

# VISITORS on CELEDON

VOLUME II

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## **TIXE OF CELEDON SERIES**

Tixe of Celedon Volume I

Visitors on Celedon Volume II

Return to Celedon Volume III

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Egor .....	1
Chapter Two: The Journey Begins.....	4
Chapter Three: The Celedon Clipper .....	9
Chapter Four: Lake Celedon.....	13
Chapter Five: Contact .....	16
Chapter Six: The Visitors.....	23
Chapter Seven: The Ceremony .....	27
Chapter Eight: Moving Day.....	31
Chapter Nine: The Search for Catherine.....	36
Chapter Ten: The Forest People.....	40
Chapter Eleven: The Catch .....	45
Chapter Twelve: Cave of the Rock That Melts.....	50
Chapter Thirteen: An Errand of Mercy .....	55
Chapter Fourteen: New Friends.....	60
Chapter Fifteen: New Ways .....	67
Chapter Sixteen: <i>Endeavor II</i> .....	71
Chapter Seventeen: Goodbye.....	77
Chapter Eighteen: Choices.....	80



# CHAPTER ONE

## EGOR



“Tixe! Where is my warm jacket? The new one? I need to find my extra boots and the green ball. Where is my green ball?” Egor was so agitated he rushed from cupboard to closet to table and around the room, gathering up items.

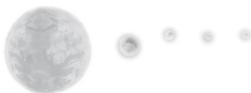
Tixe grabbed her little brother by the shoulder as he rushed past her. “Egor, slow down. I’ll help you pack what you need.” She smiled at him and brushed the tangle of auburn curls away from his flushed face. Egor had seen eleven complete seasons and this was the first time he and Tixe were to be separated.

“Will you miss me, Tixe?” Already Egor felt the twist of leaving.

“It will be strange without you, Egor, even for a short stretch of days.” Tixe paused in her work. “Now, let’s arrange everything here on your bed, and then we can pack your bag.” They worked quickly and soon had the bag packed with everything Egor thought he needed for his journey.



Jeremy Butler came from Earth. When his scout ship crashed in the mountains of Celedon and he was found by the people, he was treated as a criminal. He had killed a padua, one of the gentle creatures of Celedon. It is one of the strictest laws of the people that anyone who kills an animal must himself be put to death. However, Nepo, the mother of Egor and Tixe as well as the leading elder, convinced the others to give Jeremy a chance to explain.



When they learned that Jeremy had killed the padua in ignorance of their laws, they decided this killing was an unfortunate accident, and let him live. The people came to trust Jeremy and when ancient computer and data files were discovered, it was Jeremy who translated them for the people. It was Jeremy who helped the people learn about the old ones and what happened in the Beginning time.

When Jeremy returned from the crash site in the mountains with Tixe, Egor and their father Trane, they brought back salvaged items from his ship. Jeremy then decided to build a boat and do some scouting. Egor would serve as his second in command.

“I intend to explore the water beyond these woods,” he told the people of Celedon. “You should know what lies beyond your village. I will make a map of the area and a record of any animals or people in other places.”

As the work on the boat progressed, Jeremy told Egor they would need another person to help during the journey.

“Who will be a good choice?” he asked Egor.

“I know just the person. Alex Alexson. He is my best friend, and he wants to explore the water, too.”

Egor and Alex became the crew of the newly christened *Celedon Clipper*.



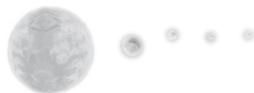
Tixe succeeded in convincing Egor to leave the green ball at home. It was a special ball that Jeremy had made from the leather of his old boots. He used it to teach Egor and the other children of the village a game he called pitch and catch.

“What if it fell into the water, Egor?” Tixe gave Egor a tight hug.



“I wish I were going exploring with you, but Elder Olen needs me.”

“I know.” Egor pulled his hat over his ears. “I’ll keep a journal so I can tell you all about our travels. I have to go now. Jeremy and Alex will be waiting.” He slung the bag over his shoulder and ran down the steps.



# CHAPTER TWO

## THE JOURNEY BEGINS



When Egor first saw the drawings of this thing Jeremy and Jason Allgood, the village carpenter, were building, he still didn't understand what a boat was.

"I don't understand, Jeremy. How does a boat work? How can you cross the water in just this? What keeps it from tipping over and sinking?"

Jeremy just laughed. "You'll see."

Finally, the big day arrived. Jeremy and the men of the village tugged and hoisted the boat onto a wagon and pulled it through the woods to the edge of the marsh. They eased it from the wagon and slid it into the water. It settled with a gentle sigh as the reeds and grass brushed the sides.

The ropes used to lower the boat into the water were flung onto the deck. Egor and Alex caught the ropes and began winding them around the posts on the side. Jeremy, using a long pole, guided the boat through the marsh. The sound the reeds made as they scraped against the sides of the vessel gave Egor a feeling of uneasiness, like claws scratching at the door.

Alarm shivered down Egor's back. Egor tightened the rope around the post and then joined Alex, who was standing at the rail.

Egor looked back at the shore. He could no longer see Tixe and the others. The uneasy feeling persisted. Whenever he explored the fields and woods, he knew he was close to home as long as he could see the path back. On the wa-



ter, the ripples made by the boat disappeared. There was no path.

“Egor, do you think there are demons here? In the water?” Alex whispered. “Egor? I’m really scared.”

Egor looked at Alex. Alex’s eyes were wide and he looked as frightened as Egor felt. Egor swallowed hard, chewing down his fear. He had to tell Alex something. After all, he was older than Alex, if only by half a season.

Egor took a deep breath. “I don’t believe there are such things as demons, Alex. That’s just the old stories told to children. Remember the teaching of the elders: ‘The only worry is fear. You must not let fear steal everything from you.’”

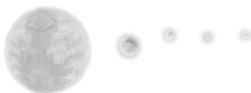
“I know,” Alex nodded. “I have heard that a hundred times. It never made any sense.”

Jeremy placed the long pole in the bottom of the boat. He called to the boys. “Now we need to use the oars.” He pulled two oars from under the seat and handed one to Egor and the other to Alex.

“This is how the oars are used.” He showed Egor and Alex how to place the oars in the notches cut in the rail. Next, he showed them how to dip, pull, and lift to move the boat through the water. Egor was glad to have something to do. It made him forget, for a little while, how alone he felt.

Egor and Alex rowed with care, close enough to see the shore, but far enough away to avoid being snagged on under water growth or rocks. Jeremy sat with a tablet on his lap, charting the coastline. When they reached a cove, Jeremy told Alex to measure the depth of the water. At first, Alex and Egor were quite puzzled by such a request.

“Here. I’ll show you, then you can do it.” Jeremy took the end of a rope that lay coiled on the bottom of the boat.



“I have placed knots in this rope that are one foot apart.” He tied one end to a bag of sand and tossed it overboard. The rope unraveled quickly, then just as suddenly stopped.

“Now, pull up the bag and count the knots,” Jeremy commanded Alex. “That will tell us how deep the water is here and I’ll record the depth on our charts.”

Egor and Alex took turns measuring the depth of the water, and preparing the meals. At night, they dropped anchor and sat in the sheltered forward part of the boat while Jeremy told them stories of his world.

Egor loved lying on the mat in the bottom of the boat and looking at the stars as the boat rocked gently. The water slapped lazily against the sides of the boat. Occasionally a night bird was heard overhead. At times, it was so quiet, Egor was sure he could hear the stars. Soft breezes brought coolness from the water.

“The green clouds don’t seem to affect us out here,” Alex stated one day. “Do you suppose the water is keeping them away?”

In the village, the green clouds appeared every day at sunset. Long ago, many of Celedon’s people died from the effects of the clouds. The people were no longer affected by the clouds, even though their skin retained a tint of green.

“Perhaps.” Jeremy was working on his map. “Today we shall pull into the next cove and go ashore. I want to see whether the trees are the same here. We might even stay overnight if it appears safe.”

At the next cove, Egor and Alex jumped out and splashed through the shallow water to pull the boat up onto the shore while Jeremy shouted directions at them. The sand was soft and they pulled hard to anchor the boat.

Each one took a walking stick, a packet of food, bottle of water, and a few tools. Jeremy led the way into the woods. The trees here were different from the familiar Shabar trees. They were much taller with rough bark and dark red leaves. The shore was lined with short, scrubby firs, as though the taller trees of the forest crowded them down to the water's edge.

Egor followed Jeremy, stepping carefully so as to make as little noise as possible. As they climbed up away from the sand, the ground became rocky. The soil puffed up in little clouds around their feet, and they heard scurrying sounds in the grass. Pausing to look around, Egor held up a hand.

"Listen. Did you hear that?"

"What?" Alex stooped to shake a rock from his boot.

"There it is again. A kind of chattering."

"I hear it." Jeremy turned slowly, looking in all directions. "It almost sounds like the chattering of squirrels back home."

The three stood, listening. First it was one, then two, three, then more than they could count.

"Turn around. We're going back to the boat." Jeremy spoke in a low voice as he started back down the path. "I don't want to be caught here with no way to defend ourselves."

They heard rustling in the grass and bushes along the path as they walked.

"Just walk quickly, but do not run," Jeremy instructed. "They are more curious than anything else right now."

Egor wanted to run, but he made himself walk at a steady pace. He grabbed Alex by the arm and kept him from running, too. When they reached the boat, they unfastened the



ropes and pushed it away from the shore, each one hopping in as the boat caught the waves.

“Look!” Egor pointed to the woods they had just left. Standing there, watching, was a group of people. They wore close fitting tunics of dark green with brown leggings and brown boots. Acting on a sudden impulse, Egor raised his hand and waved. The one at the front of the group waved back.

“Did you see that? He waved to me.”



# CHAPTER THREE

## THE CELEDON CLIPPER



The *Celedon Clipper* continued along the edge of the sea. Jeremy had Egor and Alex collect small plants, leaves, and flowers, although most flowers were dried up by now. They collected soil samples and a few specimens of rock.

“I don’t understand why you want all these rocks,” Alex grumbled. “After all, a rock is a rock, isn’t it?”

“You can learn much about a place by studying the rocks. Look.” Jeremy took a few small pebbles from the container and rolled them about in his hand. “These rocks with all the different colors may show the presence of metal. This is useful information. I have marked on my map just where you found each of these. That’s why I want you to collect from different areas.”

Alex was still puzzled. “What if these spots are metal? How do we get it out of the rock?”

Egor was annoyed. Sometimes Alex asked the dumbest questions.

“There are ways, Alex. I don’t know how to extract the metal, but there are those who do know. We should investigate every possibility.” Jeremy grinned at the two boys. “Just worry about one thing at a time.”

One evening, as the crew of the *Celedon Clipper* ate supper, Egor asked, “Why did you name our boat the *Celedon Clipper*?”

Jeremy put down his plate and poured a cup of water. Leaning back, he looked out at the sun at the water’s edge.



“A very long time ago, on my world, in order to go from one country to another, people had to travel in sailing ships across vast stretches of water. It took many days, but in time, men discovered that if they used a sail, which is a huge piece of cloth, it would catch the wind. The wind pushed the ship along, and they reached their destination sooner.”

“What kind of cloth?” Alex asked. Egor frowned at the interruption.

“Canvas. Something like the material in your shirt, only heavier.” Jeremy continued. “Eventually, the clipper ship was built. The hull was streamlined and narrow which made it the fastest ship on the sea. She had a towering spread of canvas sails that gave the appearance of a giant white bird flying along on the water.” Jeremy stared out over the water, as though watching the ship sail in his mind.

“Then what? Do your people still travel by clipper ship?” Alex urged Jeremy to continue.

“No, the clipper ship doesn’t exist now except in museums. There are still some individuals who love old things and keep a sailing ship for personal use. But over many years, other transportation developed, and now my people travel in the air and in space. We use the ion drive, which is many times faster than the sail and cleaner than the early space vehicles.”

“Have you ever sailed on a clipper ship?” Egor nibbled at the last of the muffins.

“I spent one summer visiting a friend who lived on the coast of one of Earths’ oceans. His father had a sailboat. Not a clipper ship; I think he called it a sloop. Anyway we sailed almost every day. Ben, that’s my friend, and I got terrible sunburns and were soaked from the spray of salty ocean water and our muscles ached until we thought we would turn

into stone, and it was wonderful. There was only the sound of the wind in the sails and the creaking of the mast. At night, when we took in the sails and dropped the anchor, all you could hear was the slap of the water against the boat and the wind sighing through the rigging.”

Jeremy sighed and looked up at the stars. “But it felt just the way this boat feels right now.” He looked around and started gathering up the utensils.

“Egor, it’s your turn at KP.”

Alex looked at Egor. “Where does he get these strange names?”

Egor laughed. “Jeremy explained it to me. ‘KP’ is an old military term meaning kitchen police. Just another way of saying it’s your turn to do the dishes.”

Near the end of their journey, Jeremy guided the *Celedon Clipper* into a large inlet. The boat glided up a wide stream which stretched between towering stands of fir trees. They anchored the boat and went exploring.

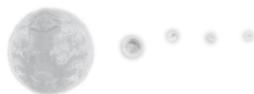
“Watch for any signs of the creatures we saw before,” Jeremy told them quietly. “Whatever you do, don’t yell or startle them.”

But after walking for several hours through the trees and a large meadow, they returned to the boat without meeting any creature other than the birds and small furry animals that scurried through the tall grass.

They turned the boat and rowed back to the wide sea. Egor sighed with relief.

“It feels much better out here,” he said. “I was beginning to feel closed in.”

Jeremy laughed. “Spoken like a real spaceman.”



There were creatures floating in the water. The water was very clear after they passed the mouth of the river. Alex and Egor leaned over the side and watched the water creatures while Jeremy worked on his map.

“What is so interesting?” Jeremy leaned over beside them. “Oh, I see.”

“What are they?” Egor and Alex spoke together.

“Those are fish.” Jeremy looked at them in surprise. “Don’t tell me you don’t know what fish are?”

When the two boys shook their head, he also shook his head. “Of course. You haven’t lived around much water. I keep forgetting. Well, fish are creatures that live in the water like birds live in the air. Fish have special systems in their bodies that enable them to breathe under water.”

Egor’s curiosity flashed. “Is it dangerous to go into the water?”

Jeremy grinned at him. “That depends. You must learn how to survive, and I have the perfect answer for you.” He took hold of Egor’s and Alex’s shoulders. “The next water adventure we plan will have to include swimming lessons.”

“What is swimming?”

“Oh, my stars! I can’t believe this. Never mind. I’ll explain it later.”



# CHAPTER FOUR

## LAKE CELEDON



Jeremy looked again at his map. “This body of water seems to be contained. Look.” He held the map so Egor and Alex could see. “We have been all around this area,” he outlined the place with his finger. “Most oceans are larger than this. Yes,” he nodded. “I definitely think this is a lake.”

The last night before they were to reach home, Jeremy and Egor and Alex studied the stars. The sky was black and the stars twinkled and shone brilliantly. The tiny sun glowed in the distance, only a shimmering echo of the daytime sun.

“I don’t know the names of your stars, but they are just as magnificent as the ones around Earth.” Jeremy sighed.

“Aren’t the stars the same everywhere?” Egor could not imagine how something like the sky and stars could be different somewhere else.

“Egor, even the sky is different here.”

“How?”

“For one thing, Earth has a moon which reflects light off itself at night. Sometimes it is so bright the stars cannot be seen. Then other nights, it isn’t so bright and the stars show up like diamonds on black velvet. And we don’t have two suns. You’ll just have to wait until we get back for me to teach you about the Earth’s stars and the moon.”

“Jeremy, are you ever afraid?” Egor finally asked the question that had bothered him the entire journey.



“Afraid?” Jeremy leaned back against the shelter and closed his eyes. “Sure, Egor. Why?”

“You never seem to be afraid. I don’t believe you.” Egor looked at Jeremy from under his brows.

“There are so many uncertain things that happen, a person can be afraid of everything if he chooses. But where’s the fun in that?” Jeremy paused. “You just can’t let fear run your life.”

“Oh.” *Just as the elders taught.* Egor had much to think about.

The next day was a busy one. Egor worked at making a fastener to secure the lid over the rocks. Jeremy didn’t want to take a chance on any rocks being spilled when they were moved ashore. Alex was in charge of packing up all the remaining supplies and utensils.

“We are lucky,” Alex laughed as he stuffed the pots and bowls into the basket. “We have just enough for one meal, then we are out of food.”

“That’s not luck, Alex; that’s careful planning.” Jeremy grinned at him. “Did you two have a good time?”

“When can we do this again?” Egor clamped the lid on the rock container. “Maybe we can come back here for those swimming lessons.”

Just then, Alex gave a shout and began waving both arms. He pointed to the crowd standing on the shore.

“Look, Jeremy. They have built a place for us to tie the boat.”

There was a short dock stretching out over the edge of the water. It was built up with logs anchored against the shore. A railing was built along both sides. Egor saw Tixe

and his parents and many of the villagers waiting for them on the dock. He and Alex waved again.

Jeremy jumped out and tied the *Celedon Clipper* to a post. The rocks, specimens, and remaining supplies were carried off and placed in carts. The carts were pulled toward the village. Egor and Alex followed with the other villagers.

“Take all this,” Jeremy pointed to the specimens and rocks, “to the schoolhouse. I will come with you and show you exactly where to put it.”



# CHAPTER FIVE

## Contact



Nepo insisted the family and Jeremy sit down and eat supper before any telling of adventures. She knew there would be no eating otherwise.

When the meal was finished, the table was cleared of the supper things and Jeremy brought out his journals and maps. Jeremy and Trane studied the map of the lake.

Egor pulled Tixe and Nepo over to the chairs by the fire. He had so much to tell, he didn't know where to start.

“Sailing on the water is smooth, mother, Tixe. There are no bumps. We stopped several times and went ashore. The trees are all different, and in the water are creatures that—” Egor stopped to think. “I think Jeremy called them ‘fish.’ They move around in the water like the birds move in the air.” His enthusiasm bubbled over as he recounted his adventures. “And mother, we saw some people and one of them waved to me.”

Nepo placed her hands on Egor's shoulders. “You have had a marvelous adventure, but now it is time to sleep.” She sent Egor to bed, and Egor heard her say to Tixe, “I imagine the parents of Alex are also hearing of these adventures. I will speak to the other elders about the new people they saw.”

The next morning Egor followed Tixe as she took Jeremy up to the tower. Tixe served as apprentice to Elder Olen, the keeper of the Eye of Trane. The Eye was a scanner of the heavens, built by the old ones. In time, Tixe would take on all the responsibility of the keeper. She showed them the

shadow on the screen. The image covered half of the screen and it was possible to identify the shape. Jeremy knew right away what it was.

“It is the *Endeavor II*. Have they tried to contact you?”

“We have received no message from them. What kind of message should we expect?” Tixe pointed to the screen. “This image has grown larger in just a few days. How close do you think they are?”

“If I had my OMDLAT, I could contact them now.” Jeremy stared at the screen.

Egor knew the Oscillating Multi-Directional Locator And Translator, the OMDLAT that Jeremy brought to Cel-edon, was lost at the bottom of the marsh.

Jeremy turned to Elder Olen and asked, “Do you have any means of contacting them?”

Elder studied the control panel carefully. “I remember reading in one of the old books of a means to talk—” The elder leaned over the console and looked carefully at each of the switches. “Ah-ha. I think this is what we want.” With a determined look, he carefully moved a switch.

Egor peered around Elder Olen in order to see which switch he moved.

Immediately the room was filled with a terrifying sound like the magnified crackle of dried grass.

Egor backed away from the console, his ears ringing from the noise.

“Static.” Jeremy shouted and adjusted a knob beside the switch, reducing the rough noise to a much lower level.



“To the unidentified vessel orbiting Celedon, please respond.” He waited a few seconds, then repeated his message.

Egor heard only the static, then the static cleared and a voice echoed in the silence of the tower.

“This is the Earth ship, *Endeavor II*. To whom am I speaking?”

“*Endeavor II*, this is Jeremy Butler of the *Endeavor II* on special assignment. Please stand by.”

Elder Olen took Egor by the arm and pushed him towards the door. “Run. Bring your mother. Hurry.” Egor ran like the padua.

“Mother, come quickly,” Egor panted. “Tixe and Jeremy have made contact with the strange image on the Eye. The stranger speaks the ancient words just as Jeremy did.”



“We wish to extend greetings and land in friendship. May we do so?”

Nepo did not answer but stood frowning as though in deep thought.

“Mother? He is waiting.” Egor was so excited he could not keep still.

“We extend our greetings of friendship. One of your people is here with me now. He will instruct you.” Nepo looked at the others. “I must call the elders to consider this. Jeremy, you know your people, but I prefer that only a few come at first. Tixe, come with me.”

Nepo and Tixe ran down the steps with Egor right behind them. Nepo struck the bell hanging at the entrance to the tower. It was the signal for the elders to assemble.

The elders had many questions.

“What if they bring powerful weapons? We have no way to defend ourselves.”

“They will have strange ideas and corrupt our children.”

“What if they want to change all of us to a different way of doing things?”

There were so many questions that Nepo finally held her arms up and demanded silence.

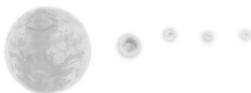
“Your concerns are all important ones, but our first concern is to give an answer to the visitors. Any beings who can reach our world from the sky would be able to destroy us if they wished. Since they have not done so, I am inclined to accept their offer of friendship. You have all become friends of Jeremy Butler, who is from the same world as the visitors. I see no reason to think they will be any different from him. Go to your homes now. I will speak with the visitors, and inform you of any news.”

While Nepo soothed the people of the village, Jeremy talked with the captain of the *Endeavor II*. Tixe and Egor entered the tower as he discussed the arrival of several representatives from the ship.

“The people here have learned to understand much of our words, but bring an OMDLAT with you. Mine was lost. The language here is a derivation of Earth English. They speak of it as ‘the old words.’”

Tixe moved over to Jeremy’s side. Instead of the usual grid marking the sections of the sky, she saw the face of a man who looked like Jeremy, only older.

Jeremy reached out and took Tixe by the hand and pulled her closer to the Eye. “Father, this is Tixe of the Rood. She is the apprentice keeper of the Eye of Trane, and was the



first to spot my ship when I came here.” Turning to Tixe, he waved his hand at the screen. “This is my father, Captain Butler of the *Endeavor II*.”

Tixe bowed slightly to the captain. “It is a pleasure to be able to speak to you and give you welcome. The elders are meeting to decide a course of action. My mother will be speaking with you shortly.”

It seemed to take a long time for the elders to come to an agreement, but things were finally completed and the visitors were informed of the decision.

That evening after the evening meal was eaten and Elder Olen left the tower, Tixe dragged Egor away from his studies and hurried him up the steps. “Egor, you must promise not to tell anyone what we are about to do. Promise?”

“What are we about to do?” Egor hesitated, not sure. This sounded like another of Tixe’s pranks.

“Egor! Promise!”

Egor gave in. “I promise. Are we going to get into trouble?” he sighed. “Again?”

Tixe did not answer. Instead she turned to the panel and pushed a switch. “Greetings, Captain Butler. This is Tixe of the Rood.”

“Greetings, Tixe of the Rood. It is good to hear your voice again.”

Egor shook Tixe’s arm. “Have you been talking to them?” His voice was a rough whisper.

“Captain Butler, I have a brother, Egor, and we ask whether there are any young members on your vessel?”

Tixe and the captain talked for a long time. Egor was frantic with the fear that their mother or Elder Olen would