

I remember the frigus of 3452 as momentous. Momentous because it was the beginning of a new school season and I was starting 5th grade, which meant I'd take the bus to my new school on Refraeno. Kids in 5th grade and above flew into Refraeno seven half days a week from exoplanets and moons within a 100 million mile radius. Our family farmed a 9300 acre patch on Guernsey since way before I, my mama or my daddy could remember. I hurried out of bed, knowing I had to tend to the calf embryos before the school bus came to beam me aboard for the 30 minute zip to school.

The path to the calf embryo barn wasn't within the gravity shield, so after I'd pulled on my new blue and white Refraeno jersey and leggings, I slipped my feet into mama's hand-me-down boots which were weighted to keep me grounded and from accidentally bumping into the incubators and coolers.

I loved caring for the calf embryos, measuring the nutrient rich manna for each baby calf into the nutrient mixer and watching as milky green manna pumped into the fetuses through the connecting umbilical tubes. Mama was a stickler. The amount of manna for each calf embryo had to be precise. I checked each's fetus's density monitor, carefully fed the density numbers into the nutrient mixer and watched to assure the manna mixed and flowed through the umbilical tubes.

Mama put me in charge of the babies that were in their last 45 days of gestation. I was mama to 23 baby calves. I named each of them, knowing that once they left the pens for the pastures, I'd never be able to tell one from another. "Aren't you a pretty girl, Bessie?" I said as Bessie floated weightless, her big brown eyes blinking through waxy slime.

"Daddy, Bessie's ready to pop tonight, I think," I shouted as I kicked off my gravity boots and skipped to the breakfast table. Mama put a blue and white pancake in the shape of an "R" on my plate. I didn't think it looked too appetizing, but said "Thanks, Mama," anyway as I hurriedly smothered it in brown sugar, blue berries and cream. "Daddy, can I help move her out?" I asked.

"Mmmm," daddy replied as he looked intently at the screen on his cap visor. "Looks like the market for methane is up again today," daddy said. "I look like a friggin' genius for hooking up with Nature's Gas."

"We look like friggin' geniuses," mama said, as she refilled daddy's coffee cup.

I remembered when I was just a little kid – maybe 7 years old – Mama and Daddy sitting at the breakfast table and talking about buying a methane vacuum. The first generation had come out, but the methane storage unit needed more height for Nature's Gas collector drones. The Methane Vacuum Tall2 came into the Guernsey implement shop in 3451. Daddy was the first on Guernsey to buy in. Heck! I bet I'd be the only kid at Refraeno Public School whose family had purchased enough Tall2s to cover 5,000 acres.

Of course some old-timers on Guernsey didn't much like the Tall2s peppered across a landscape that hadn't changed for a millennium. They were used to seeing vistas of cows lowing in meadows of green grass. Mama and Daddy said that by the time I graduated high school they'd have enough money from the sale of methane gas that I'd be able to go to any university in the galaxy. That is, if I studied hard and kept up my grades.

I had a history class in grade 4 that covered cow farts and methane. Of course, my teacher didn't talk about "farts", she said we were studying ozone layers and methane gas produced by cows. It's ancient

history, but that's why Guernsey was established in the first place. Guernsey has the thickest ozone layer of any inhabitable planet – more than 300 miles of ozone -- so it became the planet for beef production... and cow farts! Now, Guernsey would become known for the sale of methane gas to help warm the cold planets. Isn't that something!

Daddy beamed me up into the Tall2 once and it was pretty creepy with all the piping and gauges for measuring the methane collection, concentration and storage. It was peaceful, too. I could see clear to the Otium Mountains and even spotted the campground where we pitched our tent. It was fun hovering just above the tent floor in my sleeping bag, but the way I tossed and turned, I kept everyone awake so Mama put rocks in the bottom of my bag.

Of course it didn't smell so good in Tall2. That's a lot of concentrated cow farts! I couldn't take it. I had Daddy beam me down.