

Preface

Dear reader,

Thank you so much for choosing my debut book, *Devi's Game*, for your reading pleasure.

Today, there are more than Two Hundred Million Dalit people live in our world. For thousands of years Dalits have been suffering discrimination based on their caste.

Still by many these human beings are considered as low caste, not clean enough to be touched and deemed to only qualify for the dirtiest job in the world; experiencing violence, such as verbal and physical assaults, murders, and rapes, is a part of their daily lives.

Devi's Game, the first book in this sci-fi trilogy: *Kepler-186f*, is a story of one of them, a poor orphaned girl named Geeta, who refused to accept these societal norms and determined to create a fair world.

Our planet is currently bruised and battered, but within, it still holds enough powers to heal itself,

given no further damage is done to it. I pray that the day never comes when we must leave Earth behind in search of an exoplanet for the sake of the survival of our race: Humans.

I hope you enjoy reading this space odyssey and help to build a better and just world, right here, on our beloved Earth, for all of us who call this planet our home.

Thank you,

Alan Hamid

The author

Prologue

He scooped her into his arms, rain cascading like tears down his face as he dashed towards the awaiting spacecraft. Geeta's body was a canvas of wounds - her legs bore deep gashes below the knees; one arm hung limp as if shattered.

In her fleeting moments of consciousness, Geeta's thoughts were a singular echo: **Talib**.

The name reverberated through the chaos, a lifeline in the storm of agony that enveloped her.

As soon as he entered the spacecraft, the door closed behind them, and within a blink of an eye. The spaceship left Planet Earth, taking Geeta light years away from it.

Growing up in the orphanage of the temple, surrounded by the majestic peaks and fairy-tale like valleys of Himalayan Mountains, somewhere between Nepal and Tibet, this Dalit - a low-caste considered not clean enough to be touched - orphan girl had always dreamed that one day a Rajkumar, a prince charming, would come, and take her away, beyond this village and its segregated system and caste-based ways of life.

But not even her worst nightmares, Geeta had ever imagined that a son of God, Talib, would descend on earth and would fall in love with her, and she had to leave earth, half-dead, without

him!

Amidst the tumult of pain and uncertainty, Geeta's resolve crystallized. A fire kindled within her, an unshakable determination to return to earth, to reclaim her love, and to shatter the shackles of societal bias.

This Dalit girl, who was once not even allowed to enter the temple where Gods were worshiped, was going to prove to the universe that she was worthy of not only loving a son of a God, but also becoming a Goddess herself: A Devi.

The journey had just begun.

Chapter 1

Era: 2500 A.D.

Looking out a gigantic glass window of the spacecraft observatory, **Captain Talib** was stood tall with his back towards the doorway, unaware of the fact that **Geeta** was silently watching him, as he was recording his daily log,

"The mistakes, hunger for power, and greed of our ancestors have rendered our beloved home, Planet Earth, unlivable, ..."

He took a moment trying not to sound emotional as he looked out where the vast space is alive with celestial displays in front of him, as vibrant nebulae and distant galaxies danced across the viewports.

"... forcing us, only Seven Hundred and Eighty-Six kids to be precise from Nineveh, to leave the earth for the sake of survival of our race."

"It has been over 200 years since we left it."

Our mission is to reach KEPLER-186F, an exoplanet, within the next 300 years and make it our New Home."

A shooting star, or perhaps a missile was heading in the direction of the spacecraft called S.H.I.P.: Stellar Horizon

Interplanetary Pathfinder.

The defense system of S.H.I.P. intercepted the missile in mid space and destroyed it before reaching S.H.I.P. The incident rattled the spacecraft.

Geeta covered her mouth with her hand that appeared to be bionic. Tears rolled out of her eyes, but she stood there without making a sound, looking at Talib, with love and pride beaming out of her eyes.

Captain Talib, regained his balance and continue recording,

"In case we don't make it, this log will stand as a as a testament to that We, the Humans, once existed, and have had roamed among stars, the moons, and the skies."

" My name is Talib, I am the captain of the S.H.I.P., and this is our story."

Geeta closed her eyes, allowing a few tears to escape. She then wheeled herself in the direction of S.H.I.P.'s R&D department. She reserved the use of her mechanical legs for combat situations, concealing them beneath a simple white saree to make them less conspicuous.

As she traversed the corridor, the crew members she passed showed their respect by bowing to her. In return, Geeta graciously acknowledged their gestures with a combination of

her bionic arm and human arm, forming the traditional Namaste greeting—a common and reverent way to welcome and show appreciation in India.

The Commander-in-Chief of the S.H.I.P., Geeta Devi, known affectionately as "Devi" to her crew and as the mother of Captain Talib, whom she fondly referred to as "TJ", for Talib Junior, made her way purposefully towards the Research and Development Department. Pausing before the sealed entrance, she gazed upon an inscribed Quranic quote that adorned the doors:

" If You Have Powers, Go Beyond the Bounds of the Heavens and the Earth, and Seek the Hidden Secrets! - ***Al-Qur'an 55:33*** "

She cherished the quote dearly, to the extent that she had it prominently displayed at the entrance of the R&D department.

As she approached, a precise laser beam extended from the doors, scanning her retina for authentication before gracefully sliding open. Stepping through, the doors sealed shut behind her.

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