

# Entity

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## **A. Nation**

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## Prologue

In the twenty-fifth century, mining on Mars can be a profitable venture. Every aspect, from tunnel boring to analyzing minerals for the next claim, would make or break an investor. One careless move could cause someone their life.

Tom Williams, a company geologist assigned to Mars, tied the nylon rope to a rock overlooking the canyon of Valles Marineris. He clipped the end of the rope to the belt on his spacesuit. Tom tapped his radio.

"Can you hear me?" he called into the transmitter in his helmet.

From the shuttle, his partner Devon saw him wave.

"Yes, I hear you."

"I'm going down," Tom said. He turned on his headlamp before rappelling over the cliff and down the side of the canyon wall.

Halfway down to a lower ledge, his headlamp flickered. He tapped the light and it remained on. A shadow brushed by him as he continued to descend. When his vision blurred, he waved his gloved hand in front of his visor but saw nothing. Every time he eased a meter down the rope, a thick haze curled up and pushed against him. He swatted at the unknown force.

"Get away from me!" he shouted.

Several shadowy forms bumped him.

His partner in the shuttle called through his receiver, "Tom, what's going on?"

"No!" came the response as he flailed his arms.

The knot tied to the rock above unraveled by unseen forces until Tom fell. He hit the next ledge flat on his back. Reddish dust sprayed upward around him as a shadow passed over his body.

Devon, suited up, left the shuttle, and ran to the edge of the canyon. He brushed away the fine dust from Tom's face shield. After he took one look at Tom's open blank eyes, he ran back to the aircraft. Devon hoped in his heart that his friend was still alive but his logic told him no. As fast as he could scramble into the shuttle and slam the hatch closed, he called his supervisor in the Lasswitz Crater. Once inside the shuttle, he removed his helmet and sat at the console. The reception was poor this far from the company mine. After two unsuccessful tries, he made contact.

"You have to come fast. He could still be alive!" He yelled into the mike. "I don't know, he fell. Hurry."

Later, Matt Mathews and two other men arrived. Leaving one man with Devon above, they rappelled down the cliff until they arrived at Tom's body. After they determined Tom was dead, they strapped belts to the dangling ropes and gave the signal to hoist the body up. Matt followed to the surface. Later, he would write up the incident as another casualty on Mars.

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At the same time on Earth in the Stenlan-Hill's home, Andrea's son, Jeremy, turned on the kitchen faucet. She heard the front door slam and a lot of screaming from her daughter, Felicia.

"Mom! Dad! Where are you?" their oldest yelled.

"In the kitchen, dear. What is the matter?" Andrea asked.

"Mom, I have a scholarship," the girl shouted. She waved a sheet of paper above her head.

"That's wonderful dear, but you don't need that for two more years when you graduate," her mother advised. She handed Jeremy a plate of hot rolls for the table.

On Earth in the twenty-fifth century, school enrollments were spaced out. Many students graduated two years early to reduce the standard enrollment in the overcrowded schools.

"No, you don't understand," Felicia wailed, "this is special. I intern in hydroponics—"

James, Andrea's husband, entered the kitchen. "That's a great course at the tech school. When do you start?" he asked, grabbing a roll from the tray.

"No, listen to me." Felicia crossed her arms over her chest and stomped her feet. She frowned and glared at her parents. Her shoulder-length light brown hair dangled straight over her cheeks.

Andrea, noticing her daughter's behavior, stopped what she was doing. "Okay, what is it?"

"I intern on Mars!" Felicia exclaimed.

Andrea looked at her husband and again at her daughter.

"Oh, no, I don't think so, dear. The trip is too costly, dangerous, and I will add you're much too young to go."

"Mother, ever since Aunt Alice told me about the program, I have been studying really hard. I put in my application and today, my instructor told me I won. The scholarship pays for all travel expenses, my one-month stay, and funds for my chaperon."

Everyone looked at each other and again at Felicia.

"One month? But that means you'll be gone over a year, including the travel to get to Mars and back. And who do you have in mind for a chaperon?" Andrea asked, taking her potholder gloves off.

"Well, let's see there's my instructors, Mrs. Topper or Mr. Robinson, or maybe you can be my chaperone," her daughter suggested.

"Looks like you have your work cut out for you, Andrea," James said, patting his wife on her shoulders. "You don't even like flying much less taking off into space."

"But, no, I mean...James!" she stuttered as he left the kitchen. "We should think about this."

"Mom? I may not get another chance. The board needs an answer from me tonight. Pleeze."

"Tonight?" she echoed. Torn between the imploring look from her sixteen-year-old daughter and her fear of flying, she offered options. "I know Mrs. Robinson, and she won't pass the physical. As for Mr. Topper, he's caring for his mother."

"Mom. Please come with me," Felicia asked. "It will be fun with just the two of us."

"I have to arrange things. I'll have to call my sister, Mary to watch Jeremy during the day. Then I'll have to check to see if my vaccinations are up to date. Why didn't you tell me this weeks ago?"

"I didn't know they were picking me until a few days ago. They just told me for sure today. Mrs. Crosby said, she'll arrange your health exam and shots.

Andrea relented. "I guess if I pass."

"Oh, Thank you, Mom." Felicia threw her arms around Andrea's neck and hugged her. "Now we can pack."

"Wait a minute, when do we leave and what is our itinerary?" Andrea asked.

"Day after tomorrow—Wednesday. The scholarship committee has scheduled a cab to pick us up. It will take us to the airport where we'll meet the other students who also won. I received the tickets today along with an introductory letter. This letter," she said, waving the paper in her hand. "We take the shuttle plane to Denver, meet my supervisor, Mrs. Crosby, and board the ship to Mars from there."

"Why can't this Crosby woman be your chaperone?" Andrea asked. "James, say something."

"I know both of you will be fine," he said. "My mother can relieve Mary."

"This is why she can't be my guardian," Felicia said, handing the paper to her mother. "It says I have to choose someone else other than Mrs. Crosby, since she may not always be available outside of my classes.

"Why can't you go, James?"

"I'd go, but this family needs my income. This chance doesn't come along every day, Hon," James said.

Oh, isn't this exciting, Mom?" Felicia exclaimed, bouncing on her heels.

"Wow, I'm just so thrilled to death," Andrea sighed with apprehension in her soul.

## About the Author

A. Nation travels the west with her husband. I write about futuristic adventure stories that could happen. Whether from prejudice, political crime, retribution, or enslavement, the sagas shall continue.



For more new releases and excerpts, please see [My Blog](#).

To participate in National Writing month go to [nanowrimo.org](http://nanowrimo.org)

You can purchase my ebooks through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, iTunes, and others through [My Webpage](#)

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Shirley, Kam, Jean.

Watch for my ebooks on

[Amazon](#)

For more insights on how this story progressed, see my blog at: [My Blog](#).

If you would like to receive my monthly newsletter on my book progress, Click on [Newsletter Signup](#). I ask for your information only once. There is no spam.

## Books by A. Nation

### Domino/Blackhawk Sagas 2422-2432 A.D.:

- Novella - [A Cat on Mars](#) - Includes all cat adventures
- Prequel - [Cat in Space](#)
- Saga One - [Similar But Not the Same](#)
- Saga Two - [Deflection A Race Against Time](#)  
[Best Friends](#) – An Outtake
- Saga Three - [CrossRoads A Moment of Decision](#)
- Saga Four - [Found - The Lost Ones](#)
- Saga Five - [Return - There's No Easy Way](#)
- Saga Six - [Desert Shock - Secrets Never Stay Hidden](#)
- Saga Seven - [Fatal Error – Death by Innocence](#)
- Saga Eight - [The Takers – In the Dark of Night](#)  
[High Flyer](#) – a companion book

### Quest Series 2445 A.D.

- Quest 1 - [Eye of the Matrix – The Stone Map](#)
- Quest 2 – [Eye of the Throne – The Medallion's Secret](#)

### Urban Series –Present Time:

- Prequel - [Hobnobby's Story](#)
- Urban Fantasy 1 - [Where Did They Go?](#)
- Urban Fantasy 2 - [The Pottery Sale - What Lies Beneath](#)
- Urban Fantasy 3 - [The Cruise – Lost At Sea](#)
- Urban Fantasy 4 - [A Witch Comes a Haunting](#)
- Urban Fantasy 5 - [The Magic Within](#)

### Travel Series – Present Time:

- Travel 1 - [Mystery Along the Danube](#)
- Travel 2 - [Mystery Along the Italian Coast](#)

### Non-Fiction:

- [The Night the Bridge Collapsed.](#)
- [Using Word to Format Your Book](#)

## **Character List**

Charlie Dane

Penda

Lonnie Sleeveman

Malcom Wentworth

Adrian Egroeg

Matt Mathews

Olivia Crane

Alice Carone

Mike Carone

Nathan Carone

Felicia Hill