

January 3016 Laton

Toby sat down with Roberto in his office on a cool but sunny day. Roberto was clearly annoyed with Israel DeGaulle's aide Semper Fidless and his lack of clarity on his meeting with Henry Holland. Toby felt indebted to Israel for all the guidance and advice through the years that helped Toby achieve position as king, but was beginning to wonder more about that relationship. Was the fresh air on Lad having a rejuvenating effect on his thoughts, as well as his body? Israel had not taken a very sympathetic tone in presenting plans for the tax increase to the public. Toby wondered what other policies and deals Israel has come up with, presenting them as coming from Toby himself. He would have to try to keep a closer reign on him.

Shortly after Toby's presentation with the timeline, the Farmers Association had their regular meetup in Laton, and word of the plans got around. Elvin Thom, proprietor of Grand Hotel in Laton, told Jeb Smithers, that the space port was going to be built near the Smithers' farm near Snill. Nadia also let the other farmers know what she knew about the plans. They agreed that it would make sense to have a meeting out of site of Toby, to see if the farmers could make an agreement to make sure the development did not get out of hand and threaten their livings. They had agreed to assemble at a cabin at the Adia Woods sacred grove in 2 weeks for discussion. Nadia, her brother Joseph, Jeb and Sarah Smithers, and a number of other farmers were now around the fireplace in one of those cabins. It seemed like the main threat was to the Smithers farm, so they agreed to keep a close eye on Toby's people, and try to find out just how much of the land they intended to use. If it was to be a fairly small project, maybe it would be okay. They all agreed that there was probably not too much they could do about it if Toby's plans were likely to hurt their farming operations, but they would discuss it with other farmers before the next meeting, and try to make a contingency plan. They dubbed themselves "The Preservationists", and agreed to meet again at the end of March at the Mountainside Sacred Grove near Snill.

In orbit around Tobus

Captain Ogdan Jones floated from the door of the crew quarters into the transparent cylinder that ran the length of Factory Ship I, in its final stages of conversion. The transformation of Explorer I, orbiting Tobus, had begun 9 months ago. The craft, in the shape of a box kite, with the power plant and engine at one end, and the passenger quarters at the other, was extended to include the large, zero gravity factory. Many of the passenger quarters were removed to make room for one gravity design and manufacturing. The spaceship had proved worthy during its several trips between Tobus and Lad, as Explorer I. Now the captain observed the in-ship factory modules that were being finished in the first half of the craft, and the portable modules and landers that took up the other half. There were advanced metal and plastic manufacturing

facilities, and others dedicated to semiconductors and power generation.

Once in orbit around Lad, it would be possible to use the resources harvested on the planet, as well as materials in the transport, to establish advanced technology. He was proud to have been personally selected by Toby to lead this noble ambition. Over the next 6 months, he would be responsible for assembling the crew to pilot the craft. The crew would have double duty, also being responsible for installing the portable factory units on the planet, and bringing the facilities on the ship into production.

February 3016 Tobusi

From his office near the top floor of the Grand Tower on Tobusi, Robert Pond, the CEO of SpaceTour Corporation, saw the yellowish disk of Tobus rise over the horizon. He had always been nervous of being stationed at the top of a skyscraper on the quake prone moon of Tobus, but his engineers assured him it was perfectly safe, and it encouraged the corporation's shareholders to know that he was comfortable at the firm's first tourist destination. It had now been 13 years since the space tours had started. Tobusi was a spectacular tourist destination, with the mountainous continent where Pond's office was located, and the low plain of the other continent, which was mostly covered in water during the high tides, leaving only a few peaks poking out as islands, and was exposed during low tide. The proximity to Tobus was responsible for the extreme tidal action, as well as the quakes that occurred several times each year. The headquarters was spectacularly sited to offer the best view of the famous Tidal Canyon. The tide was going out, and the sun shone on the mist that sprayed from the Great Falls as the water spilled from the mountain lakes back into the sea. The executive was oblivious of the view. He was thinking of the new project that was beginning today. The final negotiations with Toby's government agents had been completed, and the terms were extremely generous. Not only were taxes to be minimal, but the government was going to help with construction of SpaceTour I. Even after sharing the profits of the tourism business with Toby, the owners of SpaceTour Corporation stood to become extremely wealthy. With the completion of Factory Ship I 2 months ago, Toby's engineers were getting ready to devote all their efforts into building the system's first interplanetary tourist vessel.

Toby assembled his associates and the citizens committee in his office. It was late February, and the word was that Toby had an important announcement. Once everyone had settled in, Toby began. "I was reluctant to make the trip to Lad, and apprehensive of how it would be to leave the comfort of home for an extended time. During the journey, I was already thinking about how good it would be to on the way back home after my stay. But once I was here, I discovered how much I enjoyed mingling with the people of Lad. Also, I have felt better here than I had been since many years ago on Tobus. Maybe it's the air, or maybe it's the kindness of the people I've met here. I think I need to remain here to continue to guide the developments to get the tourist

industry started. I will not be on board the Explorer I when it leaves Lad next month. I will remain on Lad until the next ship that comes here departs." The announcement came as a great surprise to almost everyone in the room, and there was a lot of talk as Toby took a seat. As the crowd dispersed, Sally discretely asked Toby if she could have a word with him when the room had cleared. Sally explained that she felt she had only scratched the surface in learning about the culture of this planet, and for the sake of history, thought it would make sense to remain to document the developments on Lad. Toby was not too surprised, and told Sally it would be good to have her around.

Michael Nehoc was driving his tractor along the road from Laton to Lisp, on his way to repair a mast gear on a fishing boat anchored there. As he passed the bend where the road veered east towards his destination, he noticed one of the rovers from the lander parked alongside, and several of Toby's people were out with their surveying equipment. Curious, Nehoc got out and asked one of the technicians what he was measuring. He explained that the route for the railway would follow along the road up to this point, but when then veer away from the road and follow along the coast the rest of the way to Lisp. A coastal route was preferable for sight seeing, and the line would offer a nice view as it approached Lisp along the ocean. It was clear that the engineer did not know about the sacred cove the railway would pass near to along that path. Michael made a mental note to ask around in Lisp to find out if anyone else was concerned about that.

March 3016

Jeb Smithers parked the tractor in the barn and shut it down, and as he was closing the door, he saw the figure approaching the door of his house. Clearly a Tobus man, quite a bit smaller than the door to the home. He greeted the man before he had a chance to knock. "Hello stranger. What brings you up to these parts?" The stranger, clearly surprised by the sudden greeting, coughed and turned around. "I am Arnold Firth, surveyor for Toby's space port project. I came to let you know that we will begin the surveying next week, and to leave you with some legal papers to sign." Jeb had not heard about plans for a space port, but knew that the craft from Tobus had landed some miles south of his farm. "Well come in then, and tell me about this plan". He held the door for the man to enter, and offered him a seat closer to the fire. "Would you like something to drink while we talk?" The stranger declined, so Jeb sat next to him while he opened his bag and drew out some maps and an official looking document. He handed over the document saying "You can look over this at your leisure, no need to sign it now." He spread one of the maps out on the floor in front of the fireplace. Jeb saw that the map covered the northeast section of the island. A long, wide dark strip ran across the top of the map, extending from the eastern edge of Lake Adia all the way to the eastern edge of the island, and crossing right over the rectangles representing the borders of the farm. Two large circles were below the strip, and there were many

connecting roads and buildings on plan. "This long strip is the runway for landings", explained Firth, "and the circles are the launch pads". Jeb pondered for a few moments before speaking. "Well my farm is right in the middle of your plan. I think you'll need to move the site a few miles south." Firth seemed puzzled. "We've studied the terrain, and found that this is the ideal site for the space port. You will be generously compensated for the use of the land. Take a look at the contract, and I can return in a few weeks if you have more questions about it." The exchange continued for a few more minutes, Jeb expressing skepticism about ceding his farm, and Firth expounding on how this progress would make Jeb and his family wealthy and secure in their future. Jeb's wife came in from bringing the cows in as they were chatting. Jeb introduced Firth, who was packing up his things. They said goodbye, and Jeb told Sarah about the man's proposal as she started making dinner.

Sally, Toby, Henry Higgins, and Michael Nehoc stood together in the observation area on a cool, windless morning as the hatches were sealed and the final checks done on the last lander, ready to depart to meet the orbiting Explorer II craft. Toby had been concerned about losing his chef, Pierre Perot, but realized he had gotten used to the local foods, and preferred the way the natives prepared them. He would miss Thomas Krost, his aide, but maybe he could convince Baleena to stay in Laton, and be employed as his secretary. He wondered what kind of marketing plan the SpaceTour Corporation would come up with back on Tobus, with all the information that Godfrey Lipito had collected. The bright glow of the engine lit the sky before the roar of combustion reached them, and the rocket slowly lifted from the pad but rapidly gained velocity, and was soon just a bright dot on the horizon. It would be more than a year until the next ship arrived to Lad. Toby hoped that the problems on Tobus would get out of hand during his continued absence.

The Preservationists had gathered in a small cabin near the Mountainside sacred grove. Jeb Smithers spoke first, and talked about his meeting with Arnold Firth. They brainstormed to come up with ideas about how to convince Toby's team to move the space port a few kilometers south, to minimize the impact on his farm. Jeb was not happy with the idea of exchanging his farming career for a payment. They agreed that the best approach would be to offer the tourism business something in exchange for changing the plan. They would think about that until the next meeting. Heorge Iduke, having spoken with Michael Nehoc, who was also in attendance, told the group about his meeting with Sally and Krost. They decided that Heorge should meet directly with Toby to try to convince him to move the rail line north, further away from the Southside Sacred Cove, and tell Toby this would help to preserve the picturesque nature of Lisp for the tourists. They decided that since it was one of their main concerns, they should hold the next meeting in June at the Southside Sacred Grove.

April 3016 Nadia and Joseph's house

Joseph had some time away from the fishing boat, which was undergoing renovation in Lisp, so he was helping Nadia and the farm crew get the first crops planted for the season. He invited Sally to spend a few days with them at the farm, and Sally was happy to have a chance to spend some time with Joseph. She was starting to worry a bit about how the plans for the space port would affect the islanders, and one night as they sat around the fire, she told Joseph about it. Joseph himself had been thinking about his part as one of the Preservationists, and was wondering if it would be smart to tell Sally about his involvement. He said "Sally, I understand why you are worried, and I can tell you more about how we feel about this, but can you promise not to pass this on to Toby?". Sally, now even less certain if she wanted to continue to be part of Toby's team, said yes. Joseph told her about the meetings, and asked for her thoughts on how she thought a meeting between Iduke and Toby would go. Sally had found Iduke to be a reasonable man, but one who was confident in his opinion, and willing to fight for what he thought was right. She was hopeful that Toby would do the right thing after speaking with him.

May 3016 Laton

Baleena had returned to her job in Lango, and Toby was starting to feel restless with his daily routine of working on the space port plans, trying to get a good sense of what was happening at home, and wandering the streets of Laton. He missed having Thomas around to help with the planning and scheduling. Maybe it was time to ask Baleena if she would like to take his place in Toby's office. Also, he had received a message from Heorge Iduke, who wanted to talk about the plans. Toby had heard about Heorge from some of the people he knew in Lango, and thought it was time to meet him in person. Toby asked Henry Higgins if he would like to take a couple of days off for a short trip, and Higgins obtained a car and agreed to drive Toby to Lango for one night, and then to Lisp the next day, before returning.

In orbit around Tobus

Factory Ship I was one month from launch. Captain Ogdan Jones was pleased that the construction had gone so smoothly, and that the inspections of the nearly completed vessel were going without a hitch. In a couple of weeks, supplies would be loaded on. He thought he had found the best possible crew members, both for piloting the vessel, and for getting the factory production going in Lad orbit, and in the portable factories on the surface. Sitting in the window of the spaceship manufacturing satellite, parked near the new ship, he watched as the first of the portable factory units was being slowly pushed into one of the six bays that took up the very back of the vessel. The first bay was already occupied by the heavy payload lander that would transport the units to the surface, and the second was consumed by the

huge fuel tank to replenish the propellant before each unit was moved. The 3 remaining factory units were completing their final checks. He worried as he reviewed the aggressive timeline on the screen in front of him. There was an enormous amount of work to be done to make Ladla ready for the first tourists in 3019, and he knew his reputation and career in the Space Guild was at risk if there were any hitches. Orbit of Lad was scheduled for June of 3018. He would be on the first personnel lander, to be launched immediately upon arrival, to ensure that the landing sites were ready for the payloads they were to receive.

The first module, an advanced metal production factory, was to be delivered to Lango in July. The other 3 factories, a semiconductor facility for Laton, a nuclear reactor to provide power, and a factory to build rockets and the guides and vehicles for the high speed rail, starting at its origin in Olean, were scheduled for subsequent months. He hoped the lander was up to the task, that his crew would perform efficiently, and that the local people would be cooperative. SpaceTour Corporation knew that everything would not be completed for the first tour, but it was important that the tourists and the corporation officials see that development of the facilities was proceeding smoothly. He had a feeling that Robert Pond would be keeping a close eye on things, and that there would be trouble if there were any delays.

Lango

It was a long ride to Lango on a cool, still, foggy day. Toby could hear the sound of boats on Lake Lin, but could not see the water. As Higgins turned the car east, only the very tip of Eagle Rock Island was visible. It was late afternoon by the time they arrived in the town. Higgins drove to the building on the waterfront next to the hotel, and Toby went in to find Baleena's apartment, and Higgins parked the car at the hotel for the night. Baleena had been expecting Toby, and was dressed in her best blue dress which accented her slim form. She was delighted to receive a surprise gift from Toby, a beautiful silver necklace that she put around her neck before they went down to eat at the hotel restaurant. Over a meal of fish and squash, with a bottle of the hotel's finest wine, Toby asked Baleena if she would take a job in his office as secretary. Baleena was clearly surprised, but said she would think about it. She was going to visit her sister in Laton on the first weekend of June, and told Toby she would let him know then. They retired to a quiet evening at her place, where Baleena was sure to show Toby how thankful she was for the gift.

Higgins showed up at the door with the car late the next morning. Patches of blue sky peaked through the clearing fog as they proceeded south away from the lake, past farms where early crops were turning the brown fields to green. The sea shone before them as they topped the last hill overlooking Lisp, on a rare sunny day. Heorge Iduke was ready for the lunch meeting, and was advising his staff who were putting trays of food and pitchers of beer on a table that had been set up on the deck overlooking the wharfs. Toby knew immediately that the towering figure

he saw on the deck was Iduke. Heorge, who apparently knew just about everybody on Ladla said hello to Higgins, who introduced Toby. Heorge had to lean down to offer his firm handshake. They agreed that Higgins would join them for lunch and conversation. Toby made a point of letting Iduke know how important Lisp was to the tourism plan. The bustling but quaint harbor town would make a real impression on the folks who had come to experience the peaceful, simple ways of life on Lad. Iduke used Toby's remarks about the scenic approach to Lisp to lead into why he thought the rail line should avoid the town proper. "You could plan to have the train station on the road, about 10 kilometers north of here. Tourists could then enjoy the view from the hill as they take the bus from the station. Another major advantage of this is that there would be a lot of savings in building the line next to the east-west road, rather than having to cut through the woods to put it right along the coast". Toby agreed that this did make sense, and said he would talk with his planners about it. Iduke managed to steer the conversation to the fishing industry, and told Toby that anything he could do to help with that would help to ensure the best cooperation from the townspeople. He was interested in the satellite surveillance that had been done to produce the maps Toby had shown him. A station to receive weather and fish finding data from the satellite would be a great help to his business. Higgins, the engineer, agreed that this would be an excellent way to make the tourism plan beneficial to all parties. Iduke was able to convince Toby to reveal some more details of the plan. He was happy to learn that the arrival of Factory Ship I in June of 3018 would signal the start of serious development on the island. There would be plenty of time to make sure that tourism could be kept in check, and the impact on their way of life would be minimized. The afternoon included a tour of the wharfs, before Toby and Higgins proceeded to the hotel for the night.

June 3016

The largest cabin at Southside Sacred Grove was nearly full with preservationists, and no fire needed to be lit. This was the first meeting for Heorge Iduke, and everyone was anxious to hear about his meeting with Toby, since the survival of this particular cove was at stake. Iduke reported that he was cautiously optimistic that Toby would do the right thing in this case. He revealed what he knew of the arrival of the factory ship, and attendees were relieved that they would have ample time to make plans. The lodgings at the grove were nearly full at the time of this meeting, which coincided with the solstice pilgrimage that many had made. Several of the pilgrims talked with the preservationists, and joined the cause. The next meeting would convene at the Ollva Sacred Grove.

Toby had come to the Frowlees' hotel to meet with Baleena and hear her decision about working with Toby. They sat down for a light lunch, and Baleena said "After thinking about this, I think taking this job and moving to the big city would be a good move to further my career. The

only thing is, I really like my place in Lango, and the room in the hotel is too small to be my permanent residence. I'm not sure where I would live if I were to move to Laton". Toby assured her that he could arrange a suite for her at the Grand Hotel where his office was. She would not even need to leave the building to go to work. She was pleased to hear that, and said she would move as soon as the place was ready.

In orbit around Tobus

Captain Ogdan Jones was strapped to his seat, waiting for the 2 gravity acceleration that would mark the departure from orbit and beginning of the flight to Lad. The engines were set to light up automatically in 3 minutes, as part of the programmed routine. The final message from Robert Pond, and the unexpected one from Israel DeGaulle were still rattling around in his brain. "Hello Captain. This is Israel DeGaulle. We are confident that you will perform your mission brilliantly, but in these final moments, I need to remind you of the importance of this project, and the consequences if there are any problems. A great deal of funding has been made by our government on this tourism project, and if it is not successful, the SpaceTour Corporation will lack the income to pay us back. The economy of Tobland is at risk if this venture fails. Good luck". After hearing that, Jones was even more terrified that indeed something would go wrong. He was brought back to the present as he heard the roar of the engine igniting, and was pushed back hard into his seat. The 2 planets would be in full opposition by the time of arrival, so the journey would take a full year. He would have plenty of time to worry.

July 3016 Laton

Arnold Firth and Harry Horde, head of the high speed rail team, stood around a table in one of the office's of Toby's suite in the hotel, looking over a large map of the eastern half of the island. Arnold had just told Harry about his encounter with Jeb Smithers at his farm near Snill. Harry countered with his description of running into Michael Nehoc, when he was surveying for the rail line near Lisp. "He told me he was just curious about what we were doing, but I sensed he was actually worried about something. Hey, have you noticed that sometimes it's really hard to find some of the local people when you need to talk with them? I was trying to get a meeting with Heorge Iduke, but all his secretary would tell me was that he was away for a couple of days, and she could make an appointment for when he returned. The same day, I tried to see Elvin Thom to find out if there would be space at the Grand Hotel for the people arriving on Explorer II in October, and got the same kind of response. I wonder what's going on". They asked Toby about it, and he had no idea. Toby asked Sally Freud, who said it was probably just a coincidence.

Baleena did not have a lot of possessions, so a small truck was

sufficient to move her things into the suite in the Grand Hotel. This was much nicer than her place in Lango. When she was all unpacked, she invited Toby to see her new place, and she was sure to make him know that she appreciated his efforts.

September 3016

The Ollva Sacred Grove, on the side of Ollva Mountain on the southwest part of Ladla, was a long journey for many of the members, but nonetheless most of the usual people were there. This was the first one Shad Hills attended, but he had made the journey from Comton, where construction of Toby's new mountain home was in its final stages. Frank and Frances Frowlee and their daughter Beth, now 10 years old were also in attendance. Frances' sister Baleena was also present. There was not much new to report regarding Toby's grand plan to transform the island into a tourist destination. Sally's mention of the conversation she had overheard in Toby's office led into a lively debate on how to keep future meetings secret. Consensus was that meeting at sacred groves and coves was risky. If Toby's people caught on, the very places they were most interested in protecting were in jeopardy. In the future they would meet at member's homes. Also, they would meet at irregular intervals, not every 3 months as they had been doing. Shad Hill volunteered to host the next meeting in February.

October 3016

Arnold Firth was on a mission to arrange for metal to be delivered to Oleans to be used in production of rockets and components for the rail line. He had driven his car alone from Logo along the Lower Lin River Road, and made a stop at the Lango Farm Store as he approached Lango. It was a slow day at the store, so he sat down with Phil Rollins in the store and shared lunch with him. Firth was concerned about the less than cordial welcome to the northeast neighborhood he had received from Jeb Smithers, and wondered what the people in this more industrial part of the island thought about everything. Phil had a good perspective on this, as his store was frequented by all of the area farmers, as well as miners picking up tools and machines for the mineral harvesting on the mountain. The farmers, at least the ones in this area, did not seem too concerned, since their farms were not near where the tourists would be going. The miners on the other hand were happy with the idea that their business could do well with the increased demand for metal to create tourist facilities. Arnold left assured that all would go well. His meeting with Gary Gowin, owner of the foundry, reinforced the idea that the demand for output of that factory would be good for business. He continued on his way to Laton to report back to Toby.

November 3016

Cindy Hopper, the school science teacher, and Laton town engineer Henry Higgins sat outdoors in the small observatory that he had helped build

next to the school building. It was an unusually cloudless night, and they hoped to see the arrival of Explorer II into orbit around Lad. A couple of interested students were chatting near the small telescope Higgins was adjusting to point to the expected location where the ship would fire its engines to achieve orbit. The visitors from Tobus had brought electronic screens and imaging devices that Higgins had adapted to fit to the telescope, so all present would be able to see. They monitored the time and counted down the seconds. About 30 seconds after the expected time, they all saw the bright flare as the ship's rocket fired long enough to slow the craft and bring it into orbit. Cindy was looking forward to meeting Joseph Columbo, who would lead the team responsible for establishing a technical school to help people of Lad learn about the new technology that was being introduced.

The first lander contained 5 crew members, and the first 5 members of each of the 5 teams. Joseph Columbo's team, responsible for recruitment as well as the technical school, would remain in Laton, as would Hilda Gernstatter and her team who would prepare for delivery of the semiconductor factory. Aptly named Robert Stone would head up the mineral assay and processing unit near Lango. Roberto Puck, Toby's crew chief from the previous voyage of Explorer II, had decided to return to manage installation of the nuclear power plant in Olean. The plant would power the rocket and rail line manufacturing facility in Olean. Hilda's sister Ingrid, as knowledgeable in heavy manufacturing as her sibling was about semiconductors, would lead that team. The craft came down right on schedule, and settled gently on the landing pad near Laton.

It had been a longer journey than Toby expected, from Laton to Comton, where he was ready to enter his new house for the first time. Shad Hills was standing in front of the door, and offered a firm handshake as Toby approached. Toby was glad that Baleena could come along on the long trip to keep him company. Shad welcomed her to the neighborhood. The expanse of shining stone floor inside the entrance was stunning, but it was somehow intimate with the wood and stone walls that surrounded it. All of the facilities on the first floor were exactly what Toby expected from his meeting about the design. Shad's tour of the new building ended in the master bedroom, featuring a large fireplace with a cozy fire already burning. There was still some work to be done in the office, setting up the telecommunications gear so that Toby could be in constant contact with his people back on Laton. Shad retired to a guest bedroom on the floor below, and left Toby and Baleena alone in the large bedroom.