



Stories for the Train

Tales on the go

0:5:00

Aqua – A New World

By David Rowlandson

William Brewster, John Carver and Dorothy were Gods. Not in the literary sense of course, but to many in this New World, that's what they were. Their music transcended all cultures, all generations and all ethnicities.

Only that very morning the trio had transported from their vessel in space down to Aqua, a unique waterworld, full of lakes, rivers, waterfalls and millions of islands, the atmosphere kept damp under an almost endless cloud cover. It is just as well the cloud existed, because Aqua had two suns, which lit the planet for all but two parters a day, and would have burnt the lush green foliage to a frazzle, if either sun broke through during the forty parters day.

Brewster, Carver and Dorothy positioned themselves high on a clifftop, towering over the daily hubbub of life below and the moment Brewster struck the first chord on his bass guitar, the world below stopped and looked up above to the three Gods on high.

Carver on acoustics and Dorothy on rhythm joined in and as their music reached a crescendo the populace below wept, uncontrollably, with joy. They were mesmerized by the sounds that engulfed all partitions of their brains. They could think of nothing but the music. They were open to whatever whims these Gods dictated.

They had become true worshippers to the “Music Gods.”

“It’s going well so far Captain,” commented Lieutenant John Clarke. His face was almost as red as his hair, he was so enthused. John had been my able Second in Command and friend these last ten years aboard our space transporter, ‘The Hawthorn’, ever since we left Earth and it’s apocalyptic ways. We were carrying pilgrims to find a New World to settle in. This was the fourth planet we had found that looked to sustain plant and animal life such as ours. We were amazed and grateful to find intelligent life also. A very gentle humanoid race it appeared, but one that strangely had no verbal speech with which to communicate. This was all done, we assumed, through telepathy. This world was relatively silent compared to the megadecibel world we had left behind us.

I ventured my own summation. “It’s hard to believe any cultured society has never had music in any form. Brewster’s idea to play music to them is working. I knew they could hear but hadn’t accepted how they would react to sounds that had rhythm, beat or melody.”

Everything was going well. We had been in orbit for two weeks now and each day we had transported our musical trio to the surface in different regions of this world, receiving the same reaction wherever they performed. We were now ready for the second phase of our plan. Integration.

We had brought over two thousand passengers and crew with us with the intention of dividing them into at least four groups, to be placed in different regions. Our resident psychologist, Doctor Solomon Prower had advised this scheme as it was least likely to upset the local inhabitants and this number was sufficient for the ongoing propagation of our race.

Lieutenant Clarke and I were sitting in my Ready room when there was a knock at the door. "Come on in," I advised.

Stepping through the door was one of the pilgrim leaders, Isaac Allerton, a very tall, very serious individual, one who I recognised as a man with very little patience. "Sorry to interrupt Captain Jones, but we have all been following the success of Mr. Brewster on the monitors in the lounges and we have been impressed by the world below. We're all eager to begin living our lives again on terra-firma. Can you please tell us when we can be transported down?"

That was the politest conversation I had had with him in quite a while. I answered with equal politeness. "Ah! Mr. Allerton. Your timing is excellent. The Lieutenant and I were just going through last minute plans on how to proceed. We are ready to transport the first group down into the Southern Region. Please have them ready to board the transporter in eight parters."

"Wonderful news Captain. That is my Region I believe. I will have my group ready. I'm sure everyone will be relieved to be on the move."

As he turned to leave, I added more information. "Please advise the remaining passengers to be patient, as we will monitor your integration into the Region for a week before sending down the next group." Mr. Allerton was about to object but I reminded him that we had travelled for ten years and a few weeks wait was little time in comparison. That was the last time we saw Mr. Allerton until the moment of his group's departure.

We spent the next day transporting the passengers and their possessions down to the surface, including equipment to begin building a new life. I had arranged for Lieutenant Clarke to supervise

the move on the ground, and we kept in constant touch over our communication devices.

John reported that initially the locals were curious about the arrival of the group and as yet good communication with them had not been established, but for some elementary sign language. At times their curiosity impeded the setting up of camp life. John and I discussed the effect Brewster and co. had on the populace and incorporated a similar scenario by setting up speakers around the camp and continually playing soothing music through the airwaves. This did the trick and the locals appeared to enjoy the sensation and left the group to their settling in.

On day three a delegation of locals arrived into the camp and believe it or not they began trading with the pilgrims over basic food and indeed some of the possessions the travelers had brought and no longer needed.

By day five Mr. Allerton had set up a trading post and delegated some of the young men to act as traders on behalf of the community. The food being traded was strange to the pilgrims and included new fruit, vegetables and strange fish, which by all reports were most tasty.

They learned that the local community were relatively sophisticated regarding technology, but of course they had no equipment that transmitted sounds, hence no telephones, radio or television as such. The trading post found that there was growing demand for the novelty of portable music players.

Towards the end of day six there were no more portable music players to trade, yet more and more locals were turning up requesting them. Also, earlier purchasers were returning looking for

additional music. Young Bartholomew Allerton had an idea. In exchange for goods he would play different music over the huge speakers in the compound for all to hear. By all accounts he selected some Heavy Rock Music from his personal collection.

It was at this point everything went wrong. The locals reacted violently to the sounds they were hearing and became agitated. Mr. Allerton, in his own aggressive style, tried to quell the animosity in front of him by shouting at them. A group of Aqua locals covered their ears in an attempt to keep out both the music and Allerton's angry sounds. Others began slinging whatever they could find at Allerton and anyone close by.

It quickly developed into a riot. Fifty-one of the pilgrims were killed, including Isaac and Bartholomew Allerton and over one hundred were injured. We have evacuated everyone from the planet.

We don't intend to give up on our plans to inhabit this world, but myself, John Clarke and Doctor Prower are discussing what happened and how best to proceed in colonizing another region. There will definitely not be any Heavy Rock Music played, I can tell you.

Captain Christopher Jones - Hawthorn Record 9th November 2070.