**Outline Desert Ring World**

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Novel is already in progress. The first part of this may be a little skimpy until I catch up to current position.

This is the story of the colony world Tingies 0017, commonly referred to as just Tingies. This is a large world with a lighter gravity than it should have, one very large continent and many islands. In fact, initially the colonist thought about settling on one of the larger islands. However, they choose the center of the main land mass, the continent instead. This decision, made by Jarwan Sunderson and the other colony leaders, was because it was thought that offered the best chance of survival during the colonies first years.

The site they choose was the center of the large circular desert in the center of the continent. This desert, unusual in its size and shape, is split by a large river that runs from an almost continent-wide mountain range in the north to an equally wide swamp in the south. The two sides of the continent are covered in forests that go from the edge of the desert to the ocean with no apparent open spots. They chose the center of the desert because of the yearlong sunlight and steady source of water.

It is a small colony effort consisting initially of 271 people, the majority of them adults. Few children have been born in the first ten years of the colony. Of the children in the group two of them, Sam and Polly Bitterlly are the children of Denise, the colonies Primary Doctor. Their father died in the first year of the settlement before they realized how bad the spring flood water coming from the mountains would be. The doctor is now an interest of Jarwan, Wendy’s father and the colony leader. He is the appointed leader until certain milestones are reached in which case the colony will elect new leaders (maybe these elections have already occurred, and the results are known).

Colony missions are resupplied at certain pre-arranged intervals set up and paid for in advance. This way colonies don’t have to worry about achieving any kind of sustaining production during their startup years. This of course leaves the colony vulnerable to the company they hire to carry them to their new home and contract with to make supply drops. Most of the time this is handled by one of the large system spanning company or family groups but there are a few independent smaller companies, like the Deidre who do this kind of thing. Such companies, regardless of size, must have and maintain a stellar reputation, in order to be trusted. They of course insist on prepayment for cargo drops to protect their own financial status.

Our story starts on the eve of the Tingies colonies first cargo drop. This is occurring roughly on the tenth year of the colony. (Appointment times when starships are involved are often imprecise.) One of the things that is to happen during this cargo delivery is an exploratory mission conducted by the Deidre to further expand the colonies knowledge of it ‘s home world. This is sub-contracted to the Deidre because they carry equipment and personnel that a colony would not normally have. The colony, in this particular case, is also providing team members. This is not always the case.

Since the exploration mission is going to take some time the Captain of the Deidre, Mike Halerin, decides to get some necessary maintenance and rebuilding work done on the ship’s engine and power systems. This is done so that the ship doesn’t not waste time at its home base, the planet Sartagius.

The exploration team is led by Josh Halerin, the Captain’s son, and an old flame of Wendy Sunderson, the colony leader’s daughter and one of the colony members assigned to the exploration team. In this age of very long-life spans (LLS – Long Life Spans) that doesn’t really mean anything. Relationships are often fleeting and just for convenience, companionship and, of course, sex.

Wendy is not really gung ho on the need for the expense of the team, but after father explains that it can’t be changed now she insists on going along. The other member of the colony team is Jameson Maleef, a biologist trying to be a farmer and interested in Wendy as a possible mate. You think Jarwan had anything to do with this pairing.

The exploration team sets out while the Deidre begins its maintenance work overhead. The first day of the team’s mission is uneventful.

At the end of the second day of the mission the team reaches the edge of the desert and discovers a three-meter wall of unknown material separating the forest from the desert. This wall apparently covers the entire edge of the desert all the way around effectively separating the desert from the rest of the continent.

They discover that anything going over the top of the wall, in this case a drone, loses power. The perform some experiments and discover that a dampening field that sucks away energy is responsible. This field also sucks up lifeforce energy, so it is potentially fatal and they have no easy way over it.

They report all of this to the Deidre, who relay it to the colony.

It’s about this time that bad weather in the form of incessant rain begins to fall on the colony.

The exploration team decides, with the input of the ship, to attempt to get over the wall.

11/14/2021 Pick up here.

After getting the new arrivals down to what they now call the lounge (from all the seating arraignments), where the injured people are. Josh takes the new arrivals, Jerimy, Dr. Lovis and Patty around to the various chambers they’ve explored with particular emphasis on what they call the control room. He fills them in on the various things they’ve encountered.

Dr Lovis tells them that Wendy should be up and around but that Jameson really needs the ship’s medical facilities.

Josh and Mikiu return to the surface to contact the ship, but the weather is so bad they cannot attempt to contact the ship. The dock is being flooded and the elevator will not open the doors. It does show them why. (Apparently this is an automatic function using a viewscreen that opens on the wall where each doorway is.