



# The Sunflowers of Stardust

Elizabeth Crow



Astra stands on a desolate, grey launchpad, her sleek white spaceship humming with readiness. She looks back at the dusty horizon of her home planet one last time before climbing into the cockpit.



## EXPLORATION

The engines ignite with a brilliant blue flame, propelling the ship through the thick, dark clouds. As Astra breaks through the atmosphere, the oppressive grey fades into the vast, sparkling velvet of deep space.



Floating in the silent vacuum, Astra adjusts her navigation controls while staring out at the distant, cold stars. She is searching for a legendary warmth that most people believe is just a myth.



A faint, golden glimmer appears on the edge of a swirling purple nebula, catching Astra's eye. She steers her craft toward the light, feeling a strange and hopeful pull in her chest.



As the ship enters the golden mist, the darkness of the void is replaced by a warm, amber radiance. The sensors begin to chime with rhythmic pulses, signaling life in a place where only silence should exist.

**ASTRA**

Astra gasps as the first giant sunflower drifts past her viewing port, its petals glowing like solar flares. It is as large as a small moon, swaying gently in the cosmic currents.



The ship emerges into a hidden galaxy where every star is the heart of a massive, radiant sunflower. Thousands of golden blooms stretch across the horizon, turning their heads toward a central, glowing sun.



Astra dons her suit and steps out of the airlock, tethered safely to her ship. She floats weightlessly among the soft, glowing petals that hum with a gentle, life-giving energy.



She reaches out to touch a floating seed that sparkles like a diamond in the golden light. Swirls of glowing pollen drift around her suit like golden stardust, illuminating the wonder in her eyes.

**ASTRA**

Resting against the hull of her ship, Astra watches the endless field of celestial flowers bloom against the dark. She has found the universe's secret garden, a place where beauty grows in the heart of the stars.