

**FOUND IN SPACE,  
BUT WHO ARE YOU?**

**A Science Fiction Novel**

**By Randal Lee Gritzner**

**Illustrated by Taylor Randa Gritzner**

# Chapter 1

## Blast Off

**Today is August 8, 2673. My name is Captain Jeremiah Scott. My wife, Commander Olivia Scott, and two others are with me on this mission. Commander Sebastian Brown M.D. and his wife, Commander Amelia Brown M.D. are with us. My wife and I are both qualified to fly this craft. The Browns are on this mission as medical staff. This is Expansion Mission #27.**

**Some background information might be of use. In recent decades, the population of Earth has been growing in a very healthy pattern. We nearly drove ourselves extinct about a hundred years ago with nuclear warfare, but finally crawled out of our own rubble and stabilized. New technologies deserve much of the credit for that stabilization, and our population growth since. Since the year 2647, the United States has launched one Expansion Mission per year. Each mission has settled on a new planet, forming settlements for expansion of the human population. Continuous *light-warp communication* has maintained contact between those colonies and Earth, and a couple of those colonies have reached populations over 100,000 strong. Very few successful missions have been launched by any other country. None of those missions have been very successful.**

**Because the United States has outpaced every other country on Earth in space technology, immigration has become another nightmare. Other countries have outperformed our technological growth in a small number of other areas. Hunger on Earth no longer exists, but that is partially because so many hundreds of**

**millions died a century ago. The people living in “poverty” today are actually comfortable. They just want more and are not always capable of earning more. When the U.S. moves slowly to allow legal immigration today, they are not turning back people who suffer from harsh conditions. There really are no harsh conditions on Earth today, just people trying to reach for more than they currently have.**

**All four of us on this ship are childless, and in top physical condition for reproduction as soon as we settle and stabilize our new colony. Commander Sebastian Brown M.D. and Commander Amelia Brown M.D. are on this mission for that very purpose, to serve as childbirth and medical professionals.**

**Data collected from earlier missions has been collected to give us strong ideas on where to look for a good planet. *Search and settle* technology will allow us to scan planets one by one for final selection. Soil and atmospheric composition, resource availability, and multiple other surface factors to be used in choosing a planet can be precisely measured. All data from planets that were scanned earlier is in a database to help us avoid scanning a planet that has already been discarded.**

**Some of the earlier missions scanned a dozen planets or more prior to finding a suitable planet for colonization. Mission #13 scanned over 2 dozen planets, but they did eventually find a beautiful planet on which to live long and prosper. They found such a wonderfully suitable planet to establish themselves upon, that they became the first new settlement to reach population of over 100,000. Life on Earth is prospering beyond all expectations, but many people still jump at the chance to be part of new settlements**

**elsewhere. Ship after ship sometimes flock to a new planet when good reports warrant it. Many people are looking for adventure.**

**I am so proud of our ship, that I must brag just a bit. We are sitting in the first ship to be powered by nuclear fusion. Mankind has been using nuclear fusion in power plants for decades, but it has never before been used in the small quarters environment of a spaceship. Nuclear fission powered spacecraft have been used for nearly 400 years, but there's just something about nuclear fusion that had us stumped for the longest time. Nobody could reach the temperatures needed to initiate fusion. It turns out that nuclear fission was needed to reach the appropriate temperatures for initiating nuclear fusion. That was accomplished about 400 years ago, but then they couldn't figure out how to do it with sufficient safety and in small enough space restrictions to fit on a spacecraft.**

**I feel so honored to be the Commanding Officer of such a historic flight. My wife and I struggled through serious competition to secure our positions on this flight. The Browns faced similar competition to earn their positions on this flight. That makes me believe beyond any shadow of a doubt that we have 4 of the most highly-qualified people on this ship for the successful completion of this mission.**

**The countdown has gotten close to the time for launch. Mission Control can be heard over the radio, "30-29-28-27-26-25-24-23-22-21-20-19-18-17-16-15-14-13-12-11-10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 LAUNCH! EXPANSION MISSION #27 has successfully lifted off!"**

**I have waited so long to hear those words! I've been on dozens of short missions, but this lift-off was so smooth that I almost felt like I was in my own living room in my recliner. I keep checking all**

my digital gauges and readouts, and everything is perfect. There have been times when cryogenics were used for long-term launches, but those were *research* missions. This being a *search and settle* mission, our distances will not be so great. All four of us will maintain awareness at all times, in alternating shifts, and control where we go accordingly. When we do choose a planet, we have automated equipment with which to perform most labor-intensive tasks.

I've done this so many times before, but there is still something intoxicating about seeing the entire Earth at once, then watching it get smaller and smaller. Watching the bright sunshine of daytime turn gradually to darkness within minutes never gets old. I've heard people who haven't been to space describe it as boring darkness, but that is so far from the truth. Stars are so much brighter without atmospheric distortion that the beauty is magnificent.

We're now 16 hours away from Earth, and all systems are operating perfectly. My readings and the readings from Mission Control on Earth are all optimal. It is now time for my wife and I to enter into our altered sleep cycles. The Browns will be doing the same thing. We each get 8 hours to sleep per day. My wife and I can't sleep at the same time until we stop on a planet, because we only have 2 pilots. That should occur within a week or two.

Just as I kissed my wife goodnight for her to go to bed, we froze in place with our lips pressed firmly together. Unfortunately, that's the only pleasantness of the next 7 days. The Browns also froze in place, or so it appears. It's like we all fell asleep at the same moment and our motions stopped.

**The next thing I remember, I woke up with my lips still pressed against my wife's face. We both woke up at the same time and looked at each other, both wondering what just happened. The Browns also woke up at the same time, in the same state of confusion. I quickly looked at my control panel, and red lights were flashing everywhere. Dozens of communications from Earth had gone unanswered while we were unconscious. The time and date on the panel indicated that one week had passed while we were out, and the communications from Earth had stopped 6 days ago.**

**I tried to reinitiate communications, and Earth communication is somehow out of reach. My control panel also tells me that our direction has changed, and it has changed 12 times in the last week. My database recognizes no star patterns in our current sky. I have no idea where we are! Who has been flying our ship? How did they take control? What is going on?**

**"Look at that!" my wife shouted. She was pointing at my control panel as a message came from an unidentified source. The message said, "Silly humans! When will you ever learn that you are not the most intelligent beings in existence?" I tried to reply to the message, but there was no way. It was like a one way text message with no possible way that I could find to respond. The communication stopped there.**

**My wife, the Browns, and I stared at each other in the most confused state imaginable. We've been flying for a week in who knows what direction at the fastest speeds yet achieved. We have no idea where we are. Perhaps it's time to start scanning planets in hopes of establishing our new home. We'll obviously keep trying to reconnect with Earth, but we've had no success communicating with Earth yet or with any of the other 26 planetary colonies. Light-warp**

communication should be able to reach Earth and the colonies, and I haven't been able to diagnose the problem.

I am the Commanding Officer of this mission, and in this unique situation I choose to inform my colleagues of our next plan of action. "Initiating the *search and settle scan*," I said, "That is our mission." Olivia and the Browns nodded in agreement, hoping that regaining communication with Earth can still be accomplished at a later time.

My *scan app* informs me that 3 possible planets are nearby. The first planet is now coming into range. A 10-minute scan informed us that the planet has insufficient air for our survival. It's not even close. That was the first information available from the scan, so I aborted the scan.

The second planet is nearly in range, but I'm already getting readings of radioactivity. I've never even heard of a planet with radioactivity reaching that far into space. No discussion necessary.

The third planet will be in range in about 20 minutes. Our training taught us patience in these matters, because choosing a planet prematurely can be a choice that is soon regretted. We can always go back to a planet that was sufficient but not optimal, should the selection process take too much time. Patience can be a virtue.

While waiting for that third planet to come within range of our scan app, we tried to make sense of our 7-day unconsciousness and the unknown text message. I truly consider the four of us on this ship to be extraordinarily gifted in intellect, training, drive, and every other trait necessary for the successful completion of this

mission, but we still have no idea what happened to an entire week of our time on this ship.

The third planet is now in range, and the initial readings are coming in with very promising readings. The atmosphere is wonderful, resource availability is better than on Earth, and then strong readings of possible life came through. We got indications of animals much larger than we expected. We nearly landed to look around, but at the last minute we got some visual readings. The animals that we saw fighting viscosly with each other had teeth and claws nearly the size of a human. We'll keep looking.

The next 10 planets took over 2 days to find and scan. 10 big rocks incapable of growing a weed did not look promising. We keep trying to regain communication with Earth or the colonies and have had no success.

We try to keep spirits up and patience in good supply, but this can get rather depressing after a while. Olivia reminded us that we must have a good planet coming soon. One week went by and we scanned our 34<sup>th</sup> planet. The readings started coming in, and we may have a winner. The air is practically a perfect match for Earth. The resource availability reading suggests a richer planet than Earth by far. Then life was detected, and this time the animals seem to be of comparable size to humans. With due caution we prepared to land and take closer readings.

The push of a few buttons brought a smooth landing. I hardly ever need to perform a manual landing unless vicious winds become an issue. That is usually avoided, when possible. This place looks like a beautiful, lush valley, with a stream nearby. Weapons at the ready, we left our ship and searched the area. A gentle breeze felt



cool and mild, and birds were chirping. It felt as if we had landed on Earth. A deer walked nearby and looked at us, like as if he were curious. This place couldn't be any more like Earth. Then a rabbit sauntered through. He seemed indifferent to our presence. This place is too much to believe. This place seems like Earth before humans messed everything up. Today is August 16, 2673.

We have little need to establish a camp because our ship has everything we need. Our food, lighting, clothing, and everything else we need is synthesized at the push of a button. We dressed for a hike and set out to evaluate the area for resources. Trees are abundant as raw materials for our building construction devices. The stream that flows near our ship joins a larger stream that appears to have lots of fish. Our automated fish harvesting equipment will get a good workout. Soil samples tested with fertility ratings off the charts. Synthesized food is good, but there is still nothing like a good home-cooked meal. Of course, we have automated devices that fish, farm, hunt, and cook, and the food tastes so much better than that synthesized diet that we frequently subsist on while traveling through space.

We were looking for every resource available near our ship, including wildlife, and we were therefore proceeding very quietly. We purposely walked into the breeze to give minimal evidence to wildlife of our presence. We found something, or I should say *someone* that surprised us all. I heard a snapping twig and silently motioned for everyone to be still. We peered through the branches to see a small group of humans, and they were collecting grasses, fruits, seeds, berries, and nuts. They all wore what looked like warm-weather clothing made of light-weight animal skins. One man had a wooden spear with a rabbit hanging from it.

**The Browns, Olivia, and I looked at each other in disbelief. We weren't exactly sure what to do. I silently motioned with a finger for them to follow me. We walked slowly into the clearing. They noticed us immediately. They were startled, and obviously weren't sure what to make of us because they didn't recognize us or our clothing. I started collecting some fruits and seeds, so Olivia and the Browns started to follow my lead. Within a couple minutes they returned to their collection activities, while keeping a close eye on us. They had some small hand-woven baskets for collecting their food items. We put our collected items into their baskets, and the baskets were soon full.**

**One man was obviously their leader, an older man beyond his prime. He gave a loud grunt and they followed him. We followed the group to a nearby camp. Several small lean-to shelters were in a semicircle, with a fire in the center. Several people were already in the camp. Two men had skinned rabbits lying on a large rock in the center of the fire. A large rock nearby had a scraper sitting on it that looked like flint. It was bloody and appeared to be the tool with which the rabbits had been skinned.**

**We had agreed not to speak yet, not wanting to scare these people. We had heard no speech, beyond occasional grunts and hand motions. The third rabbit was over the fire in minutes, and the smell was better than anything we had eaten in the past week.**

**I motioned to my partners and went back toward the ship a short distance. I used my pocket knife to quickly make a spear. In short time I had 2 rabbits. I walked back to the camp and cleaned those rabbits with the flint scraper. Sebastian saw what I was doing, so he quickly left the camp site long enough to use his pocket knife to make a spear and came back with one additional rabbit. We**

observed the behavior of our new friends and did our best to fit in. Sebastian and I cooked 3 rabbits while Olivia and Amelia gathered some fruit and seeds from the baskets, like the other women were doing. We watched small families gather for a meal of rabbit, fruit, berries, and seeds. Not all families had rabbit to eat. Once Sebastian and I had cooked our rabbits, we shared rabbit with our women and our women shared fruit and seeds with us. Not a single person in this group is overweight. Some appear underweight.

I motioned for Sebastian to come with me. We left for a few minutes and came back with 3 more rabbits. We cleaned the rabbits and handed them to 3 families that didn't seem to get as much to eat. They looked at us with expressions of confusion. I put a rabbit on the big rock in the fire and pointed a man toward the cooking rabbit. His woman cried quietly. The other 2 families put their rabbits on the big rock and started cooking them. Those 3 families kept looking at us with smiles and expressions that indicated they didn't understand exactly what had just happened. None of those families had more than one child that we could see. None of the children looked older than 5 or 6.

A few minutes later a group of 10 entered the camp site. They were all men and young boys. Some of the boys may have been teenagers. We still had heard no talking beyond the occasional grunt and hand motions. They had obviously been hunting. They had a small deer, what looked like a coyote, and 4 rabbits. Another group of 6 entered the camp site from another direction. They all appeared to be young ladies, some of them teenagers. They had 3 baskets full of fruit, grasses, and seeds. Perhaps these people are not as underfed as it first appeared.

**My partners and I quietly walked away and went back to our ship. We obviously need to talk and decide on our next plan of action. We walked a good distance before we started talking, not wanting to spook our new friends.**

**“Can you believe that we found a group of hunter-gatherers?” Sebastian exclaimed, “Their only speech was a few grunts and hand motions.” “We all freaked,” I said, “Now what are we going to do with this discovery? We still haven’t been able to communicate with Earth, so we’re on our own here.” Olivia said, “We could search for another planet to settle on, or just settle on the other side of this one or stay here and teach these people what we can.”**

**“I vote that we stay here and teach these people,” I said. Olivia and the Browns thought for a minute, then we had a unanimous decision. “These people were skeptical of new humans, but it didn’t take much effort to fit in and be accepted. They sure did look at our clothing with weird expressions,” said Amelia.**

**It had been a long day, so we showered and went to bed. Tomorrow we will rejoin the hunter-gatherers in an attempt to fit in more completely. Our modern comforts of home that are plentiful in our ship offer such incredible contrast to the way our new friends are living. “Good night all,” I said. The Browns responded, but Olivia got a good long lip lock. She smiled.**

**We all woke in the morning feeling refreshed from a good night’s sleep. We ate our synthesized bacon, hash browns, eggs over medium, ciabatta rolls, butter, orange juice and coffee. I wonder what our neighbors had for breakfast. The Scotts and Browns decided to keep wearing our normal attire, and to carry some small tools in our pockets. We’ll not let those tools be seen, but they could**

come in handy when nobody is looking. We decided that today our plan is to just blend in with what they are doing and try to teach a couple words here and there. The rest we can play as opportunities present themselves. We might get separated during the day, so we do have our implanted cell phones.

Olivia and I held hands as we walked toward the campsite, and the Browns followed our lead. The nomads took notice and looked at us with questioning expressions. I kissed Olivia on the cheek, so Sebastian followed by kissing Amelia on the cheek. I hugged Olivia and Sebastian hugged Amelia. It appeared that they were still eating breakfast. As close as I can tell, their settlement has 30 people. I wonder if there are any more settlements nearby.

The deer brought in by the hunters yesterday has been cleaned. Multiple flint scrapers are on the big rock in the center of the campsite near the fire. They have obviously been used then washed. Large slabs of venison can be seen laying on large rocks in the center of the campfire. The entire deer has been cooked. They don't exactly have a freezer to put it in.

I picked up a flint scraper and decided to try a first word. I said, "Flint," and pointed to the scraper. I now had everybody's attention, because I think that may have been the first word that they have ever heard. I tried to read their expressions, and they didn't seem scared, but confused. I repeated that word repeatedly while pointing at the scraper, "Flint, Flint, Flint, Flint." I looked one young man in the face and invited him to say the word as I repeated the word and motioned with my fingers for the word to come from his mouth, "Flint, Flint, Flint, Flint." I held the scraper in front of his face, but not too close, pointed to it and motioned again for the word to come from his mouth as I repeated it, "Flint, Flint, Flint,

**Flint.” The young lady beside him cautiously said, “Flint.” Her pronunciation was rough, but I was so excited to hear it that I smiled brightly and said, “Yes, Flint, Flint.” She said it again, “Flint.” Olivia and the Browns joined me in saying, “Flint, Flint, Flint.” With that, several of the nomads said the word, “Flint.”**

**The Scotts and Browns have just experienced our first major success. We can teach these people some new technologies to make their life better. They seem quite content with life as they have it, so we’ll teach them very slowly until we get a better feel for their capacity for learning. Frustration needs to be avoided when possible. I think that now I need to learn something from them. I wonder where they find the flint. Perhaps I need to establish some names before I get their help to find the flint. Olivia and the Browns are now working with some individual nomads practicing the word “flint.” They each have a flint in their hand pointing to it, as individuals can now be heard saying the word “flint.”**

**The young man that I was speaking to seems to be strongly paired with the young lady that first said the word “Flint.” I’ll try teaching the nomads our names, starting with these two individuals. I pointed to myself and said “Jeremiah.” They seemed confused, so I repeated my name “Jeremiah, Jeremiah, Jeremiah.” They both said the word “Jeremiah.” I smiled brightly with great enthusiasm and said, “Yes, Jeremiah, Jeremiah!” while still pointing to myself. A couple of nomads could be heard saying “Jeremiah” while pointing to me. I addressed them and reinforced their success with “Yes, Jeremiah, Jeremiah” while pointing to myself.**

**I took a couple steps to Olivia, pointed at her and spoke to my first two students, “Olivia, Olivia, Olivia.” My first two students hesitantly said “Olivia.” Their pronunciation was again rough, but**

pretty good for day #1. I was so excited now and smiling brightly that the entire group of nomads were now looking at me like I was the main attraction on stage. I addressed the crowd and said, “Olivia, Olivia” while pointing to Olivia. Several of them were now making their best efforts to say the word “Olivia.” Olivia and the Browns were now roaming around helping the entire group to practice their first three new words. Some individuals seemed reluctant and had not yet attempted either word. That’s okay, we’ll get them involved someday soon.

I then pulled Sebastian over near my first two students. I pointed to him and said his name repeatedly, “Sebastian, Sebastian, Sebastian.” My two students were hesitant, but they eventually said “Sebastian.” Again, I expressed great delight with my smile and saying, “Yes, Sebastian, Sebastian.” They said his name again, “Sebastian.”

I hope that I’m not trying for too much on our first day, but I motioned Amelia to come over. I faced my two students, pointed to Amelia, and repeated her name, “Amelia, Amelia, Amelia, Amelia.” My students said her name, “Amelia.” I almost danced a jig to show my excitement and enthusiasm for their success. My smile was bright, and they said her name again, “Amelia.” Several nomads could be heard saying “Amelia.”

Then I spoke to my comrades, Olivia and the Browns, “Let’s quiz them.” The nomads didn’t understand me, and their expressions showed great confusion. My comrades agreed, so I motioned them to come over to me.

I addressed my two students and pointed to the flint. I motioned for them to say the word. They looked somewhat

**confused, so I did it again and I said the word, “flint.” They smiled as they understood, and they both said “flint.” My excitement was nearly erupting now. I motioned for them to say the word again as I held up the flint, and they said “flint.” I held up the flint to the whole group, motioning for them to say the word. It took 3 attempts with me saying the word and my comrades saying the word, but a few individuals started saying the word with us, “flint.” My comrades and I are now displaying excitement that seems to be contagious. The nomads are getting excited now. We’ll do more testing later to see how their retention is.**

**I faced my students again and pointed to myself. I motioned for them to say my name. They said nothing, so I pointed to myself again and motioned for them to say my name while I said it, “Jeremiah, Jeremiah, Jeremiah.” They smiled and said, “Jeremiah.” We’ll work on pronunciations later, but we have made great progress today. My comrades and I continued to display great excitement. We got several nomads saying “Jeremiah” as I pointed to myself.**

**Then I faced my students, pointed to Olivia, and motioned for them to say her name. They looked like they almost understood me, but they said nothing. I pointed to Olivia again, motioned for them to say her name while I said “Olivia, Olivia, Olivia.” They nearly shouted this time “Olivia.” “Yes, yes, yes!” I nearly shouted and danced in excitement. My students repeated “Yes, Olivia.” I guess I need to be careful with that word “yes.” My comrades now have several nomads saying “Olivia” as I point to her.**

**I then pointed to Sebastian, faced my two students, and motioned for them to say his name. “Sebastian,” she said. She**



looked at her partner and repeated “Sebastian.” Then he said “Sebastian” while I’m still pointing to Sebastian.

“Don’t overdo it on day #1,” said Olivia. “I’m almost done for today,” I replied. The nomads appear to pay close attention to us now when we speak. They look very confused, of course, but curious. That’s a good sign. I’m happy that they aren’t spooked anymore when my comrades and I speak.

Then I pointed to Amelia, faced my two students, and motioned for them to say her name. “Amelia,” they both said. My comrades and I expressed great excitement over their progress, and they seemed to appear proud of themselves. I kept pointing to Amelia as my comrades and I now have several nomads saying her name “Amelia, Amelia, Amelia.”

“Almost done,” I said to Olivia as she was giving me her expression of “don’t overdo it.” I pointed to my individual male student and motioned for him to tell me his name. My two students looked at each other with expressions of confusion. I kept repeatedly pointing to him and motioning for him to tell me his name. They were still confused, so I took that to mean that he has no name yet. So, I gave him a name and he seemed to like it. I pointed to him and said “Adam, Adam, Adam, Adam.” I then motioned for the two of them to say his name, and they said, “Adam.” My comrades and I jumped in joy and soon had several nomads saying “Adam” as I pointed to him.

Then I pointed to Adam’s woman and motioned for her to tell me her name. I think she understood me, because she sat there shaking her head like she was trying to say “no.” I then pointed to her and gave her a name, “Ava, Ava, Ava, Ava.” She caught on

rather quickly and said “Ava” while pointing to herself. My comrades and I soon had over half of the nomads repeating “Ava” with us as I pointed to her.

The nomads were now very excited, but perhaps they had learned plenty for their first day. I called my comrades off to the side for a meeting. “I can take the lead on teaching our friends,” I said, “You all can follow and help the group practice just like we did today. Agreed?” They all expressed their support and their agreement, but Olivia did express her concern that I had given them too much for a first day. “I agree that I may have pushed the limit a bit, but I need Adam and Ava to have names so that I can learn some things from them. Our next couple can be Ben and Betty, followed by Criss and Cathy. Do you like my pattern, hoping that the memory tricks will be helpful?” “That’s a plan that I can follow whole heartedly,” said Olivia. Sebastian and Amelia expressed their agreement and approval with smiles. We have a plan.

“Pop quiz,” I said to my comrades. We faced the entire group and I held up a flint, pointing to it. Several people, Adam and Ava included, said “flint.” I pointed to Adam, and several people said “Adam.” I pointed to Ava, and several people said “Ava.” I pointed to myself, and several people said “Jeremiah.” More people have started participating now, and perhaps 2/3 of the nomads have learned some words. I pointed to Olivia, and several people said “Olivia.” I pointed to Sebastian, and several people said “Sebastian.” I pointed to Amelia, and several people said “Amelia.” I started to applaud, and my comrades followed my lead. Within a minute or so we had most of the nomads applauding themselves. I’m not sure how many of them understand the applause, but my

comrades and I had bright smiles, so at least some of them appear to understand.

I then spoke to my comrades and said, “Now maybe I can find where they get the flints.” I picked up a flint and said “Adam, where?” Still holding the flint, I kept repeating “where?” I walked around looking at the ground picking up rocks and shaking my head with a “no.” After a couple minutes of walking around, flint in hand, picking up various rocks and shaking my head, Adam suddenly smiled. He stood up quickly and pulled my arm. Perhaps he wants me to follow him, so I did.

We walked nearly half a mile. He showed me a rocky cliff and led me to a small cave. Inside the cave we easily found some nice samples of flint with good sharp edges. I picked up 4 for my comrades and myself. I smiled to Adam and said, “Thank you,” with a smile. I don’t know how well he understood my thanks, but he did smile.

When Adam and I got back to the campfire, most people had already left on their daily activities of gathering grasses, fruits, berries, seeds, and nuts. The young men and boys had gone hunting. “Olivia and Amelia, would you two like to go with Ava and do some gathering like the other ladies are doing?” I asked, “Sebastian and I can go with Adam and teach him how to fish.” Everyone agreed.

Sebastian and I motioned for Adam to follow us, and he quickly went along with us. I had noticed a river near the cave, so we went there and I taught Adam another word. I put my hand in the water, pointed at the river, and said “river, river, river.” Adam quickly said the word “river” and pointed to the river. Sebastian and I both smiled brightly and repeated the word, “river, river.”

Adam did, of course, say the word with difficulty and pronunciation that needs refining, but what can be expected from any human who is learning the first words of his life other than a grunt and a hand motion. I'm very impressed in his ability to follow directions and comprehend. We'll keep working on it.

Sebastian and I found a large tree that had fallen and was now hanging out over the water. "Let's make spears," I said to Sebastian. We each broke off a tree branch and used our flints to sharpen one end into a point. Adam followed our lead and made his own. He had his own flint tucked away and had obviously done this many times. The tree hung about 30 feet over the water, so I crawled out on the tree with Sebastian behind me. We laid quietly with spears in hand and arm cocked into position to strike. Adam watched us closely, with a confused look on his face. Sebastian saw a nice big fish swim by slowly, and he successfully speared it. He quietly took his fish back to the shore and handed it to Adam, spear and all. Adam stood there looking at the fish with amazement in his eyes. Sebastian then walked a short distance into the trees, found a strong vine, and cut off a long piece of it with his flint. We now have a *stringer* for some fish. By that time, I had a nice fish, and I put it on our stringer.

Adam was still watching us with a questioning expression. "Does he understand that we plan to eat the fish?" I asked Sebastian. "I don't think so," he replied, "I don't think he knows the word fish." So, we taught Adam the word "fish." Sebastian and I both pointed to the fish and repeated the word "fish, fish, fish." Adam now appears smarter than we first thought. "Fish," he said with a big smile. "Fish," Sebastian and I both said with big smiles.

**Sebastian and I went back out onto the tree and we each caught another fish. This river is teeming with fish, and they seem like nice big catfish that have never been harvested.**

**Adam then grunted, and hesitantly pointed to the tree. I motioned for him to go ahead. He has obviously hunted rabbits and other game with a spear, so he should have the skill to easily do this. Adam crawled out on the tree, laid down, and in very few minutes had a fish of his own. He was quite excited, but still appeared to be confused as to what we would do with the fish. We put his fish on the stringer and without a word he was back out on the tree. He caught a second fish. We put his fish on the stringer and motioned for him to follow us again. He kept looking at the fish with a confused expression, but he followed us. Perhaps curiosity has captured his attention.**

**We walked back to camp, and then Sebastian and I showed Adam how to clean the fish with our flints. We threw the bones, heads, and skins into the fire and let them burn. We then laid 12 nice big slabs of catfish on the huge rock in the middle of the fires. Most of the people at the campsite were watching us by now with confused expressions on their faces. It appears that they have never eaten fish. Sebastian and I put the tips of our spears in the fire, just long enough to sanitize them. Adam did the same. We then used the spears to turn the fish on the “grilling rock.” As appears to be the custom, large leaves are used as pseudo plates.**

**With all the fish now cooked and sitting on leaves on another large rock that they have been using as a “table”, Sebastian and I each picked up a piece of fish and started eating. Adam and several other nomads watched us with curious expressions. I motioned for Adam to eat some. He tasted it, and obviously like it. He gave a loud**

**grunt and motioned for other people to eat some fish. The fish didn't last very long, and everyone who ate some appeared to be smiling and very surprised. I think we just introduced these people to something that they have never tasted before. Sebastian and I smiled at each other, with perhaps the biggest grins of all time.**