

## The Cabin

(A Short Story by T. U.-P.)

On a warm and sunny afternoon in the Galatian Bay archipelago, the Hunters and some of their closest friends pack up their lunch coolers and picnicking gear for their first trip to Silent Island. The large island, about forty-five minutes due north from the front dock of the family cottage was once reputed to have vast sandy shores which were deemed rare amid the expanse of bedrock in the archipelago area.

“Make sure you pack the snorkels and don’t forget the Frisbee...” Mrs. Hunter shouts aloud.

“Got it! I’ll grab the red cooler as well and take it to the front dock!” Her son Todd replies.

“Don’t forget to pack an extra bathing towel and plenty of sunscreen...” Mrs. Hunter says.

“Are we taking the burgers and hotdogs? Not sure if there’s a fire pit...” Todd asks.

“I packed away some bread and lunch meat for sandwiches. I don’t want to take the hibachi and charcoal this time... Ok?”

“Thanks mom!”

After hauling all of the picnicking essentials to the dock and placing them into the front compartment of the motor boat, the group of twelve sets off for Silent Island. On board the slightly stern heavy “Pelican” motor vessel, the upbeat crew enjoys socializing while being splashed by the bay waters as the boat cruises along bobbing up and down over the wavy open waters. After passing One Tree Island and going through a narrow straight of rocky shallows, the driver speeds toward the recognizable mounded profile of Silent Island. About forty minutes later, the waters begin to get shallower upon their approach to the sandy beach.

“I’m turning off the engine and pulling the motor up cuz the waters are getting shallow!” Mr. Hunter shouts to his crew.

“Let’s get out the paddles so we can check the depth and get a bit closer before we use the anchor!” Thomas Hunter says.

“When we get about thirty meters we’ll throw the anchor off the starboard side!” Todd says to his brother.

After eyeing the shallowness of the clear blue waters, the anchor is tossed overboard and some of the heavier gear is loaded onto a small rubber float. After jumping overboard, Todd and Thomas wade in the knee deep waters, carrying backpacks of gear on their shoulders and guiding the dry inflatable float toward the

beach some twenty meters away. Soon, the rest of the Pelican's crew follow the two boys, keeping their picnic possessions dry as they also wade toward the sandy beach.

"Welcome to paradise, honey!" Mrs. Hunter says cheerfully to her husband.

"Is it as pretty as you imagined it to be?" Mr. Hunter asks his wife.

"We have the whole beach to ourselves! I'd call that more than just pretty, honey!"

After carrying all of the picnicking gear and other beach paraphernalia to a sunny part of the beach, the island visitors spread out their bathing towels onto the pristine sands and soak in the sun with their beverages, snacks and self-serve sandwiches by their side. After lunch, most of the group goes in for a swim to cool off, while others choose to read or play catch in the sand.

After a prolonged swim with their snorkeling gear, Todd grabs a Frisbee and shouts to his brother: "Thomas! Catch!"

After throwing the Frisbee intentionally out of reach, the disc flies well over Thomas' head and far beyond into the wooded area beyond the sandy dunes.

"What did you do that for you knuckle-head! There better not be poison ivy in there!" Thomas shouts back at his brother who has a big grin on his face.

"We'll both go and get it! I thought you had enough hops to catch it!"

"I'm not twenty feet tall you moron!" Thomas says heading through the dune-scape toward the woods.

"We can play explorers like we used to back in elementary school! No sweat bro!"

After passing the dunes, Thomas pauses some ten to twenty meters into the patch of woods awaiting his brother Todd.

"Have you found it?" Todd shouts from just beyond the dunes with their shallow-rooted pollinator plants and thick grasses.

"Bro... I see the Frisbee but you've got to see this... This island isn't really abandoned like we once thought it was..." Thomas says to his brother.

"What the... Is that a razor-wire fence? Let's just grab the Frisbee and get out of here!"

"You're gonna have to give me a boost. It's stuck there at the top..."

"Maybe you can climb up on my shoulders and reach up at the top part of the fence where those sharp things are..."

"Good call!" Thomas says back to his brother.

After standing on a small boulder near a small tree, Thomas climbs onto his brother's shoulders and is carried over to the tall fence where the Frisbee is stuck.

Standing as tall as he can, Thomas eyes the jagged top of the fence and peers into the heavily armored enclosure.

“What the heck! Todd! You should see how many coyotes are trapped in here! There are literally hundreds of cages with five to ten in each! They also put muzzles on the poor animals!”

“What? Coyotes! Just grab the Frisbee, I’m getting creeped out!”

After noticing the cages and a small wooden cabin further into the wooded enclosure, Thomas quickly grabs the Frisbee, which has scratches from the barbed wire, and quickly hops off of Todd’s tired shoulders. At the very moment the Frisbee is forcefully dislodged from its metallic trap, a loud alarm sounds with a male robotic voice: *“INTRUDER! Intruder Alert! INTRUDER! Intruder Alert! You are intruding on private property!”*

“Let’s get off this island! This place gives me the creeps!” Thomas says to his brother as they rush out of the woods and back toward the beach.

“We’ve got to get out of here! This island has a weird secret or something... Let’s tell the others we’ve got to jet...” Todd says as he tails his speedier brother toward the dunes and out of the woods.

“What’s all that commotion, Sweetie?” Mrs. Hunter says as she spots Thomas racing toward the boat anchored just off the shore.

“Mom... We’ve got to pack up and go... Silent Island isn’t really a public beach anymore!” Thomas shouts at his mom who has an apprehensive look in her eye.

“What do you mean son? Where’s all of that noise coming from?” Mr. Hunter says, putting his book down on the sand by his beach towel.

“Dad... We’ve got to pack up and go... Thomas and I went looking for our Frisbee and we stumbled on some type of fur farm... Let’s tell the guests it’s time to get the hell of this island! Like right now!” Todd says rushing through the dunes and onto the beach.

“Ok everyone... A slight change of plans... Let’s pack up and we can have cocktails and appetizers when we get back to the cottage...” Mr. Hunter says to the rest of his guests sprawled out on their beach towels.

After quickly packing up the coolers and loading the rest of the packs and dry bags onto the same flotation device, the same group of twelve start to wade in the shallow waters to get back to the Pelican still anchored a short distance off the sandy shore. Some five to ten minutes later when all of the crew is on board, the anchor is brought back into the bow and the motor is lowered down at the rear before Mr. Hunter turns on the ignition. Soon, the Pelican jets off again heading southward with a slight rooster tail of water at the stern propelling it forward.

As the Pelican was speeding twenty or so minutes away to the south, a red 'cigarette' speedboat sets its course for the northern end of Silent Island. Equipped with a rifle and wearing camouflage army gear, the lone driver, standing upright at the steering wheel, rushes toward a well dissimulated dock, bobbing up and down over the tall waves of the northern channel. Reaching into the pocket of his camo army vest, the driver uses his radio to talk to another associate in the same bay area.

"Someone triggered an alarm on the delta side. I'm heading over to investigate... I'll radio back shortly... Over..."

"Roger that... Over..." A gruff male voice replies.

After putting his radio back in his pocket, the speedboat driver slows upon his approach to the island and cuts off the engine just before throwing the bumpers over the port side and hopping onto the long wooden dock. After tying a set of complex sailor knots to anchor the boat to the dock, the same man grabs his rifle and rushes into the island compound. Ten minutes later, the man reaches back into his pocket to talk on his radio after deactivating the same loud alarm and pulsating siren.

"It appears someone tripped the alarm at the top of the fence on delta. No one got into the compound though... Over..."

"Have you checked the footage? Over..."

"I'll go into Cabin 3 and see what turns up... Over..."

"Report back... Over..."

After heading past the many cages of the distressed coyotes kept silent through the use of intrusive muzzles, the same man with his hunting rifle goes into the same cabin Thomas had partially noticed on his brother's back while retrieving the Frisbee. Once inside the mysterious inner confines of the small cedar plank cabin, the man sits at a command post eyeing footage of the south fence. After noticing the face of the eighteen-year old peering over into the enclosure at a set time within the last hour or so, he jots a few notes down and decides to check footage of the south beach from a hidden dune camera. As he studies the group of picnickers frolicking on the now private beach through his security footage, the man receives a call from the same associate on his radio.

"Any breach going on for Big Goose Corporation and the top-secret fur-op? Over..."

"Another group of picnickers... They left the island before I came by... We're gonna have to install 'No Trespassing' signage now... Over..."

"How do they know about this place? It's no place on the internet... Never seen it written about either... Over..."

“We’ve got to make signs soon... Especially on the south side... Looks like a pair of teenage hooligans tripped the alarm when they were trying to get their Frisbee on the top of Delta... Over...”

“We don’t want no trouble with our operation... Big Goose is payin’ you well to keep this little island a secret... You hear me... Over...”

“Roger that, Boss... I kept my trusty rifle real close... Was ready to use it on ‘em if I had to... They were already speeding south by the time I got here... Over...”

“I’ll order some signs that’ll scare the next group who want to sneak onto Silent Isles unauthorized... Over...”

After signing out, the same illicit fur-trader stands up in his cabin and opens a small dresser lined with an array of different high-end winter coats adorned with thick fur collars and a fancy red patch with the brand name “Big Goose” stitched onto it. After quickly eyeing the new line of men’s and women’s jackets set to hit stores in the fall, the man leaves the cabin with the same rifle leaning next to the small door. After walking up and down the rows of cages where the dehydrated coyotes and confined, he heads back to the north dock where his boat is moored.

[The End]