

T H E
E X T I N C T I O N
T R I A L S
R E B E L

Storm wanted to run. She did. But already she could see that the powerful legs of the spinosaurus were more than a match for the three small men. The dinosaurs were catching up fast.

“Run!” Reban’s face was directly in hers, spit coming from his lips.

“I won’t leave Dell,” she insisted. She couldn’t pretend she wasn’t terrified. But would she sacrifice her former friend?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The Extinction Trials is S. M. Wilson's first teen series. She lives with her family on the west coast of Scotland.

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The Extinction Trials: Exile
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T H E E X T I N C T I O N T R I A L S

R E B E L

S . M . W I L S O N

USBORNE

-  JUNGLE
-  MARSH
-  FOREST
-  MOUNTAINS
-  DESERT



UNCHARTED
TERRITORY

PILORIA



To my three favourite heroes: Kevin, Elliott and Rhys Bain.

To my dad, John Niven Wilson, who has been pestering me
for an early read of this book for forever!

And to my two Sarahs – Sarah Hornsley and Sarah Stewart
– for making this dinosaur journey such fun!

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“The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the one,” in reference to Spock and
Kirk, *The Wrath of Khan*, 1982, screenplay by Jack B. Sowards.

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PART ONE

EARTHASIA

ONE

L I N C O L N

The streets were packed, voices were angry, and Lincoln lowered his head as he tried to dodge through the crowds. Bony elbow after bony elbow jabbed into his sides. The faces around him were like his – gaunt. Food provisions were down yet again and the perpetually empty stomachs were making tempers flare.

He turned the corner and stopped dead. The crowd around the parliament building was a hundred deep. In a land where some of the other buildings were crumbling due to overcrowding and neglect, the parliament building still stood proud, like a snub to the entire, hungry nation. Set across huge thousand-year-old tree trunks and built with bricks the same colour as the reddy-brown bark, the round building looked as if it had grown out of the trees. Creeping vines and branches had wound their way around the outside.

On other days, and in other circumstances, people might stop to admire the beauty of the building. But not today.

Lincoln skirted around the edges of the crowd, trying to weave his way towards the back doors of the parliament. It was hard work. The mood in the air was ugly. Starvation would do that to you.

For the briefest of seconds, one of the black-cloaked Stipulators appeared at the main entrance. For as long as Lincoln could remember, the Stipulators had governed Earthasia. Each of the forty zones had a Chief Stipulator who came and sat in parliament making the rules for the entire nation. Their word was law – or it had been. The roar from the crowd started almost immediately, with shouts and jeers of disgust.

“Give us more food!”

“We can’t live like this!”

The normally arrogant Stipulator baulked at the size and noise of the crowd, and turned back around. Lincoln stopped walking for a second. Was that fear in the Stipulator’s face? Surely not.

Crack. The guards at the parliament door flinched, as something flew from the crowd and hit the back of the Stipulator’s head.

He stumbled for a second, before turning around in disgust, clutching the back of his skull. One of the guards bent down and picked up an old worn boot, dangling it between two fingers. The crowd cheered as the Stipulator muttered under his breath to the guards.

It was clear he was telling them to pursue the assailant. But the guards weren’t stupid. In the past, they would have obeyed the Stipulator’s command without a word. But over the last few months, things had changed. For the first time in Lincoln’s lifetime, the stern rule of the parliament and the Stipulators had wavered.

People didn’t seem quite so afraid of them as they were before. The blistering plague that had previously meant death for a large part of the population was under control, thanks to the roots and leaves Lincoln and his colleagues had brought back from the neighbouring continent of Piloria six months ago. The plants had finally been encouraged to grow in the colder climate using special greenhouses and had been turned into a wonder treatment for the disease. But more people meant more mouths to feed, and crops were already at an all-time low. Overcrowding meant there was no land to grow food, and the land that was available had been overused and stripped of its nutrients.

After a few angry exchanges, and some awkward shaking of heads by the guards, the Stipulator stormed back inside the parliament building. Momentum was growing. This revolt had been building for days.

“Oof!” There was a sharp elbow to Lincoln’s face as he tried to push his way through the crowds.

“Watch it, boy,” growled a crooked-toothed man, stepping in front of him.

“Watch it yourself.” Lincoln shoved the man, trying to clear a path through the packed bodies.

He ignored the comments behind him and kept going. Píloria – the continent of the dinosaurs – had taught him many things. To not be afraid. To stand up for himself and those he loved. To not trust anyone. He'd grown muscles in places he didn't know they could exist and developed a steely determination. With a final push, he reached the back door of the parliament.

“Lincoln Kreft for Octavius Arange.” The guard at the rear entrance blinked at the name of the Captain Regent and shot Lincoln a curious stare. Did he recognize him? Lincoln had brought home the cure for the blistering plague from Píloria. It wasn't unusual for him to be recognized. Some people thanked him – some people cursed him. But the guard merely checked his name on a list, then sent him through the security checkpoint.

Inside the parliament was just as chaotic as outside. A swarm of angry black-cloaked Stipulators stood shouting at each other in the main foyer. Their aides, in pale blue, stood along the edges of the atrium, occasionally responding to an irate shout or gesture.

Lincoln sighed. The first time he'd come in here, he'd been amazed at the beauty of the building and terrified by the sight of so many Stipulators. For all his life these people had ruled unchallenged.

But the world he'd known was unravelling around him. Lies had been exposed, treachery revealed, and his own betrayal weighed heavily on his shoulders.

He moved across the atrium, avoiding the eyes of the

most self-important Stipulator – Silas. The man was bellowing at the Stipulator opposite him – trying to belittle and intimidate him. But the other man's chin was proudly tilted in the air as he fought back. Things were definitely changing around here.

Lincoln reached Octavius's door and resisted the temptation to turn and walk away. This was the fourth time Octavius had summoned him to parliament. What now?

He knocked sharply.

“Enter!” a voice inside boomed.

Lincoln rolled his eyes and pushed the door open, closing it behind him to block out the din outside. Octavius was perched on his strangely shaped chair behind his impossibly high desk, his short legs dangling. From the first second Lincoln had met him, he'd been bewildered that such a loud voice could come from such a diminutive man.

Octavius scowled behind the reading aid perched on the end of his nose. His snow-white hair was pulled back from his face. Storm had mentioned once that when she'd met Octavius she'd been shocked. She'd never seen anyone this old, and neither had Lincoln. People in Earthasia generally didn't live to an old age; they were wiped out by the lack of health care or the blistering plague.

“Where have you been?” snapped Octavius, as he jumped down from the high chair.

Lincoln tried to find some patience. “I've been exactly where I should be – in the lab helping replicate the cure.”

Octavius's scowl deepened in his saggy face. He bustled

past Lincoln and climbed a set of steps to his large bookcase.

“This is all your fault,” he muttered.

“What’s all my fault?”

Octavius waved a gnarled hand in the air. “The people outside. You bring home a cure with no thought to the consequences.”

Lincoln’s hackles raised. “I brought home a cure for my sister.”

Octavius pulled a large book from the shelf and tossed it at Lincoln. It was amazing how spending time on a continent of dinosaurs could heighten your senses. His hands instantly plucked the book from the air before it hit him in the face.

Octavius walked back down the steps and snatched the book from Lincoln’s hands as if that behaviour was entirely normal. “You left her,” he muttered, shaking his head. “You left her there.”

Lincoln pressed his lips together. For the past six months, the last glimpse he’d had of Storm – of her and her father standing on the beach of Pioria – had been imprinted on his brain.

“We’ve gone over this,” he sighed. “I didn’t *want* to leave her behind. She *chose* to stay. She chose to stay with her... father.”

It still felt odd using that word to describe the man who was the disgraced Chief Stipulator of Ambulus City. No one had known he was Storm’s father – not even Storm – until a few months ago.

Octavius turned angrily towards him. “And what will

happen to her there? How can she survive, with barely any weapons? Nothing to protect her from the host of monsters who live there?” He held the book up, clutching it between his gnarled hands.

Lincoln stepped forward. Books were uncommon. They were a luxury that had vanished as the wood supplies had been depleted on the continent. Not enough space for people meant that trees had been surplus to requirements.

Lincoln couldn’t help himself. He reached out and touched the dark-blue cover with gold lettering. He’d never seen anything quite like it – even though he’d been here before, he’d never really had a chance to look at the books up close. Before Octavius could react, Lincoln had taken it from his hands.

“This is it,” he said, realization dawning. “This is the book Storm told me about.”

He laid it on the table and gently stroked his fingers over the lettering. *The Continent of Monsters by Chief Stipulator Magnus Don*. Lincoln turned to Octavius.

“This is the book you wanted her to update, isn’t it? The one I heard her and Reban talk about.”

Octavius’s face softened. He reached his thin hand over and flicked open the book. It landed on a page with a hand-drawn sketch of a roaring T-rex.

Lincoln shuddered. He didn’t need a reminder of what lived on Pioria. He’d experienced it all too vividly himself.

“She did update it,” Octavius said softly, “for the most part.” His hand was shaking slightly as he traced his fingers

over the drawing. It was the first time Lincoln had seen any sign of vulnerability from the old man.

When Lincoln had first been in this room, Octavius had spent the whole time screaming at him for leaving Storm behind. He'd been so tempted to shout back. To tell Octavius how angry Storm had been when she'd found out that Octavius was her great-uncle and he hadn't bothered to tell her. How hurt she'd been.

But that wouldn't have helped anyone. Things were delicate enough. His sister, Arta, and Rune's and Kronar's brothers and sisters had all been ejected from the care facility. Storm and Lincoln's first trip to the dinosaur continent had been a contest which Storm had won – but two of their friends, Rune and Kronar, had died. As the victor, Storm and her family were entitled to extra rations and health care, so, in an act of kindness, she'd declared their families were her own. But now Storm wasn't here, all that was gone. Arta had been sent back to live with Lincoln and their mother in the caves. As for Rune's and Kronar's brothers and sisters? He had no idea. Lincoln could only hope they'd gone home to their parents in Norden.

The one plus point was that – because he worked at the lab – Lincoln had unlimited access to supplies of the ointment. Before Pioria, Arta had been on the brink of death. Now her skin looked almost completely better, even though she was thinner than before, thanks to the more restricted rations.

There was a loud noise from outside. Octavius's frown

deepened and, despite his slight frame, he moved swiftly to the door and yanked it open.

The bedlam from earlier had increased. Lincoln's eyes widened as he looked across the atrium. The dark ominous doors on the other side were now wide open and the Chief Stipulators were shoving their way through into the large chamber beyond. The bright white of the parliament debating chamber was a startling contrast to the black cloaks of the Stipulators, but Lincoln's eyes were drawn to the blood-red chair at the far end of the room.

Silas, the blond Chief Stipulator of Norden – who'd staged a coup against Storm's father and now governed the capital, Ambulus City, as well as his own region – seemed to be leading the charge.

“Get me my cloak!” ordered Octavius, his voice booming beside Lincoln.

Lincoln jumped and looked around in surprise. “What?”

He still didn't really understand the workings of the parliament, but Storm had told him Octavius was the Captain Regent. If anyone was in charge here, it seemed that it might be him.

“Over there!” bellowed Octavius, pointing him towards a drawer set in the wall. Lincoln walked over and opened it, pulling out a dark-green, heavy cloak. He shook it out and the gold trim reflected the light. Although it was heavy in his arms, it was small; perfectly sized for Octavius.

Octavius appeared in front of him, turning around so Lincoln could drape the cloak over his shoulders.

“Wait here,” he hissed, as he took off across the wide atrium.

Lincoln watched. He’d never seen the doors to the debating chamber open before. White seats lined the walls and the Chief Stipulators, each representing all the zones of Earthasia, settled into them. Lincoln frowned. Were all four hundred of them really here?

Octavius strode across the vast room and, using a small box, got up onto the red chair. There was a staff beside his seat, which he banged angrily on the floor.

Lincoln held his breath. The parliament doors were still wide open. Was this normal?

He could see some of the staff dressed in pale blue shaking their heads, sidling closer to the open doorway to watch.

“Who called this session?” shouted Octavius.

“I did,” said Silas haughtily. He turned to his right and grabbed hold of the man next to him. Even from here, Lincoln could see the Stipulator’s cloak was torn, his face bruised and his knuckles bloodied. “There has been a revolt in Tarribeth. Rufus barely made it out in one piece.” There was a collective intake of breath around the parliament. “The people are uncontrollable. It’s time to take a stand.”

One of the Chief Stipulators snorted. “And do what? We’ve already cut rations again. Our Stipulators barely have enough nutrition to stand on their own two feet.”

“Isn’t that what we’re trying to do? Starve the population into submission?” asked another Stipulator, who had the dark skin of the Lambora zone.

“And starve ourselves too?” sneered another.

“We need to get the ointment supplies under lock and key. The more people get treated, the more people there are to feed.”

One of the Stipulators turned to Silas and pointed his finger. “This is your fault, Silas. This happened on your watch. That lab was supposed to be focusing on dinosaur DNA. Instead, it starts to miraculously produce a cure for the blistering plague. A cure that has been replicated in all the other labs across the continent!”

Lincoln shifted uneasily. They were talking about his lab. The one he worked in. As soon as he’d got off the ship from Pioria, he’d headed straight there to place the samples he’d collected into Lorcan Field’s waiting hands. The head scientist had been as desperate for a cure as Lincoln – his own daughter had been dying from the blistering plague.

Lincoln had brought as much ointment as he could from Pioria, along with seedlings, plant samples and even dirt. In a matter of hours, the temperatures in the greenhouses had been turned up as high as possible to try to replicate the conditions on Pioria, and thanks to that, and the newly imported nutrients in the soil, the plants had started to grow quickly. The recipe for the ointment was simple – it was a combination of two plants from Pioria – and within a few weeks, his lab had produced its own first batch.

He hadn’t thought about the implications for the population. He hadn’t thought about how the people who previously would have died – and now would live – would

be fed on an already starving continent.

He'd only been thinking about his sister, Arta.

His sister, who was now looking better than she had in years.

One of the other Stipulators got to his feet and shook his head. "You should have stopped this, Silas. Things have got out of hand. What happened to Rufus is on your head."

It happened so quickly that Lincoln barely had time to blink. Silas crossed the parliament chamber and punched his colleague square in the jaw, sending him sprawling back onto the white chairs.

"How dare you challenge me? You, from Steroma. When was the last time your zone produced enough food to sustain your population? You've stolen from the rest of us for the last five years. *We've* been feeding your people, and all at a cost to our own populations."

The crowd in the atrium were still moving, slowly but surely, closer to the parliament doors. It seemed that no one was bothered about keeping the business in parliament private this time. They could hear every word – and wanted to hear more.

Octavius banged his staff on the ground. "Order!"

For a few seconds there was silence. "Silas, you called this session. Do you have a solution to our current problems, or do you only wish to apportion blame?"

It didn't matter that Octavius had a small and wizened body. He had the heart and mind of a warrior. And he wasn't afraid to show it.

Silas turned back towards the accusing faces. "This situation is spiralling out of control. It can't be allowed to continue. I suggest guards in the labs. The ointment will have to be rationed, along with food. Without the blistering plague, our population numbers are unsustainable." The frown in his brow was deep. "We all know what happens next. If we don't get things under control – there will be no other option."

Silence in the parliament. There were a number of anxious glances, followed by a few murmurs.

Again, Octavius banged his staff on the ground. "Put plans in place to get your labs under control. We'll reconvene in a few days."

He jumped down from the bright-red chair and swept out of the chamber. As he strode through the atrium, the pale-blue uniforms parted in his wake. They all knew better than to question Octavius's authority.

As he reached the door to his office, his sharp eyes met Lincoln's. He gestured him back inside.

Lincoln followed warily, as Octavius's movements slowed and he walked back over to the table, running his hand over the book of dinosaurs.

Lincoln's insides were churning. Get the labs under control? That couldn't be good for him, or for his sister. Arta was so much better now. But the ointment wasn't a complete cure – even though everyone referred to it that way. It only kept things under control. But he'd brought the ointment here. He should be allowed to use it.

“I need that ointment,” he said, through gritted teeth. “Twice I’ve been on the dinosaur continent. None of the Stipulators have even set foot on it. I have a right to it. Arta has a right to it. She needs it. She won’t survive without it.”

He expected anger. He expected retribution. Instead, Octavius gave a tired wave of his hand. “None of us will survive,” he said quietly, his eyes fixed on the drawing of the T-rex.

There was something in the way he said those words. As if he knew a whole lot more than Lincoln did.

But of course he would.

Octavius’s jaw tightened. He spun around, his heavy cloak billowing out behind him as he faced Lincoln again.

He regarded Lincoln carefully for a few seconds – as if he were weighing up things in his mind, making decisions that Lincoln couldn’t know or understand. His voice was still low and his grey gaze was steady. “Promise me that when you get word, you won’t hesitate. You’ll get whoever is important to you, and get to the *Invincible*.”

“What?” It was the last thing Lincoln expected to hear. His brain couldn’t even begin to consider what the old man might mean.

Octavius raised one long wizened finger. “Not a word. Not a word to a single soul. Just be ready.” Then his expression changed back to his usual frown. “Or don’t,” he added, shrugging as he pushed past Lincoln and swept back out of the room.

Lincoln’s feet were rooted to the ground. His brain was spinning with a million possibilities – none of which were good. Was this why Octavius had called him here? “I have a bad feeling about this,” he muttered.