli Dee says

I received this book as an ARC in return for an honest review, not realising that my workload was about to increase exponentially. So, first off, an apology for the delay to the editor, and the authors.

An anthology is always going to be the sum of its parts, and how well they work together. As far as the latter goes, Nathan Hystad has done an outstanding job on bringing together a set of short stories which, although each is different, and has its own focus, all blend together seamlessly in theme. Even though they vary stylistically, there is an overarching 'feel' to the book. If a colony has to be a community to survive, then this one can.

It's pointless breaking down each individual story, and could not be done without spoiling it for other readers, so I won't. The anthology follows on from previous books in the series, but can be read as a standalone. I had not read any of the previous anthologies published by Woodbridge Press. Each of the stories details some part of the creation of an off-world colony--whether the planning, the journey, or the establishment--with ships setting off to different regions of space to save humanity from a dying Earth, and expanding sun.

It starts out with 'Melt', by Felix R Savage, which unapologetically tugs the heartstrings. Jasper T Scott then managed to make a character I disliked sympathetic. I never warmed to the character, but found myself absorbed in the story. So, after those first two, I found myself wanting to read more. There's a good mixture of writers, from the seasoned and revered Ian Whates, through the established Amy DuBoff, to the up-and-coming Ralph Kern, which makes for a good mix of styles.

I admit, I would have liked a bit more of a feminine presence to balance some of the testosterone, but it didn't affect my enjoyment too much. I'm converted to Nathan Hystad as an editor and anthologist, and I've found a few more authors I'd like to read more of.

As with any anthology, there were stories which I preferred over others, and a couple were not quite my cup of tea. I'd still happily give it 8/10. It's good, modern science fiction.

Julian White says

I received an ARC.

This is the first book in this series that I have read - set in a shared universe and following the previous volume ('War'). The Sun has been damaged (injured might be a better term) following the attack by another

sentient star and is well on the way to the red giant stage of its life. The Earth is doomed and a massive evacuation is underway - so far as it is practicable to send colony ships to selected destinations. The twelve stories here deal with a number of those colonisation attempts.

Not all twelve actually deal with leaving the solar system - one is set on Earth after the evacuation and in addition to humans has a crashed alien (member of a slave race to the attacking star) and a human AI, working together to survive on a rapidly changing planet. The first story is set on the moon Enceladus (one of the main embarkation points for the colony ships) and is a heart-warming story about terraforming that moon as the Sun expands.

Several stories deal with major problems the colonists encounter; two involve wormhole use (the first in this series of collections is subtitled 'Through the Wormhole') and timetravel. At least one is genuinely funny in a way that few SF writers manage - but all are well written and thought-provoking.

There are references to the events leading up to the need to evacuate Earth (and to the previous volume but it's not necessary to have read that book). There is a lightness of editorial touch that might so easily have become heavy-handed. This book is thoroughly recommended - and I am moving the previous books up my 'to read' list.

PJ Lea says

It is rare to find a collection of which you could rate every single story as a five star, this is one. I was engrossed in every one and it has compelled me to purchase the previous books so that I can read those too. The fact that I haven't read the others didn't affect my enjoyment of these stories and I didn't feel there was anything missing as they stood well on their own.

I voluntarily read and reviewed this book, my opinions are my own

Jonathan G. Meyer says

Great Stories!

Old fashioned space survival with believable characters. The science was not too far-fetched and seemed possible in the distant future. Very entertaining.

Christinaraven says

Another good scifi anthology to read. Lately authors have been putting out good anthologies and this one was a good one. I found all the stories to be very interesting. I liked that all the stories had the same underlying theme that connected them all yet there were all completely different. Some made me think and some made me laugh and giggle. Some were from the beginning of everyone leaving Earth while others were about when the colony ships found planets to live on. A few were just fun to read and then the last sentence

or paragraph would have a twist. I thought they all gave a glimpse of the good and bad of humanity and how the good prevails. I honestly liked all the stories. They were great to read at lunch time when I did not have a lot of time to read a full novel. I thought they all were well written and very addicting once I started reading. I just had to see how each one would end. Not a dud in the bunch.

Robert Hum says

Very engrossing!

Each contribution is as fresh as a spring day. A fun read! I haven't read the first three books but, no matter, that can start now.

Alfredo Perez says

Excellent read... well worth it.

When I picked up this book I was looking for some quick short stories to pass time. What I found is a very well prepared selection of stories that developed a single idea into a world of possibilities. Couldn't put it down! Happily recommend it!

Paul says

I bought this book because of the Taylor story, "A Change of Plans". I really wish I'd just skipped to the end, it's the last story in the collection, and just read that and left the rest. It's been a slog to get through, and then "A Change of Plans" is so short and then it's over.

However, "The Unsung Heroes of Sublevel 12" by Amy Duboff is a notable exception, rising, appropriately, above the surrounding mire.
