THE STORY OF ELI
HOW HUMANKIND LEARNED TO LIVE IN HARMONY
WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

A GRAPHIC NOVEL BY THE ILLUSTRATED CLIMATE PROJECT,
WITH ARTWORK BY CARYS BOUGHTON
IT’S A CRAZY WORLD WHERE I, A CHILD, HAVE TO TEACH THE ADULTS.

YEAR 3070. HUMAN KIND IS SCATTERED IN NOMAD COLONIES ACROSS THE GALAXY.

THEY HAD TO LEAVE EARTH 1000 YEARS AGO AS THE PLANET COULD NO LONGER SATISFY SUCH A...

... FAST GROWING AND GREEDY SPECIES.

WHILE MOST PEOPLE HAVE FORGOTTEN OUR PAST, I REMEMBER.
I DON’T KNOW HOW, BUT I DO.

THIS IS MY STORY:

THE STORY OF HOW HUMAN KIND LEARNED TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH THE ENVIRONMENT.
GROWING UP IN A COLONY, LIFE IS DIFFERENT.

OUR COLONY CONSISTS OF ABOUT 250 PEOPLE, LIVING IN THIS SPACECRAFT BUILT FOR A FEW THOUSAND PEOPLE BACK IN 2070 WHEN HUMANS LEFT EARTH.

MY NAME IS ELI. I AM 15 YEARS OLD AND ONE OF THE VERY FEW CHILDREN AROUND HERE. THIS IS SAM, MY BEST FRIEND.

CHILDREN ARE SUCH A RARE SIGHT BECAUSE LONGTERM EXPOSURE TO CONDITIONS IN SPACE HAS CAUSED FERTILITY PROBLEMS.

THIS IS ME AT SIX WEEKS.

SAM IS CONVINCED THAT I AM SPECIAL BECAUSE MY EYES - ONE BLUE AND ONE GREEN - RESEMBLE THE PICTURES OF EARTH IN OUR E-LEARNING PROGRAMMES...

I HAVE NEVER BELIEVED THAT I AM SPECIAL...
... until I had this most incredible dream.

Have you ever heard the birds singing in the trees...?

... the bees buzzing?

Have you ever felt the sun tickling your skin?

It must be amazing.
ELI! WHAT'S UP? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

SORRY SAM! CAN'T STOP! I'VE GOT TO SPEAK TO THE COUNCIL!

OKAY! GOOD LUCK WITH WHATEVER IT IS!

WHOOPS!

AH!

THANK YOU! THIS COULD BE BIG!
THIS IS THE ELDER COUNCIL. THEY HOLD ABSOLUTE POWER OVER OUR COLONY. ALL WE HAVE EVER KNOWN IS THEIR VISION AND COMMAND.

BUT NOW EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED...

...I HAVE TO TELL THEM WHAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED.

ARISE, CHILD, AND EXPLAIN THE PURPOSE OF THIS INTERRUPTION.

HONOURABLE ELDERS, PLEASE HEAR MY PLEDGE: I KNOW OUR COLONY IS STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE...

...SO I AM HERE TODAY WITH AN IDEA FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

LET'S RETURN HOME - TO EARTH!
FRIVOLOUS!

HOW DARE YOU?!

YOUNGLING ELI, EXPLAIN YOURSELF IMMEDIATELY!

ELDER GRIM

ELDER AVARICE

ELDER HOAX

COUNCIL, I KNOW THIS SOUNDS STRANGE...

... BUT I DREAMT OF EARTH. ACTUALLY, IT WASN'T A DREAM...

... IT WAS A MOST REALISTIC VISION!

NOT THE EARTH I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT - SOMETHING WAS DIFFERENT, NEW, FRESH. I STROLLED THROUGH THE GRASS AND FELT A COOL BREEZE. I PADDLED IN A RIVER. IT WAS EXTRAORDINARY.

PEOPLE LEFT EARTH BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT THE ENVIRONMENT WAS BEYOND RECOVERY. BUT IT HAS RECOVERED AND IS HOME AGAIN TO ALL SORTS OF LIFE.

IT COULD BE OUR HOME AGAIN TOO! PLEASE LET US RETURN TO OUR PLANET!

DO YOU REALLY THINK WE WOULD RISK THE LIVES OF EVERYONE ON THIS SHIP JUST BECAUSE YOU HAD A DREAM?!

CHILD, YOU ARE WASTING OUR TIME. RETURN TO YOUR DUTIES.
Hee Hee Hee Ha Ha!

Elder Reverie

Reverie, what's so funny?

Please excuse my behaviour, but the coincidence is quite amusing.

weren't you just saying that we have absolutely no idea how to keep the colony alive?

Next second, young Eli comes in with an idea and you dismiss it instantly! I have to ask, what do we have to lose?

If anything went wrong, there would be plenty of time to get help from another colony...

... we could be the first ones to discover that Earth is ready for human inhabitation again...

... or we could signal for help now and give our power over to another colony...

Or, finally, we could carry on as we are, adrift alone, just waiting for our inevitable oblivion...

Elders, make your choice. The future of the colony is in our hands.
I do like the sound of being heroes... definitely better than waiting for oblivion, anyway.

Just think of the riches we will discover!

All those in favour of returning to Earth, say "aye"!

Aye!

Fools.

Fine! We'll see who's right in the end.

Thank you, council! I promise you won't regret this!

And so we took course to Earth, with high hopes and very different plans in mind, as we soon discovered...
ELI! WAKE UP!

HUH? FIVE MORE MINUTES...

WE'RE HERE!

THERE IT IS! EARTH AT LAST...

IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL! AND IT LOOKS LIKE YOU WERE RIGHT, ELI, THE ENVIRONMENT SEEMS TO HAVE RECOVERED!

SMACK!
There is no call for such excitement. We don't know what awaits us down there yet. We might still die!

We must plan for a thorough extrication of resources...!

After weeks of orbiting Earth, sending down robots for endless testing of air, water and soil samples, the elders finally allowed us to land.

And so the first humans in one thousand years set foot again on their native planet...
UPON LANDING, THE ELDERS ASSIGNED EACH OF US A TASK. MINE WAS TO MAP THE SURROUNDING AREA - A PERFECT CHANCE TO EXPLORE!

I SET UP THE NAVIGATION DEVICE BUILT INTO MY SUIT (THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAD USED IT)...

...I CHECKED MY KNIFE WAS SECURED IN PLACE (I THOUGHT I MIGHT NEED IT TO CLEAR MY PATH)...

...AND HEADED INTO THE JUNGLE.

MOMENTS LATER, DEAFENING NOISES ERUPTED BEHIND ME - THE COLONY BEGINNING TO CUT DOWN TREES.

SOON, THE JUNGLE HAD ABSORBED ALL SOUNDS OF THE COLONY...

...AND ALL I COULD HEAR WAS...

SLOWLY MY EARS ADJUSTED...

...NOTHING?

BUZZ! CRACK! BOOM!

I MOVED FURTHER AWAY, DEEPER INTO THE UNDERGROWTH, TRYING TO ESCAPE THE NOISE.

TICKING UP THE JUNGLE LIFE...

A RIVER!
ELI... WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU...

FIND US...

WHO'S THERE?!

OVERCOME BY CURIOSITY, I HAD TO FOLLOW THE VOICE.

AGH!

OUCH...

WHAT THE...?!

AAAHHH!!!
PLEASE LET ME GO! I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU!

OW! HOW DID...? I DEFINITELY STABBED THE VINE...

OH CHILD, YOU CANNOT HURT US WITHOUT ALSO HURTING YOURSELF...

WHO ARE YOU?!
AND WHY DID YOU ATTACK ME?

WE ARE HERE AND THERE...

... WE ARE EVERYWHERE...

WE ARE UP AND DOWN...

...LEFT AND RIGHT...

... TURN AROUND AND YOU WILL FIND US.
YOU HAVE SEEN WHAT WAS, WHAT IS, AND WHAT MAY HAPPEN AGAIN.

ELI, YOU CAN HEAR US SO YOU ARE OUR ONLY CHANCE -

TAKE OUR MESSAGE TO YOUR PEOPLE!

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

ELI, YOUR NAME HAS BEEN WHISPERED FROM TREE TO TREE FOR MILLENNIA. YOU ARE DESTINED TO SAVE US AND HUMANKIND.

TELL US, WHAT DID YOU SEE IN YOUR VISION?
I saw... I saw how humankind destroyed the environment. We took and took and took and gave nothing back.

We caused so much damage!

Yes, that's right. But look around you...

... what do you see now?

... so much life!

Yes, you see humankind ruined it all but nature bounced back over time.

Listen, Eli, maintaining a balance is crucial for life to flourish.

I see! I need to warn my people - we must not take anything away!

Oh child, of course you must take something from nature. The point is that you must also give something back.

Look at the ants: they built this anthill using spare materials found nearby...

... inside, they cultivate fungi, nourishing and defending it. In turn, the fungi feeds them.

They have found a way to meet their own needs while benefitting others.

I need to show my people how it is, and has always been, possible to live in harmony with nature!

That's it, Eli! Now go and fulfil your destiny!
How could I convince my people to change direction?

Most seemed more interested in sapping nature’s resources than caring for it.

I had to warn them before we set ourselves irrevocably on the path to repeating our ancestors’ mistakes.

Oh no! Sam, are you okay?

Yes, don’t worry!

Where are you rushing off to this time?

Oh Sam, where do I begin? I need to tell the council that our colony has to stop exploiting nature. We have only just arrived and we have already cleared a vast area of jungle.

You’re right, we are working relentlessly and the progress is scary...

It all feels so wrong.

We’ve got to shake everyone out of this; we are ruining our habitat again.

How can I make the elders listen?

What if you speak to everyone? Get the colony on your side. There’s a meeting now in the main square — that could be the perfect opportunity!

We already have a main square?! Oh Sam, that’s perfect!

Let’s hurry!
WHERE ARE ELDERS GRIM AND REVERIE?

I DON'T KNOW, I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM SINCE WE ARRIVED.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS! IT IS TIME TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE GREAT STEP WE HAVE TAKEN TODAY: WE HAVE RETURNED TO EARTH AND FOUND THE ENVIRONMENT READY TO BE TAMED FOR OUR PURPOSES AGAIN!

WORK WILL DETERMINE YOUR DAILY LIVES - WE HAVE TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS.

TOGETHER WE WILL BECOME THE MOST PROSPEROUS COLONY OF ALL!

YES! Hooray! Whoop! Yesss!

WHAT?! CAN'T THEY UNDERSTAND THAT THE ELDERS INTEND TO TURN US INTO SLAVES?

STOP!

YEAH! WHOO!
ELDERS, THANK YOU FOR JOINING US.

SADLY, THERE IS NO TIME FOR YOU TO SPEAK.

OUTRAGEOUS! YOU TRIED TO KILL US!

HOW DARE YOU ACCUSE US OF SUCH A THING! YOU -

YOU HAD US KIDNAPPED! BUT WE ESCAPED YOUR HATEFUL PLAN.

YOU GAVE US NO CHOICE. YOU WANT DEMOCRACY BUT WE KNOW WHAT'S BEST - HARD WORK AND UNLIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL EXPLOITATION.

Avarice is right. Your plan would have doomed us to poverty!

YOU ARE DOOMING US!

WHAT DO YOU WANT NOW?!

SOMEbody STOP HER!

LET ELI SPEAK! WE OWE HER THAT AT LEAST!

THANK YOU. ELDER HOAX, ELDER AvarICE, YOU ARE LEADING US TO RUIN. UPON YOUR ORDERS, THE COLONY HAS ALREADY RIPPED APART HALF THE JUNGLE AND YOU ARE PLANNING MUCH WORSE!

WE HAVE TO START THINKING ABOUT OUR NEEDS DIFFERENTLY!

UNEXPECTEDLY, NATURE HAS SPOKEN TO ME - TO ASK US TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH THE ENVIRONMENT.

WE CAN DO THIS AND THRIVE AS A COMMUNITY!
Our ancestors started a green movement - they had fantastic ideas about how to generate renewable energy.

But they struggled to convince enough people to make the changes in time.

We, however, can start afresh...

...we can set humanity on a sustainable path!

Eli, what you are proposing will not be easy.

But I would be honoured to take on the challenge with you.

Everyone - will you join us?

Yes!

Whoop!

Yeehaaah!
THAT'S ENOUGH FROM YOU TWO!

YOU ARE ALL FOOLS!

TAKE THE RESOURCES YOU HAVE ALREADY HARVESTED AND BE GONE!
WE WILL REBUILD SOCIETY FREE FROM GREED AND HYPOCRISY!

YOU DID IT! SEE? YOU ARE SPECIAL!

INDEED! ELI, WE NOW HAVE AN OPENING ON THE COUNCIL AND I THINK YOU ARE THE IDEAL CANDIDATE...

HM, I STILL DON'T QUITE LIKE YOU, BUT YOUR IDEAS HAVE PROVED TO BE GOOD FOR US SO FAR...

AYE! AYE! AYE! AYE! AYE! AYE! AYE! AYE!

ALL IN FAVOUR OF ELDER ELI, SAY “AYE!”
Elders hoax and avarice left on a spare shuttle. They never bothered us again.

Immediately we set to work on the development of our new green society.

We began by searching through our e-learning programmes for information about sustainable energy and living.

Wind power: the wind turns the turbine blades, which in turn spin a generator to create electricity.

Micro-hydro power: like the larger scale hydropower, micro-hydro captures the energy of moving water to generate electricity...

They can work in different sizes and contexts.

Solar power: solar panels convert sunlight into electricity

But micro-hydro’s smaller scale means it has a much more manageable impact on the surrounding ecosystem.

Like turbines, solar panels can be used in many places and can be made into different shapes.

Turf houses and tree houses are examples of buildings that blend in with nature.

We elected a new elder to help us bring about the developments.

All in favour of electing Hope say “aye!”

As we continued our research, elder Hope ensured the whole community felt their voices were being heard.
NOW A FEW YEARS HAVE PASSED AND WE HAVE BUILT A HOME THAT EXISTS IN COMPLETE HARMONY WITH NATURE.

MORE CHILDREN ARE BEING BORN...

YEAR 3073

... AND DAILY LIFE IS PEACEFUL.

WE HAVE UPDATED OUR E-LEARNING PROGRAMMES SO THAT EVERYONE WILL LEARN ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT...

LESSON 1: SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIPS
... and how to care for it in the years to come.

These new programmes, together with a message about Earth's recovery, have been sent to all colonies in reach.

**YEAR 4020?**

I can only imagine what the Earth will look like as the human population grows. Our ancestors knew what needed to be done to create sustainable societies...

But they weren't able to make the changes in time.

I will do everything for this. Will you?
THE STORY OF ELI

YEAR 3070. HUMANKIND IS SCATTERED IN NOMAD COLONIES ACROSS THE GALAXY. THEY HAD TO LEAVE EARTH 1000 YEARS AGO, SINCE THE PLANET WAS NO LONGER ABLE TO PROVIDE RESOURCES FOR THE FAST-GROWING AND NEVER-SATISFIED SPECIES CALLED HOMO SAPIENS. ONE DAY, THE PROTAGONIST ELI HAS A VISION AND TRIES TO INITIATE THE RETURN OF ONE COLONY BACK TO EARTH BY CONVINCING THE FOUR ELDERS, WHO LEAD THE COLONY IN THE FORM OF AN ELDERS COUNCIL. ELI REALISES THAT HUMAN SOCIETY HAS TO CHANGE ITS PATH IN ORDER TO AVOID MAKING THE SAME MISTAKES AGAIN. THE HARD PART IS JUST HOW TO CONVINCE EVERYONE TO FOLLOW ELI’S LEAD.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

THE ERASMUS+ PROJECT “ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING ILLUSTRATED” (ALSO KNOWN AS “ELI” OR “ILLUSTRATED CLIMATE”) ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO LEARN ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS TO THESE CHALLENGES THROUGH AN E-LEARNING PLATFORM FEATURING ILLUSTRATIONS AND THIS GRAPHIC NOVEL. THE PROJECT IS CO-FUNDED BY THE ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME FOR ADULT EDUCATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION.

LEARN WHAT YOU CAN DO:

WWW.ILLUSTRATED-CLIMATE.EU/LMS