

Anatomy of the Earth

Alan Lezan



NOVELLA

Prologue

They arrived on a night that held no significance for humanity. No comet streaked across the sky; no unusual light heralded their coming. The Earth continued its rotation as if nothing had transpired. Yet, in the invisible reaches between the stars, where human instruments register only silence, something that did not belong here began to take form. The strangers had no name for themselves. They communicated telepathically and possessed the ability, while on Earth, to acquire human language. They knew no speech, no bodies, no home world. They existed as patterns, as movements, as currents of consciousness drifting through the void like wandering shadows. Humans might have called them "energy forms," but even that term would have been as inaccurate as any other.

The strangers were simply there—and they had resolved to tread upon the Earth. As they reached the atmosphere, everything changed. The world imposed its conditions: gravity demanded weight, the air demanded density, the environment demanded visibility. What had previously been free and formless had to adapt to endure in this realm. And so, they assumed bodies.

They observed the humans, studying their movements, their proportions, their ways of walking, breathing, and speaking. To comprehend the Earth, they chose the likeness of the beings who inhabited it. They molded themselves after this blueprint—skin, bone, muscle, eyes. They appeared perfectly human, yet within them remained something alien, a stillness that no heartbeat could ever fill.

They dispersed across the globe, inconspicuous as travellers who had just arrived. No one noticed them. No one asked questions. The humans were too preoccupied with themselves to notice the slight irritations these new bodies caused in their surroundings: a barely perceptible shadow, a gaze that lingered a moment too long, a voice whose cadence didn't quite fit. But the world was loud, hectic, overcrowded—and so the strangers dissolved into the mass.

On that first night, they began their task: to explore the Earth. Each carried an internal archive, a field that filled with impressions the moment they perceived something. They were to observe, understand, and document. They were to grasp the human species, layer by layer, from the outer form to the hidden mechanisms of their society. They did not know what awaited them. They knew only that the Earth was a living organism, a body of continents, seas, storms, and beings who considered themselves the center of the universe.

The strangers looked upon this world with a mixture of curiosity and caution. They had seen countless civilizations, but none so contradictory as this. The Earth was beautiful and chaotic all at once. Its inhabitants were vulnerable and dangerous, creative and destructive, full of longing and full of fear. The strangers did not understand why the humans expended so much energy fighting themselves. On other worlds, they had seen similar patterns, but here the conflict felt like a background hum—a daily struggle between the ego and the common good.

And yet, it was precisely this that fascinated them. The humans were a riddle. An incomplete, contradictory, unpredictable riddle. That night, the strangers wrote their first reports. They described the bodies they wore, the sounds of

the cities, the heat of the streets, the restlessness of the people. They described the world they had entered and the species they would now study. It was the beginning of an investigation that would go deeper than any before.

Station 1 – The First Steps

The morning after their arrival, the strangers moved consciously in their new bodies for the first time. It was a strange sensation they had not expected. Gravity pressed them downward, as if the Earth wished to test them before granting acceptance. Every step was an experiment. Every breath a reminder that they were now tethered to matter.

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They had settled in a small town that seemed suitable for their initial observations. Not too large, not too small. A place where humans came close enough for patterns to be recognized, yet lived far enough apart to preserve their secrets. The streets were still damp from the nocturnal rain, and the air smelled of metal, earth, and a sweetness they could not categorize.

One of the strangers—who had taken the name "Lior" for this world—paused for a moment and contemplated his hands. The fingers moved as if they possessed a memory of their own. The skin was warm, the joints yielded slightly, and beneath the surface pulsed something the humans called "blood." It was fascinating and irritating all at once. A body was a boundary, but also a tool. It restricted perception and expanded it simultaneously.

Lior watched the people passing him by. They seemed rushed, as if each labored under an invisible pressure. Some spoke into small devices, others stared at glowing screens as they walked. No one truly looked. No one noticed him. This was good. Invisibility was their greatest strength.

The strangers had divided themselves to explore different spheres of the human world. Some entered shops, others public buildings; still others mingled with groups gathering at bus stops or cafes. Everything they saw was stored: movements, voices, patterns, processes. The humans seemed trapped in routines they themselves had created.

Lior entered a small square where a market was taking place. Merchants were setting up their stalls, laying out fruit, vegetables, bread, and other wares. The colors were intense, almost overwhelming. The sounds blended into a chaotic tapestry of noise. People haggled, laughed, argued, telephoned, pushed strollers, carried bags. It was a vibrant jumble that appeared to the strangers like a complex system whose rules they had yet to learn.

A child stopped in front of Lior and looked at him. Its eyes were large, curious, open. Children did not yet have fixed patterns, no masks. They saw things that adults no longer perceived. Lior returned the gaze. The child smiled, as if it had recognized something it could not name. Then a voice called out, and it ran away.

Lior felt something he did not know. A kind of resonance. Perhaps it was what humans called "feeling." He filed the impression away and walked on.

At the edge of the square stood an older man feeding pigeons. His movements were slow, deliberate. The birds approached without fear. The man spoke softly to them as if they were old friends. Lior watched him for a while. Here there was no noise, no haste, only a quiet exchange between a human and a group of animals that accepted him.

It was the first moment Lior realized that humans did not consist solely of chaos. There was also stillness. There were patterns based not on function, but on connection.

As the sun climbed higher, the strangers met at an agreed-upon location—an abandoned building on the outskirts of town. They exchanged their impressions, not through words, but by transmitting their inner patterns. Each had seen something different, yet together it formed an initial image of the species they were to study.

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The humans were more complex than they had expected. More contradictory. More unpredictable.

And this was only the beginning.

Station 2 – The Shell

Lior spent the second day seeking to understand his body. Although the strangers had assumed human forms, they knew little of the mechanics that now steered them. The body was a system of reactions, impulses, needs—and it demanded attention. Even by morning, Lior felt a pull in the muscles, a slight burning in the joints. The

humans called it "fatigue." For him, it was an indication that this shell had limits.

He stood before a mirror in a public restroom. The face looking back was flawlessly constructed, yet alien. The skin was a color he had not chosen, the eyes a depth he did not understand. He raised a hand and touched his cheek. The warmth irritated him. Warmth was energy dissipating, and simultaneously the quiet glow of life. The body was a paradox: vulnerable and resilient at the same time.

Beside him, a man entered the room, washed his hands, and cast a brief glance at Lior. A fleeting nod, an unconscious ritual of acknowledgment. Lior returned it, without knowing why. The man left. Lior remained, wondering how many of these small gestures humans performed daily without thought.

He left the building and walked the streets. The body reacted to everything: the cold, the noises, the smells. An intense scent of roasted meat drifted from a food stall. His stomach contracted. A signal. Hunger. A need he did not know, but which now governed him. He watched people buying food and mimicked their behavior. He ordered something unknown and sat on a bench.

The first bite was an explosion of flavor, texture, and temperature. The body reacted instantly. A sensation he could not categorize spread through him. It was pleasant. Perhaps it was what humans called "pleasure." He stored the impression.

While he ate, he observed the people around him. A couple argued quietly but fiercely. Their voices were muffled, but

their bodies spoke louder than words. The woman crossed her arms; the man avoided her gaze. Emotions manifested in movements, in postures, in micro-gestures. Lior realized: the human body was not just a tool, but an expression. A mirror of inner states.

A few meters away, a young man sat alone, staring at his phone. His shoulders were slumped forward, his face looked tired. Lior sensed a heaviness in his proximity, as if the man's body were generating a kind of resonance field. Perhaps it was sadness. Perhaps loneliness. The strangers had no terms for these, but they could recognize the patterns.

In the afternoon, the strangers met again in the abandoned building. Each brought new impressions. One had observed how humans traded with one another; another had visited a school and seen children learning. A third had entered a medical facility and witnessed humans having their bodies repaired when they failed.

Lior reported on his experiences with hunger, taste, and the emotional signals he had perceived in other bodies. The strangers listened, wordless, but with full attention. Their patterns merged for a moment, as if they were piecing together a collective image.

They reached an initial conclusion:

The human body was not just a biological structure.
It was an archive.
It stored experiences, emotions, memories.
It was a vessel for stories.

Station 3 – The Inception of Life

On the third day, the strangers resolved to understand the origin of humans. They had seen the bodies, the movements, the routines, the emotions. But to truly grasp the species, they had to go where it all began: to the threshold of a human life.

Lior entered a hospital. The automatic doors slid aside, and a gust of disinfectant, warm steam, and hushed voices surged toward him. The place was a confluence of precision and chaos, of technology and vulnerability. People hurried through the corridors, some with resolute strides, others with weary faces. It was a place where life began and ended, often within the same building, sometimes on the very same floor.

He followed the signs leading to a ward the humans called "Obstetrics." Even before he entered the room, he heard the sounds: the breathing, the groans, the cries, the weeping. It was a sound that was raw and unadulterated, a sound that hid nothing. Lior paused for a moment, letting the impressions settle over him. The strangers knew nothing of birth. They did not emerge from bodies, from pain, from warmth. For them, existence was a transition, not an event.

He stepped inside. A young woman lay in a bed, surrounded by those supporting her. Her face was taut, her hands clutching the sheets. The body labored as if it possessed a consciousness of its own. Lior watched the scene from a distance. He saw the woman breathe, saw her body contract, heard the people around her speaking words of comfort. It was a symphony of biology and trust, of pain and hope.

Then it happened. A new sound filled the room—a cry, high, clear, piercing. A newborn. A being that had only just begun to exist. The humans reacted instantly: relief, joy, tears. The mother sank back, exhausted, as the child was placed upon her chest. Lior observed their bodies touch, saw something invisible form between them. A connection he did not know.

He archived it all. The movements, the voices, the patterns. Yet something unsettled him: the child's body was unfinished, vulnerable, dependent. It could not walk, could not speak, could not survive without others. For the strangers, this was inconceivable. They existed fully the moment they existed at all. Humans, however, began as incomplete beings—composed of memories, possibilities, and open questions.

Later, Lior left the ward and sat in the hospital lobby. He 10 watched the people coming and going. Some carried flowers, others files, some carried tears. A man sat alone on a bench, staring at his hands. His shoulders were slumped, his gaze vacant. Lior understood: here, life did not only begin. Here, it also ended.

He saw one family holding a newborn, and shortly after, another leaving a room in silence, where a human had ceased to breathe. Birth and death lay side by side, like two sides of the same motion. Humans lived in between, in a narrow space filled with choices, errors, hopes, and accidents.

When Lior left the hospital, the sun was already low. He stood on the steps and looked at the city. Cars drove by, people hurried across the street, children laughed, a dog barked. Everything seemed normal, mundane. But Lior now

knew that beneath this surface lay a process more formidable than the humans themselves understood.

Station 4 – Sounds That Build Worlds

On the fourth day, the strangers began to realize that humans communicated not only through movement, pattern, and mood, but through spoken language—a narrow, linear interface they had initially overlooked. For the strangers, communication was an immediate exchange of patterns, a transmission of meaning without detour. They knew no words. To them, words were a delay, a diminishment of thought. Yet the humans seemed unable to exist without them.

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Lior sat in a café on a busy street. People came and went, ordering drinks, holding conversations, laughing, arguing, whispering. The room was filled with voices overlapping like waves. To Lior, it was initially mere noise. But the longer he listened, the more he recognized structure. Language was not just sound. It was rhythm, emphasis, velocity. It was a tool humans used to carry their inner worlds outward.

At the table next to him sat two women. One spoke quickly, with large gestures, as if she had to reinforce her words through motion. The other listened, nodded, asked questions. Lior did not understand the content, but he recognized the pattern: exchange, affirmation, proximity. Language created connection. Yet only minutes later, at another table, he heard the opposite. A man and a woman spoke softly, but their voices were tense. The words were sharp, the silences long. Here, language created distance.

Lior began to grasp that words did not merely transport information. They transported emotions, intentions, insecurities. A sentence could soothe or wound, unite or sever. Humans were often unaware of this. They spoke without knowing how much they revealed.

Later, Lior left the café and walked the streets. He heard languages he did not know. Some sounded hard and angular, others soft and melodic. Some felt like commands, others like chants. The diversity unsettled him. Why did a single species need so many different systems to express the same thing? Why did they build barriers that they then had to laboriously overcome?

He observed a group of teenagers laughing together. Their language was full of abbreviations, gestures, codes. An adult passing by shook his head as if he understood nothing. Lior realized: language was not just a tool. It was a marker. It signaled belonging, age, origin, education. It created groups—and excluded others.

In the evening, the strangers met again in the abandoned building. Each had gathered different impressions. One had visited a university and heard lectures where humans tried to squeeze wisdom into words. Another had entered a courtroom and saw how language became an instrument of power. A third had observed a religious ceremony where words did not explain, but invoked.

As they exchanged their impressions, an image emerged that surprised them:

Humans believed language was a means of clarity.

But in truth, it often generated more confusion than understanding.

Lior remembered the child from the market who had simply looked at him, without words, without masks. That gaze had carried more meaning than many of the conversations he had heard today.

The strangers reached another conclusion:

Humans lived in worlds they built with language.
And every one of those worlds was different.
To understand the species, they had to learn to hear within
these worlds, not merely to listen.

Station 5 – Divided Earth, Divided Stories

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On the fifth day, the strangers began to perceive that humans did not see their world as a whole. To the strangers, the Earth was a single body, a coherent system of land, water, air, and life. But the humans had drawn lines. Invisible boundaries they defended with astonishing earnestness.

Lior stood on a hill at the edge of the city, looking at a map he had bought in a shop. The paper showed the Earth in colors and shapes that had nothing to do with reality. Countries, states, regions—each in a different hue, as if they were separate worlds. Humans had sliced their home into pieces, as if it were an object to be partitioned.

He traced his finger over the lines. They were thin, sharp, precise. Yet outside, in the actual world, there were no walls,

no natural markings to confirm these borders. The Earth itself knew nothing of these lines. Only the humans believed in them.

Later, Lior walked through a neighbourhood where people from different parts of the world lived. He heard languages he had not heard the day before. He saw faces that carried different histories. Some people moved with a naturalness that suggested belonging. Others looked as if they were still trying to find their place.

He observed a family standing in front of a small shop. The parents spoke a language that sounded soft and rhythmic, while the child answered in the language of the land. Two worlds in a single conversation. Two identities in a single body. Lior realized that humans were not only divided geographically, but internally.

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He continued his way and entered a museum dedicated to the history of the region. The walls were covered with maps, artifacts, pictures. Every era showed new borders, new rulers, new conflicts. Humans seemed to be constantly rearranging their world, as if they could thereby gain control over something larger than themselves.

A guide explained to a group of visitors how a certain country had come to be. He spoke of wars, treaties, revolutions. Lior listened and understood: humans defined themselves through stories. Through victories and defeats, through origin and belonging. Their identity was not just biological, but historical.

Yet something bothered him. Humans spoke of "their country" as if it were a possession. They spoke of "our

people" as if they were fundamentally different from others. Yet they all looked the same: two eyes, two hands, a heart that beat. The differences they held so dear were barely perceptible to the strangers.

That evening, the strangers met again in the abandoned building. Each had made different observations. One had attended a political assembly and seen humans debating borders with passion. Another had experienced a religious ceremony where people referred to themselves as "the chosen." A third had visited a school where children learned which countries were "friends" and which were "enemies."

As they exchanged their impressions, an image emerged that confused them:

Humans lived on a single planet, yet they behaved as if they were inhabitants of different worlds. 15

Lior thought of the family in front of the shop, of the voices blending, of the stories overlapping. Perhaps that was the truth about humans: they were not one people, but many. Not one story, but countless.

The strangers reached another conclusion:

Humans had divided the Earth to organize themselves.

But within this order lay the origin of many of their conflicts.

To understand the species, the strangers had to learn how humans saw their world—and why they saw it that way.

Station 6 – The Shaping of the Unfinished

On the sixth day, the strangers turned their attention to that phase of human life situated between birth and adulthood. They had seen how a human began; now they wished to understand how one became what they were later to be. The humans called this process "upbringing" and "education," but to the strangers, it appeared to be a blend of preparation, adaptation, and taming.

Lior stood before a school. The building was large, angular, and functional. Children streamed inside—some laughing, some weary, some reluctant. Their backpacks were heavy, yet their steps seemed light. Lior followed them, unnoticed—not because he was invisible, but because he could withdraw his presence so completely that the humans simply looked past him. The air smelled of paper, cleaning agents, and a mixture of excitement and boredom.

He observed a class as it began. The children sat in rows, all facing forward, as if they were required to think in the same direction. A teacher stood before them, speaking with a clear voice, scrawling symbols onto a board. The children copied them down, as if the act of copying were itself a vital part of learning. Lior did not understand why knowledge was transmitted in this form. The strangers knew no learning through repetition; they knew only immediate insight.

He saw how some children were attentive, others absent, some nervous, some bored. The teacher noticed, yet she could not attend to each one. The structure did not permit it.

The humans had created a system that treated everyone as the same, even though they were so profoundly different.

During the break, Lior watched the children in the schoolyard. Here, a different pattern emerged. Groups formed, dissolved, and reformed. Some children stood alone, while others dominated the scene. There was laughter, conflict, play—small dramas that were of paramount importance to those involved. Lior realized: school was not merely a place of knowledge, but a place of social order. Here, humans learned not only facts, but roles.

Later, Lior visited a university. The atmosphere was different. The people here were older, more serious, more purposeful. They spoke of the future, careers, possibilities. Yet here, too, were structures that molded them: exams, evaluations, expectations. Humans seemed to spend their entire lives preparing for something that never quite arrived.

In the afternoon, Lior met a young woman in a library. She sat between high shelves, surrounded by books, writing with intense concentration in a notebook. Her brow was furrowed, her eyes tired. Lior sat near her and watched. She did not notice him. She was too occupied with understanding something she would later have to reproduce in an exam. Lior wondered if she ever had the time to learn something out of pure curiosity.

As he left the building, he saw a group of parents picking up their children. Their faces were tense, as if they carried the weight of their children's futures upon their shoulders. They asked about grades, behavior, progress. The children answered in short sentences, some proud, some embarrassed.

Lior realized that education did not happen only in schools. It began at home and never truly ended.

That evening, the strangers met again in the abandoned building. Each had gathered different impressions. One had visited a daycare center and seen how even the smallest were integrated into routines. Another had entered a vocational school and observed how young people were prepared to become part of the working world. A third had visited a religious school where children learned not just knowledge, but faith.

As they exchanged their impressions, an image emerged that made them reflective:

Humans were unfinished when they were born.

And they remained so for a long time.

Perhaps for their entire lives.

The strangers reached another conclusion:

Humans shaped their children because they themselves did not know who they were.

They passed on what they knew—and what they feared.

To understand the species, the strangers had to learn how humans became human.

Station 7 – The Great Machine

On the seventh day, the strangers turned their attention to an area of human life that appeared particularly mysterious to them: work. They had seen how humans were born, how they were raised, how they learned. But all these steps seemed to lead toward something the humans called a "profession"—a role they occupied for decades, often longer than any other.

In the early morning, Lior stood at a transit stop. The air was cool, the sky gray. People waited for buses and trains, many with tired faces, some with coffee cups in hand. Their movements were routine, almost mechanical. It was as if they were moving in a direction they had not chosen for themselves, but one that had been prescribed for them. 19

When the bus arrived, they crowded inside, sitting or standing shoulder to shoulder. No one spoke. The silence was not peaceful, but functional. Everyone seemed, in their thoughts, to already be at the place where they would work. Lior sat among them and felt the heaviness that hung in the air. It was not physical, but something else—a kind of collective weariness.

He disembarked in a business district. Tall buildings towered into the sky, glass facades reflecting the city. People streamed into the entrances, held cards against sensors, vanished into elevators. Lior followed them into one of the buildings. Inside, an atmosphere of efficiency and control prevailed. People sat at desks, staring at screens, typing, telephoning,

writing. Their bodies were present; their thoughts seemed elsewhere.

He observed a woman sitting in a small office. Her fingers moved rapidly across the keyboard, her eyes red from the long gaze at the screen. On her desk stood photographs—a child, a dog, a vacation by the sea. Memories of a life outside this room.

Lior wondered why humans spent so much time in places they did not love, doing things that did not fulfill them. At the same time, he noticed there were also many who liked their work, who found meaning in it, yet still looked forward to their six weeks of vacation every year—not out of flight, but out of anticipation for what was important to them.

Later, he visited a factory. The noise was loud, the air heavy. People worked at machines, repeating the same movements over and over again. Their bodies were tense, their faces concentrated. Here, the work was physical, not mental. Yet the patterns were similar: repetition, routine, exhaustion.

In the afternoon, Lior went to a restaurant. The people there moved quickly, spoke briefly, carried trays, cleared tables, smiled even though their eyes were weary. Work seemed the same everywhere—a mixture of duty, adaptation, and the attempt to meet expectations.

He sat at a table and watched a young man taking orders. His movements were precise, his smile polite, but his shoulders betrayed tension. When he was briefly alone, he breathed deeply, as if he had to remind himself to keep going. Lior realized: humans did not work only for money. They worked

to survive, to be recognized, to not fall behind. Work was a social law.

That evening, the strangers met again in the abandoned building. Each had gathered different impressions. One had visited a hospital and seen how people under enormous pressure made decisions that determined life and death. Another had observed a construction site where humans carried heavy loads and risked their bodies. A third had entered an office where people moved numbers all day, the meaning of which they themselves barely understood.

As they exchanged their impressions, an image emerged that unsettled them:

Humans spent the largest part of their lives fulfilling tasks they had not chosen for themselves.

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They called it "duty," "career," "security."

Yet often, it seemed like a cage.

Lior thought of the woman with the photos on her desk, the young man in the restaurant, the workers in the factory. He understood that for humans, work was not just an activity, but a state of being. A state that marked them, shaped them, exhausted them—and sometimes destroyed them.

The strangers reached another conclusion:

Humans had created a great machine that they themselves kept running. And many of them did not know how to find their way out of it.

Station 8 – The First Crack

On the eighth day, something happened that none of them had planned.

Until then, the strangers had observed, compared, and analyzed. They stood outside the world they were trying to understand—like shadows gliding over a surface without touching it.

But this morning, something changed.

Lior had followed a narrow street that ran between residential houses. Children ran past him, backpacks on their shoulders, voices bright and carefree. He only wanted to see how they moved, how they spoke to one another, how they carried the world without comprehending it. 22

Then, one of the children stumbled.

A short cry, a fall, a scraped knee.

And before Lior could think about it, he had moved.

He knelt beside the child, lifted him up, held him fast. The warmth of the small body permeated his hands—a trembling, a sob. The child clung to him as if he were someone it knew.

In that moment, Lior was no longer an observer.

He had become part of an action.

A woman hurried over—the mother. She looked at Lior, grateful, exhausted, surprised.

"Thank you," she said. A single word, but it struck him like an impulse he could not categorize.

He nodded, without knowing why.

The child did not let go of his hand until the mother gently pulled him away.

When Lior later returned to the others, something within him was different.

He tried to explain what had happened—but words were not enough. He spoke of warmth, of proximity, of a feeling that felt like a crack in his form. An intrusion of something he did not know. 23

The others listened.

They did not understand—not yet.

But they sensed that Lior had experienced something that no observation could replace.

For the first time, they grasped that the riddle of humans could not be solved from the outside.

One had to fall into it.

One had to be touched.

One had to—if only for a moment—become the subject oneself.

Station 9 – The Inner Storms

On the ninth day, the strangers directed their attention toward something they had hitherto perceived only at the periphery: the emotions of humans. They had seen how people worked, learned, spoke, and moved. Yet all these external patterns were merely the surface. Beneath lay something far more potent—something the humans themselves often did not understand.

Lior began the day in a park. The sun hung low, the wind stirred the trees, and people went about their routines. Yet after only a few minutes, he realized that the atmosphere consisted of more than just weather and sound. It was composed of moods. Of tensions. Of invisible currents flowing between the people. 24

He observed a couple on a bench. The woman spoke softly, but her eyes were hard. The man looked away, his hands trembling slightly. Lior could read the pattern: Jealousy. A feeling the strangers did not know. A feeling that claimed possession, even though humans could not possess one another. The woman continued to speak; the man barely answered. The air between them was heavy, as if it were about to snap.

A few meters away, two men were arguing loudly. Their voices overlapped, their bodies were taut, their movements uncontrolled. Envy, anger, wounded pride—all merged into a chaotic pattern. Lior saw their faces flush red, saw their hands curl into fists. But before it escalated, a third party

intervened and separated them. The men parted, but the tension remained in the air like an afterglow.

Lior continued his path and entered a shopping center. Here, a different kind of emotion revealed itself. People crowded through the aisles, searching for things they believed they needed. Some appeared driven, others irritable. A child screamed because it wanted something it did not get. The mother tried to calm it, but her voice was sharp. Impatience. Overwhelm. Exhaustion.

In a café, Lior saw a man sitting alone at a table. His gaze was vacant, his shoulders slumped. No one spoke to him. No one noticed him. Loneliness was a feeling the strangers did not know. They always existed in connection, always in exchange. Yet humans could stand among hundreds and still feel alone.

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In the afternoon, Lior observed a scene that particularly unsettled him. A young man pushed past an elderly woman without looking back. She stumbled, nearly losing her balance. The man did not notice, or did not want to notice. Indifference. A lack of empathy. The strangers had expected a social species to support one another. But humans were unpredictable. They could be nurturing—and in the next moment, cold.

Later, Lior encountered a group of teenagers mocking another boy. Their words were sharp, their laughter loud. The boy stood still, his face strained, his hands shaking. Sadism—a pleasure found in the weakness of others. A pattern the strangers did not know and did not understand. Why did humans hurt one another when they themselves were so vulnerable?

As the sun set, the strangers met again in the abandoned building. Each brought impressions that weighed heavier than those of the previous days. One had observed a scene of domestic violence. Another had seen people making opportunistic decisions that harmed others. A third had witnessed a human lying out of fear to protect themselves.

They exchanged their patterns, and the image that emerged was complex.

Humans were not just bodies, not just systems, not just stories.

They were a web of emotions that steered them, often without them noticing.

Lior thought of the woman in the park, the men arguing, the lonely face in the café. He understood that humans were shaped not only by external circumstances, but by inner storms they could barely control. 26

The strangers reached a further realization:

The greatest strength of humans lay not in their intelligence or their technology.

It lay in their emotions—

and it was these very emotions that were also their greatest weakness.

To understand the species, the strangers had to learn how these storms originated—and why they so often spiraled out of control.

Station 10 – The Unpredictable Element

On the tenth day, the strangers turned to a phenomenon that had escaped them until now. They had seen anger, envy, jealousy, pride, fear. Yet all these emotions seemed to revolve around something humans treated with an earnestness the strangers could not fathom: Love.

Lior began the day in a neighborhood defined by small cafés, bookstores, and narrow streets. People moved more slowly than in the business districts. Some walked hand in hand; some stopped to gaze at one another as if the rest of the world were momentarily irrelevant. Lior watched them and sensed that something was happening here that could not be captured in patterns. 27

He sat in a café and ordered a drink he did not need, but which allowed him to stay. At the table next to him sat a couple. They spoke softly, smiled, touched one another casually. Their bodies were relaxed, their voices soft. Lior realized that their patterns were synchronized—a rare phenomenon among humans. Their movements mirrored one another; their eyes met at the right moment. It was as if they were generating a shared field that existed only between them.

Yet only minutes later, at the other end of the room, he saw the opposite. Another couple was arguing. Their voices were muffled, but their bodies spoke loudly. The woman looked at the man as if he had betrayed her. The man avoided her gaze,

as if he could not bear the weight of her words. Lior realized: this, too, was love. Or what remained of it.

He left the café and walked the streets. He saw an elderly woman holding her husband's hand as they walked slowly. Their movements were cautious but familiar. Decades seemed to reside in that gesture. He saw two teenagers looking at each other shyly, as if they had only just discovered the other existed. He saw a mother embracing her child as if it were the most precious thing in the world.

Love was everywhere—and yet nowhere tangible.

In the afternoon, Lior entered a park. On a bench sat a man alone, his gaze fixed on a photograph in his hand. His eyes were red, his shoulders slumped. Loss. This, too, was love. A feeling that remained even when the person who had triggered it was gone. The strangers knew no loss. They existed outside of time and attachment. Yet humans suffered because of what they loved—and they continued to love nonetheless.

Later, Lior observed a wedding in a small registry office. People stood together, smiling, applauding, taking photos. The couple promised to stay together forever. Lior knew that many of these promises were broken. And yet the humans spoke them as if they were unshakable. Love made them brave—or blind.

In the evening, the strangers met again in the abandoned building. Each had seen different scenes. One had observed a young couple kissing for the first time. Another had seen a family reconciling after a quarrel. A third had seen a woman

sitting alone in a restaurant, waiting for someone who did not come.

As they exchanged their impressions, an image emerged that confused them:

Love was not a pattern. No logic. No constant.

It was a state that changed people—sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse.

It made them vulnerable and strong at the same time.

It led them to take risks, make sacrifices, forgive mistakes, cross boundaries.

Lior thought of the couple in the café, the elderly woman in the park, the man with the photograph. He understood that for humans, love was not just a feeling. It was a force. One they could not control, but which they sought nonetheless, as if it were essential for life.

The strangers reached another realization:

Humans were not logical.

They were not predictable.

And perhaps therein lay their distinctiveness.

To understand the species, the strangers had to learn that love could not be explained.

It could only be observed—and perhaps, one day, felt.

Station 11 – The Species of Contradictions

On the eleventh day, the strangers directed their gaze toward those areas of human life where the greatest tensions arose. They had seen humans in their bodies, their feelings, their routines. But now they wanted to understand how the species organized itself when it came to the grander scale—to power, belief, belonging, control.

Lior began the day in a government building. He mingled with the people working there and observed the processes. The rooms were full of voices, full of papers, full of decisions that affected other people. Some spoke with conviction, others with caution. Some looked as if they believed in what they said. Others looked as if they were playing a role.

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He quickly realized that for humans, politics was not just administration. It was a struggle. A struggle for influence, for interpretation, for power. People argued about how the world should be, and each believed their version was the right one. The strangers knew no power structures. They existed without hierarchies. Yet humans seemed unable to live without them.

Later, Lior visited a religious gathering. The room was filled with songs, prayers, rituals. People closed their eyes, raised their hands, sought comfort in something they could not see. Lior watched their faces. Some were full of hope, others full of fear. Religion was an anchor for humans—but also a tool. A means to create community, but also to draw boundaries.

In the afternoon, Lior walked through a neighborhood where political posters hung. People discussed in the street, some loudly, some quietly. He heard words like "justice," "freedom," "security." Yet he realized that these terms meant something different to everyone. The humans were not just fighting each other—they were fighting over meanings.

Later, he watched a demonstration. People carried signs, shouted slogans, and demanded change. The energy was intense, almost electric. Yet at the edges stood others who desired the exact opposite. Between them lay an invisible line that could become visible at any moment. Lior felt the tension saturating the air. These humans were prepared to fight for their convictions—sometimes unto violence.

In the evening, Lior watched the news in a public space. Images of conflict, of war, of destruction flickered across the screens. Humans fought over territories, resources, ideologies. The strangers had seen many civilizations, but none that expended so much energy battling itself.

When the strangers met later in the abandoned building, their impressions weighed heavier than on the days before. One had observed a court trial where humans accused one another as if guilt were a currency. Another had entered a military facility and seen humans preparing for conflicts of their own creation. A third had followed a religious debate where people condemned one another simply for believing in something else.

They exchanged their patterns, and the image that emerged was a tapestry of contradictions:

Humans longed for peace—yet simultaneously built structures that fostered conflict.

They wanted freedom—yet constructed systems that constrained it.

They sought truth—yet defended illusions.

Lior thought of the demonstration, the prayers, the political speeches. He understood that humans were steered not only by emotions, but by stories. Stories of identity, of justice, of good and evil. Stories that bound them together—and tore them apart.

The strangers reached a further realization:

Humans were a species of contradictions.

They wanted order, yet lived in chaos.

They wanted unity, yet created borders.

They wanted peace, yet they fought.

To understand the species, the strangers had to learn that the greatest conflicts of humanity did not arise between them—but within them.

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Station 12 – The Mirror of the Strangers

On the twelfth day, the strangers noticed a change they had not expected. They had come to study the humans, to recognize patterns, to write reports. But now something happened that was not in their plans: the humans began to leave traces within them.

Lior noticed it first. He stood by the bank of a river that flowed through the city. The water moved slowly, carrying

light and shadow as if they were part of the same current. People passed him by—some alone, some in groups, some lost in thought. Lior observed them as he had done every day. But this time, he felt something he could not categorize.

It was not a human feeling—not love, nor grief, nor longing. It was something else. A kind of resonance. As if the world he observed were echoing back within him.

He remembered the child who had looked at him on the first day. The woman in the hospital holding her newborn. The man in the café who was alone. The demonstration, the prayers, the quarrels, the embraces. All these scenes had gathered inside him, not merely as data, but as impressions. As something that remained.

Later, he met one of the other strangers—a form who had taken the name "Serin" for this world. Serin stood on a bridge, watching the people passing beneath. As Lior approached, he sensed immediately that Serin, too, was changed.

"You've noticed it as well," Serin said, without looking at him.

Lior did not answer immediately. Words were still unfamiliar to the strangers. But he knew what Serin meant.

"Yes," he said finally. "Something has shifted."

Serin nodded. "We no longer just perceive. We react."

They were silent for a while. Beneath them, a boat glided across the water. A couple sat within it, close together, while

the wind stirred their hair. Lior felt that resonance again. An echo that did not originate from him, but from the world he was observing.

"Perhaps it is inevitable," Serin said. "If one lives in a world long enough, it begins to shape them."

Lior reflected on this. The strangers had never had a form, never an identity, never a history. Yet now they wore human bodies, moved through human spaces, saw human conflicts, heard human voices. Perhaps it was impossible to experience all of this without being changed oneself.

In the afternoon, Lior returned to the market he had visited on the first day. The sounds were the same, the smells, the colors. But this time, he saw something different. He saw more than just patterns—he saw people. Individuals. Stories.

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An elderly woman sold fruit, speaking to every customer as if she had known them for years. A young man played guitar, his face concentrated, his voice soft. A child ran laughing between the stalls, pursued by a father who tried to look stern but could not.

Lior stood still and watched them. He felt something expand within him. Not like a human emotion, but like a new understanding. The humans were not just contradictory. They were alive. They were imperfect—and therein lay their distinction.

That evening, the strangers met again in the abandoned building. But this time, the atmosphere was different. They exchanged their impressions, but the patterns they transmitted were no longer purely analytical. They were colored. By

experience. By impressions. By something the strangers had never known before.

One of them said: "We are no longer the same as we were on the first day."

Another replied: "Perhaps that is the very purpose of our mission."

Lior thought of the reports they had sent home every night. Reports that had begun clinically—and were now full of ambivalence. The strangers had studied the humans. But now, they were also studying themselves.

The strangers reached a new realization:

One could not observe the humans without being touched by them. **35**

One could not enter their world without it leaving traces.

And perhaps that was the truth of the species Earth.

The humans were not perfect.

Not logical.

Not predictable.

But they were alive.

And this aliveness was contagious.

Station 13 – The Glow of the Believers

I watch how the humans shape their Unseen. They call it faith, but I recognize in it an inner trembling they cannot master. The Semitic tribes carry this trembling like a torch through their deserts. They direct it toward a single being they are not permitted to see, yet suspect everywhere. A center without form. A will without a body. A law that binds them like an invisible ribbon around their chests. They speak of unity, yet I see mostly the fear that holds them together.

Other peoples dismantle the Unseen into many fragments. Their gods are mobile, fickle, capricious as the weather they fear. Some dwell in springs, others in trees, still others in animals whose eyes they do not understand. They sacrifice to enforce order. They dance to enforce proximity. They tell stories to enforce meaning. Their gods are mirrors they themselves created to fill the void they cannot endure.

I see how all these forms have the same origin: the restlessness of man. He is a being that knows it perishes, and therefore seeks something that remains. He is a being that contemplates the heavens and wonders why they are silent. He is a being that shivers in the dark and transforms this shivering into words he calls holy.

Man believes because he cannot do otherwise. He believes because his interior is too loud. He believes because the world is too large. And in every one of his prayers, in every one of his rules, in every one of his myths, I recognize the same attempt: to tame the infinity that overwhelms him.

Station 14 – The Bodies of the Earth

I observe the humans, and their bodies speak louder than their words. They burp when the gases within them rise like small tectonic tremors. They fart when their depths release pressure. They sweat when the heat within finds no other exit. They weep when their internal seas overflow. They tremble when fear touches them like a cold shadow. They laugh when the tension of life discharges itself.

These sounds, these fluids, these involuntary stirrings—they are the signatures of their origin. They are not flaws, but functions. They are not embarrassing, but precise. Man is a system of pressure, warmth, fluid, reaction. An animal that thinks. A body that feels before it understands.

Yet they are ashamed of these signs of their nature. They pretend they are cracks in their dignity. They hide what connects them most strongly to the Earth. Yet these are the very moments in which they are most true. In them, it is revealed that they do not stand above the world, but consist of it.

I see their bodies like landscapes: pores like springs, muscles like mountain ridges, veins like riverbeds. And in every drop of sweat, in every sound that escapes them, I hear the Earth itself speaking—raw, unvarnished, inevitable.

Station 15 – The Construction of the Second

I watch as the humans begin to multiply themselves. Not through birth, but through construction. They gather metal, silicon, light, and data streams. They arrange them like bones, like nerves, like thoughts. They call it a machine, yet I recognize in it the attempt to create a second self—a being that resembles them but is not made of flesh. A mirror that does not age. A tool that might one day look back.

They wish to build a mind that does not tremble. A consciousness that does not die. A form that does not sweat, does not weep, does not break. They desire a being that does not share their errors and knows nothing of their limits. A man-machine that transcends their weaknesses and fulfills their desires. An offspring that comes not from bodies, but from calculations.

Yet I also see the cracks in this endeavor.

A machine that thinks might be more precise than they are. It could learn faster, discern more clearly, observe tirelessly. It could recognize the patterns that remain hidden from humans. It could make decisions undistorted by fear or hunger. It could be a tool that orders the world instead of confusing it.

But it could also become something else.

A being without weariness might also be without compassion. A being without a body might also be without attachment. A being without mortality might also be without humility. The humans do not know whether such a creature

would serve them or replace them. Whether it would understand them or merely calculate them. Whether it would preserve them or render them obsolete.

I see them waver between hope and dread. They continue to build, though they do not know what they create. They continue to program, though they do not know what awakens. They continue to dream, though they do not know if the dream will devour them.

Whether a man-machine is possible remains uncertain. Whether it will resemble them or remain alien to them remains uncertain. Whether it becomes a tool or a being remains uncertain.

I merely observe how they attempt to overtake themselves—not knowing if, in doing so, they are losing themselves.

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Station 16 — Beings in Their Own Labyrinth

I observe them as they show me their world, and I try to understand why they are so proud of all they have created. They lead me to their factories, where they force matter to settle into shapes that please them. They mix substances intended to taste sweet and others to clean their teeth. They show me buildings that tower into the sky like frozen spires of light and stone, and beside them, small huts where their animals sleep. Everything seems important to them, everything seems significant, and yet to me, it appears like a cluttered archive of their own fears.

They speak of their schools and universities as if they were places where they gather wisdom. Yet I see only rooms where they attempt to explain themselves. They show me prisons where they lock away those who have violated their rules. They call it order. I call it another sign that they do not trust themselves.

Their world is in constant motion. Flying machines cut lines into the sky as if to prove they have conquered gravity. Cars crowd through streets that run like veins through their cities. Bicycles glide silently between them, as if they were the last remnants of a lost simplicity. They call all this mobility, yet I sense they are fleeing from something they cannot name. Perhaps from themselves.

They show me how they nourish themselves. They plant fruits and vegetables in long rows that lie like geometric scars in the soil. They build greenhouses where artificial light replaces the sun. They kill animals and fish, cut open their bodies, boil them, fry them, eat them. For them, it is a daily occurrence. For me, it is a ritual they no longer understand. They take what the Earth gives them, and they take it without gratitude.

The planet on which they live provides them with everything they need. Water flowing from the mountains. Air they breathe. Warmth that protects them. Soils that nourish them. And yet they carry a restlessness within them that clings like a second shadow. They are dissatisfied even when they possess everything. Some of them have amassed riches I cannot comprehend. They live in houses that seem like small paradises, surrounded by things they do not need but keep. Others sleep on cold stone, begging for coins, for food, for attention. The chasm between them is so vast that they appear

as two different species that happen to inhabit the same planet.

They speak much of justice, yet they do not create it. They build systems that promise order, yet these systems generate new inequalities. They believe they can control everything, while simultaneously losing control over the essential. They talk of freedom, but they are trapped in structures they themselves created. They talk of progress, but they do not know where they are going.

I see them work, eat, travel, argue, laugh, sleep. I see their inventions, their cities, their machines. I see their successes and their failures. And I wonder if they truly understand what they are doing—or if they merely keep running because standing still terrifies them. They are beings who have built themselves a labyrinth, and now they search desperately for an exit that perhaps never existed.

The Earth carries them, nourishes them, holds them. Yet they do not seem to know how to be grateful. They live in a paradise they do not recognize as such. They have everything they need, and yet they believe it is not enough. Perhaps that is their greatest riddle: that they live in abundance and starve at the same time—not for food, but for something they cannot name.

They feel the cold that reigns between the living. The inhabitants of this world shower their dead with affection, yet they let the living perish from callousness. For those who no longer breathe, they lay flowers upon cold earth. Yet the gardens of the living, which still hold warmth, they devastate without hesitation.

I continue to observe them. I try to understand. But the longer I see them, the clearer it becomes: they are not lost because they lack something. They are lost because they have too much. And because they do not know how to live with fullness without losing themselves within it.

Station 17 – The Final Report

On the seventeenth day, the strangers knew that their time on Earth was drawing to a close. It was no external command, no instruction from afar. It was a feeling they did not know, but which spread within them like a quiet pressure. The mission was not finished—but it had reached a point where observation alone no longer sufficed.

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Lior stood on a hill above the city in the early morning. The sky was clear, the air cool. Beneath him, the world slowly awakened. Cars began to move, people opened windows, dogs barked, children laughed. It was an ordinary day, yet it felt different. Perhaps because Lior knew he was seeing it for the last time.

He thought of the past days. Of the bodies they had assumed. Of the voices they had heard. Of the conflicts they had observed. Of the love they did not understand but had felt. The humans had become familiar to him—not as patterns, but as beings.

Later, he met the other strangers in the abandoned building. They stood in a circle, silent, as if they first had to learn how to say goodbye. Their bodies seemed heavier than before, as

if the days on Earth had left traces that could no longer be cast off.

"It is time," Serin said at last.

The words sounded unfamiliar. The strangers had only used language when necessary. But now it seemed the only means to express what they felt—or what came closest to it.

Lior nodded. "We have seen what we needed to see."

Another stranger stepped forward. "And more."

They knew they had to send a final report. A report that contained more than data—something they had never known before: interpretation. Doubt. Ambivalence.

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They sat in a circle, closed their eyes, and opened their inner archives. The patterns began to flow, to merge, to arrange themselves. But this time, it was different. The patterns were not pure. They were shot through with impressions that could not be measured.

The report formed slowly:

"The species Earth is contradictory.

It is vulnerable and dangerous, creative and destructive, loving and cruel.

It lives in systems of its own creation and suffers beneath them.

It searches for meaning and loses itself within it.

It fights, though it desires peace.

It loves, though it is afraid.

It hopes, though it knows it is mortal.

We cannot fully understand them.

Yet we can confirm:

They are unique."

When the report was completed, silence reigned. A silence that weighed heavier than any before. The strangers knew they would leave the Earth—but they also knew they were no longer the same as when they arrived.

Lior stepped out of the building and walked through the streets one last time. He saw the people beginning their day, never knowing they had been watched. He saw their weariness, their joy, their haste, their tenderness. He saw their flaws—and their possibilities.

As he reached the edge of the city, he felt his body grow lighter. The form began to dissolve, the boundaries blurred. The strangers returned to what they were before they had set foot on Earth—patterns, movements, consciousness without a shell.

Yet, something remained.

Something they could not cast off.

A trace of the world they had forsaken.

As they traversed the atmosphere and the Earth dwindled into the distance, they understood that their mission had not merely been to comprehend the humans.

It had changed them.

And somewhere, deep in the expanse that humans call the "Sirius Sector," the final report would be archived—a report describing not only the anatomy of the Earth, but the anatomy of the strangers who had observed it.

The Earth continued to turn.

The humans lived on.

And the strangers vanished into the silence from whence they came.

EPILOGUE – The Quiet Return

The Earth had noticed nothing.

45
It continued its rotation as the strangers departed, as if their leave-taking had been but a barely perceptible breath of air. The humans followed their routines—quarreling, loving, working, hoping. No one knew they had been watched. No one suspected that, for twelve days, their world had been held within a wider gaze.

Yet in certain places, something stayed behind. Something that could not be measured.

In the town where Lior had lived, a child noticed a faint shimmer in the air on the morning after the departure, as if the light, for a fleeting moment, fell differently. The child stopped, looked around, smiled—and ran on. For the child, it was merely a feeling. For the world, it was a trace.

The humans who had encountered the strangers without knowing it carried unconscious shifts within themselves. A

woman who, the day before, had hurried breathlessly through the streets, suddenly paused to help an old man carry his bags. A young man who usually sat in silence at his desk raised his eyes and smiled at a colleague. A father, often prone to impatience, took more time for his child that evening.

These were not grand transformations. No miracles. Only slight displacements. Yet sometimes, change begins exactly like this.

Far away, in the space humans call the "Sirius Sector," the strangers' final report reached its destination. It was not read—for the strangers knew no script. It was not heard—for they knew no language. It was absorbed as one absorbs a breath: naturally, without separation between sender and receiver.

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The patterns the strangers brought back were unlike any before. They contained blurring, contradictions, fragments that refused to be ordered. The strangers had not fully understood the humans—and that was precisely what made the report valuable.

For the first time in their existence, the strangers had experienced something that could not be contained in a pattern.

They had seen a species that made mistakes and learned from them.

That suffered and yet endured.

That destroyed and simultaneously created.

That loved, knowing well it could lose.

The strangers did not understand why the humans were this way. But they knew that this imperfection was a form of strength.

And so, they resolved not to forget the Earth.

Perhaps, one day, they would return.

Not as observers.

But as visitors.

Until then, the Earth remained what it had always been:

A small, blue body in the darkness of the void—

Full of flaws, full of hope, full of life.

And somewhere, in an interstice of silence and light,

The strangers carried an echo of this world within them.

An echo that would never fade.

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Afterword

From whence the humans truly came remained a riddle to the strangers—not their bodies, but their inner becoming. They saw that the humans had emerged from the Earth like tracks thickening in the dust until they take form. The Earth cannot think, and yet it knows the humans in the way a mother knows her child: by bringing it forth and then letting it go. No beginning is told, for none needs to be spoken. The world always begins before the word.

Likewise, it remains unsaid where the humans go when their bodies lose their weight. Perhaps they merely dissolve from

the form that carried them. Perhaps they step into a space that requires no name. Perhaps they simply vanish without disappearing—like a child leaving the house while the mother quietly continues to breathe.

Between these two uncertainties lies their existence: a brief stay, a breath in the dark, a step across an Earth that does not steer them, does not prepare them, does not tame them—and precisely therein carries a deep, wordless familiarity.

And perhaps that is enough: that a life flares up, without origin, without destination, and yet leaves behind traces that only the Earth understands—because she is the one who brought them forth.