

*Hand in Hand, They Explored* by Ethan Hackett

Hand in hand, man and woman have walked in partnership since his and her beginnings. Hand in hand, they explored the vast landscapes full and lush of life. From the hottest savannahs to the densest jungles, hand in hand they went. Relying, trusting, depending on one another, they explored.

Hand in hand, together, they fended off the most vicious of beasts and befriended the most benevolent of animals. Venturing into the unknown, not knowing what may lay ahead, they traversed far and wide. Moving through the numbing and piercing winters in the highest of mountains and the scorching and blistering summers in the barrest of deserts, crossing the most dangerous and treacherous of chasms and the deepest and tempestuous of oceans, nevertheless they explored.

Hand in hand, they created intricate clothing and designs, sturdy huts and homes, flourishing villages and towns, innovative tools and apparatuses. Enduring the hardships, man and woman survived the most devastating of droughts, survived the most damaging of hurricanes, survived the most gory battles, survived the coldest snowstorms, yet just surviving, they were not content. Between the two, there was a need: a need to explore.

Hand in hand, man and woman, in this age and time, have seemed to have exhausted all the savannahs, all the mountains, all the deserts, all the plains—man and woman have explored it all. Far and wide, everything on this planet Earth has been explored. Man and woman have run out of things to explore, yet when the duo looks up to the sky, they see mystery, they see uncertainty, they see the unknown. It suddenly becomes so clear: there is a whole new area they must explore.

Hand in hand, man and woman find they have a whole new place to explore, much larger than any field, mountain, glacier, or desert explored before. The small dots in the sky that seemed so insignificant, so small, just another speck in the sky, have now become the new target of exploration. What was once the unknown became known. What was once the limit became limitless. What was once unexplored became explored.

Hand in hand, they were transported to this mysterious moon and explored its many details. From the deepest and coldest Lunar canyons to the tallest and most treacherous mountains, hand in hand they went. Relying, trusting, depending on one another, they explored.

Hand in hand, together, they fended off the most life-threatening and dangerous meteors and sampled the frozen and elusive water. Venturing into the unknown, not knowing what may lay ahead, they traversed far and wide. Moving through the numbing and piercing nights in the highest of Lunar mountains and the scorching and blistering days in the barrest of Lunar maria, crossing the most dangerous and treacherous of valleys and the deepest and tempestuous of craters, nevertheless they explored.

Hand in hand, they created intricate regolith designs, sturdy regolith-covered bases, flourishing lunar towns, innovative tools. Enduring the hardships, man and woman survived the most devastating of regolith storms, survived the most damaging of solarwinds, survived the most disastrous technology malfunctions, survived the most detrimental base breaches, yet just surviving, they were not content. Between the two, there was a need: a need to explore.

Hand in hand, man and woman explore further, this time to Venus and Mars. Questioning if they are alone in this solar system, they search for signs of life on these planets that were once covered in water. And next, to the gas giants, who, despite being made mostly of gas, have moons with characteristics of what is needed for life. And next, to the ice giants, whose origins were uncertain. Yet, even after exploring all this exploration, they still were not content. There was still much more to be explored.

Hand in hand, man and woman have a driving fire inside of them to discover what is outside of our solar system, outside of our galaxy. How many solar systems are there in the Milky Way? The universe? Are there many planets like Earth? Are there other ways for organisms to survive than traditionally thought? Is there other highly intelligent life? Man and woman will forever be curious about what surrounds them. The only limit of exploration is what they consider to be their limit, not the ocean, not the sky, not the planet, not the solar system, not the galaxy. Nothing can limit man and woman from exploring except for themselves. The more man and woman understand what goes around them, the more they can understand themselves. When they experience hardships from learning about the outside, they discover their empathy, their cooperation, their curiosity. Why put a limit on how curious man and woman can be? Why put a limit on how much man and woman can learn? Why put a limit on how great man and woman can be? Why limit man and woman to the Earth? Why limit man and woman to the solar system? Why limit man and woman to the galaxy? Why not explore?