

Search by the Foundation, Part II



[Opening theme music with voiceovers.]

Arkady Darell

"Because Kalgan may offer the best chance of being the nucleus of a new Empire."

Lord Stettin

"It is a family of note on the Foundation."

Homir Munn

"To whom they would certainly brooke no harm!"

Stettin

"Harm? Don't be a fool man! I am meditating the reverse. Hold old is she?"

[Theme music plays out.]

Joel McKinnon

Welcome back, my friends, to Seldon Crisis and the continuation of the final story in Second Foundation, the Search by the Foundation. In the first part of this story we met Arkady Darell, granddaughter of Toran and Bayta from the Mule episodes. We also encountered several conspirators on Terminus who have adopted a new and confrontational attitude towards the enigmatic Second Foundation. They now see it as an insidious threat; a society of mentalic beings intent on removing their free will, and are determined to find, unmask, and defeat them. They'd sent a reluctant agent, a scholar and collector of Muliana named Homir Munn, to the vacation planet of Kalgan to seek information about the possible whereabouts of their invisible nemesis, and Arkady – always seeking adventure and romance – had snuck aboard and just revealed her presence to Munn.

Joel

The librarian had gotten over his initial shock and soon felt grateful for the company of his niece. She was so excited to be on this grand adventure that her enthusiasm became contagious and began to alleviate his customary anxiety. Arkady loved talking about her favorite subject, the glorious trajectory of the Foundation since its founding hundreds of years ago by the great Hari Seldon.

Arkady

I've read books and books about all the great men of Foundation history. You know, like Seldon, Hardin, Mallow, Devers, and all the rest. I've even read most of what you've written about the Mule, except that it isn't much fun to read those parts where the Foundation loses. Wouldn't you rather read a history where they skipped the silly, tragic parts?

Munn

Yes, I would, but it wouldn't be a fair history, would it, Arkady? You'd never get academic respect, unless you give the whole story.

Oh, poof. Who cares about academic respect? My novels are going to be interesting and are going to sell and be famous. What's the use of writing books unless you sell them and become well-known? I don't want just some old professors to know me. It's got to be everybody.

Joel

I can't help seeing the author himself in this exchange. Asimov was notoriously frustrated in his brief career in academia. He despised the rigid hierarchy of authority and often had trouble with his superiors. After receiving a Bachelor of Science at Columbia University at the young age of 19 he felt the high expectations to become a great scientist, but due to interruptions in his studies from WWII it took him another nine years to get his masters and PhD in chemistry. All of that time he was discovering that he enjoyed writing much more than lab work, and soon found that his science fiction was more lucrative as well. He was finishing the Foundation trilogy at about the same time he was struggling to complete his degrees, and was quite fond of the ever-growing acclaim for his literary achievements. It was clear what direction he would choose.

On board Homir Munn's humble space cruiser, Arkady regaled her host with a never ending treatise on Foundation history. She was well aware of the various locations throughout the galaxy where these marvelous events had transpired, and longed to visit them all.

Arkady

In fact, as soon as I can get father to let me, I'm going to visit Trantor, so I can get background material on the First Empire, you know. I was born on Trantor; did you know that?

Joel

Munn was well aware of this, but chose to humor her.

Munn

You were?

Arkady

Uh-huh. My grandmother . . . you know, Bayta Darell, you've heard of her . . . was on Trantor once with my grandfather. In fact, that's where they stopped the Mule, when all the Galaxy was at his feet; and my father and mother went there also when they were first married. I was born there. I even lived there till mother died, only I was just three then, and I don't remember much about it. Were you ever on Trantor, Uncle Homir?

Munn

No, can't say I was.

Joel

Arkady swooned.

Arkady

Isn't it just the most romantic world? My father says that under Stannel V, it had more people than any ten worlds nowadays. He says it was just one big world of metals—one big city—that was the capital of all the Galaxy. He's shown me pictures that he took on Trantor. It's all in ruins now, but it's still stupendous. I'd just love to see it again. In fact . . . Homir!

Munn

Yes?

Arkady

Why don't we go there, when we're finished with Kalgan?

Joel

Munn realized that he must keep the girl's romantic impulses in check.

Munn

What? Now don't start on that. This is business, not pleasure. Remember that.

Arkady

But it is business. There might be incredible amounts of information on Trantor. Don't you think so?

Munn

No, I don't. Now untangle yourself from the computer. We've got to make the last jump, and then you turn in.

Joel

Shortly thereafter Homir and Arkady have arrived at their glamorous destination and Asimov paints a picture of the society they will shortly be introduced to.

Asimov

Kalgan was at the service, therefore, successively—and successfully—of the effete and perfumed dandies of the Imperial Court with their sparkling and libidinous ladies; of the rough and raucous warlords who ruled in iron the worlds they had gained in blood, with their unbridled and lascivious wenches; of the plump and luxurious businessmen of the Foundation, with their lush and flagitious mistresses.

Joel

The leader of Kalgan was a vain and ambitious man who would never be satisfied with the mastery of just a single planet. We will drop in now and listen to a conversation between him, his first minister, and another prominent character in our story, but first let's hear a little more from the author.

Asimov

In Lord Stettin's private apartments the three were alone that evening. The First Citizen, bulky and glistening in the admiral's uniform that he affected, scowled from out of the unupholstered chair in which he sat as stiffly as the plastic of which it was composed. His First Minister, Lev Meirus, faced him with a far-off unconcern, his long, nervous fingers stroking absently and rhythmically the deep line that curved from hooked nose along gaunt and sunken cheek to the point, nearly, of the gray-bearded chin. The Lady Callia disposed of herself gracefully on the deeply furred covering of a foamite couch, her full lips trembling a bit in an unheeded pout.

Joel

Meirus is speaking, and counseling patience to his ambitious master,

First Minister Meirus

Sir, you lack a certain view of the continuity of history. Your own life, with its tremendous revolutions, leads you to think of the course of civilization as something equally amenable to sudden change. But it is not.

Joel

Stettin's bearing remains unmoved.

Stettin

The Mule showed otherwise.

Meirus

But who can follow in his footsteps? He was more than just a man, remember. And he, too, was not entirely successful.

Joel

The Lady Callia, eager for her lord's attention, breaks in with a favorite endearment.

Lady Callia

Poochie...

Stettin

Do not interrupt, Callia. Meirus, I am tired of inaction. My predecessor spent his life polishing the navy into a finely tuned instrument that has not its equal in the Galaxy. And he died with the magnificent machine lying idle. Am I to continue that? I, an admiral of the navy?

How long before the machine rusts? At present, it is a drain on the Treasury and returns nothing. Its officers long for dominion, its men for loot. All Kalgan desires the return of Empire and glory. Are you capable of understanding that?

Joel

He plainly intends to hear no reply from his minister and continues brusquely.

Stettin

You're a slave to the far past. The Foundation is greater in volume and population, but they are loosely knit and will fall apart at a blow. What holds them together these days is merely inertia; an inertia I am strong enough to smash. You are hypnotized by the old days when only the Foundation had nuclear power. They were able to dodge the last hammer blows of the dying Empire and then faced only the unbrained anarchy of the warlords who would counter the Foundation's nuclear vessels only with hulks and relics.

But the Mule, my dear Meirus, has changed that. He spread the knowledge that the Foundation had hoarded to itself through half the Galaxy and the monopoly in science is gone forever. We can match them!

Joel

Stettin has recently heard of the visit by Homir Munn, and informs his minister that he is a scholar from the Foundation who has expressed the unpopular opinion that the rumored Second Foundation no longer exists.

Meirus finally gets a word in.

Meirus

I have heard of him, or at least of his writings. What does he desire?

Stettin

He asks permission to enter the Mule's palace.

Meirus

Indeed? It would be wise to refuse. It is never advisable to disturb the superstitions with which a planet is held.

Stettin

I will consider that—and we will speak again.

Joel

Stettin dismisses the minister, and after his departure, the Lady Callia pouts,

Callia

Are you angry with me, Poochie?

Stettin

Have I not told you before never to call me by that ridiculous name in the presence of others?

Callia

You used to like it.

Stettin

Well, I don't anymore, and it is not to happen again.

Joel

Lord Stettin stares at her and wonders why he has put up with her for so long. He reflects that she had been more useful in the past, in his days as an Admiral, but in his present position... He realized that soon enough he should be seeking a marriage to one of the great families of the Foundation, to fuse a dynasty. Asimov writes,

Asimov

He wondered testily why he did not rid himself of Callia now. It would be no trouble. She would whine a bit— He dismissed the thought. She had her points, occasionally.

Joel

Callia softly interrupts his dark musing,

Callia

You're not going to scold me, are you?

Stettin

No. Now just sit quietly for a while, will you? I want to think.

Callia

About the man from the Foundation?

Stettin

Yes.

Callia

Poochie?

Stettin

What?

Joel

Callia, happy to have apparently returned to his good graces at least for a moment, continues,

Callia

Poochie, the man has a little girl with him, you said. Remember? Could I see her when she comes? I never—

Stettin

Now what do you think I want him to bring his brat with him for? Is my audience room to be a grammar school? Enough of your nonsense, Callia.

Joel

She gently continues,

Callia

But I'll take care of her, Poochie. You won't even have to bother with her. It's just that I hardly ever see children, and you know how I love them.

Joel

Stettin reminds her that Arkady is hardly a small child, being nearly as tall as you are, but finds himself relenting to her request. She embraces him happily and says she will keep the child in her rooms so he will not be bothered.

Soon thereafter our young protagonist has indeed been introduced to Stettin's mistress and is alone in one of her rooms in the palace, enjoying tea.—

Lady Callia is smitten with Arkady's company and presents her a gift of a pearl necklace that she had received from Lord Stettin, which a surprised Arkady politely declines to accept. Then the Lady asks the girl to tell her about the wonderful Foundation that she's heard so much about in bookfilms, with their rough and tough traders swashbuckling around the galaxy. Arkady laughs and says this is all from ancient history and it's all very boring now, with corporations and whatnot.

Eventually she turns to the topic of Arkady's companion on this journey and wants to know if Munn is a trader, and Lady Callia reveals her disappointment that he is not.

Callia

Really? What a shame. Then what does Mr. Munn do? I mean, if he's not a Trader.

Arkady

Uncle Homir's a librarian.

Callia

You mean he takes care of book-films. Oh, my! It seems like such a silly thing for a grown man to do.

Arkady

He's a very good librarian, my lady. It is an occupation that is very highly regarded at the Foundation.

Callia

But my dear child. I'm sure I didn't mean to offend you. He must be a very intelligent man. I could see it in his eyes as soon as I looked at him. They were so . . . so intelligent. And he must be brave, too, to want to see the Mule's palace.

Joel

Arkady is quietly excited at this. Why must one be brave to want to see the palace? This sounds like the intrigue she desperately seeks. She tries her hardest to appear indifferent in asking why bravery is required?

Callia

Didn't you know? There's a curse on it. When he died, the Mule directed that no one ever enter it until the Empire of the Galaxy is established. Nobody on Kalgan would dare even to enter the grounds.

Arkady

But that's superstition—

Callia

Don't say that. Poochie always says that. He says it's useful to say it isn't though, in order to maintain his hold over the people. But I notice he's never gone in himself. And neither did Thallos, who was First Citizen before Poochie.

But why does Mr. Munn want to see the palace?

Joel

Arkady now sees her opportunity. She understands from all the bookfilms she's read that a mistress is the real power behind the throne - though Lady Callia hardly looks the part. She decides that this is her chance to help Uncle Homir gain entrance to the palace, a prospect which had seemed doubtful so far.

Arkady

There's a reason, my lady—but will you keep it in confidence?

Callia

Cross my heart.

Arkady

Uncle Homir is a great authority on the Mule, you know. He's written books and books about it, and he thinks that all of Galactic history has been changed since the Mule conquered the Foundation.

Callia

Oh, my.

Arkady

He thinks the Seldon Plan—

Callia

I know about the Seldon Plan. The videos about the Traders were always all about the Seldon Plan. It was supposed to arrange to have the Foundation win all the time. Science had something to do with it, though I could never quite see how. I always get so restless when I have to listen to explanations. But you go right ahead, my dear. It's different when you explain. You make everything seem so clear.

Arkady

Well, don't you see then, that when the Foundation was defeated by the Mule, the Seldon Plan didn't work and it hasn't worked since. So who will form the Second Empire?

Joel

Callia looks puzzled.

Callia

The Second Empire?

Arkady

Yes, one must be formed someday, but how? That's the problem, you see. And there's the Second Foundation.

Callia

The Second Foundation?

Arkady

Yes, they're the planners of history that are following in the footsteps of Seldon. They stopped the Mule because he was premature, but now, they may be supporting Kalgan.

Callia

Why?

Arkady

Because Kalgan may now offer the best chance of being the nucleus for a new Empire.

Joel

Callia brightens again.

Callia

You mean Poochie is going to make a new Empire.

Arkady

We can't tell for sure. Uncle Homir thinks so, but he'll have to see the Mule's records to find out.

Joel

Callia looks lost again.

Callia

It's all very complicated...

Joel

Arkady gives up in frustration. She has done her best, but Lady Callia seems to be too dim to be of much possible help.

We find Lord Stettin alone, ruminating upon his ambitions, and he is once again in a foul humor. Lady Callia peeks her head cautiously in at the doorway. Stettin snaps at her in anger,

Stettin

What do you want?

Joel

Callia meekly asks,

Callia

Are you busy?

Stettin

Yes. I am busy.

But there's nobody here, Poochie. Couldn't I even speak to you for a minute?

Oh, Galaxy! What do you want? Now hurry.

Callia

The little girl told me they were going into the Mule's palace. I thought we could go with her. It must be gorgeous inside.

Stettin

She told you that, did she? Well, she isn't and we aren't. Now go tend your own business. I've had about enough of you.

Callia

But, Poochie, why not? Aren't you going to let them? The little girl said that you were going to make an Empire!

Stettin

I don't care what she said— What was that? What did she tell you?

Joel

Callia has his full attention now, but coyly pauses.

Callia

I can't remember what she said, if you're going to look at me like that. The little girl made me promise not to tell.

Stettin

That's too bad. Tell me! Now!

Callia

Well, she said the Seldon Plan was changed and that there was another Foundation somewhere that was arranging to have you make an Empire. That's all. She said Mr. Munn was a very important scientist and that the Mule's palace would have proof of all that. That's every bit of what she said. Are you angry?

Joel

Stettin leaves the room without answering, and a short time later issues two orders. The first is to order 500 ships into space for what is officially noted as war games. The second order was to result in a change of plans for one Homir Munn, who until that moment had been packing to return home having apparently failed in the mission he had found so distasteful. He glumly read the order allowing him entrance to the Mule's palace. Arkady, however, was joyful and smug in the assurance that it was her pleading to Lady Callia that had turned the tide. This adventure was proceeding beautifully!

Back on Terminus in the Darell household, Poli, the family maid, is serving her master breakfast while keeping an eye on a newscast reporting the latest belligerent activities of the leader of Kalgan, who once again was appearing to covet the old descriptor of warlord. Poli mutters under her breath as she sets the plate down for Darell, who is lost in thought.

Poli

Oh, people are so wicked.

Darell

Mm hmm

Joel

The big news is about new war games by Kalgan and the reaction of mobs of protestors outside of the Foundation consulate on that planet. Poli rambles on muttering about past wars like the one that had claimed the life of an uncle soon after the Mule had died.

Poli, the maid

You'd think if they had sense people would just never want to start it again; just have nothing to do with it. And I suppose it's not people that do it, either; I suppose even Kalganese would rather sit at home with their families and not go fooling around in ships and getting killed. It's that awful man, Stettin. It's a wonder people like that are let live. He kills the old man—what's his name—Thallos, and now he's just spoiling to be boss of everything.

Poli

Maybe it's all in the plan, but sometimes I'm just sure it must be a wicked plan to have so much fighting and killing in it. But to be sure, I haven't a word to say about Hari Seldon, who I'm sure knows much more than I do. And perhaps I'm a fool to question it. And the other Foundation is much to blame. They could stop Kalgan now and make everything fine. They'll do it anyway in the end. You'd think they'd do it before there's any damage done.

Joel

Darell looks up absently as if he has just noticed her presence.

Darell

Did you say something, Poli?

Poli

Nothing, doctor, nothing at all. I haven't got a word to say. A body could as soon choke to death as say a word in this house. It's jump here, and jump there, but just try to say a word—

Joel

Poli departed, simmering in her anger and left Darell alone with his thoughts. The news concerned him little. Another warlord seeking violence scarcely mattered to him. His mind was on the more formidable opponent in the shadows. He pondered again, as he often did on the loss of his wife, and how it had left him feeling alone and tormented by the enemy that aimed to control his life with its mentalic powers.

Lord Stettin

In Asimov's words,

Asimov

But she had died. Less than five years, all told, it had been; and after that he knew that he could live only by fighting that vague and fearful enemy that deprived him of the dignity of manhood by controlling his destiny; that made life a miserable struggle against a foreordained end; that made all the universe a hateful and deadly chess game. Call it sublimation; he, himself did call it that—but the fight gave meaning to his life.

Joel

Darell had spent those five years throwing himself into that battle. He'd joined Dr. Kleise at the University of Santanni where they aimed to penetrate the workings of the mysterious Second Foundation. They'd emulated the Mule by learning the art of control of unsuspecting individuals in the supposed interest of preserving the Seldon plan. It was the concern of Kleise and Darell that the Second Foundation had likely been seduced by their newfound powers and now aimed to be the new conquerors of the galaxy. They worked to gather data on how they could monitor their activities and work out a way to defeat them. Kleise had found ways to identify the brainwave patterns that could reveal their targets, but they were no closer to finding the living individuals behind these insidious practices. The arrival of Anthor had given him some hope that there might still be a way to fight them. He thought of his daughter and hoped she was staying safe with Munn. He felt he could trust her native intelligence to keep her out of trouble. Or maybe he was just telling himself that...

At that same moment on Kalgan, his daughter is alone with her thoughts as well, but in an entirely different circumstance. She is waiting for Homir Munn to emerge from an interview with the First Citizen of Kalgan, where he had been in consultation for the last half hour. She feels frustrated and at a loss. She is being ignored and neglected now, and feels ineffective and useless. She thinks back to a recent evening when Munn had returned from the palace and seemed changed. He was no longer reluctant but seemed possessed by a new passion for his studies resulting from the opportunity to study the Mule's environment in his final years. He had whispered to her with excitement,

Munn

It's a dream-world for me. If I could only chip the palace down stone by stone, layer by layer of the aluminum sponge. If I could carry it back to Terminus— What a museum it would make.

Joel

Arkady had seen that he had changed. He was eager, practically glowing. She noticed he rarely stuttered now.

Munn

There are abstracts of the records of General Pritcher—

Arkady

I know him. He was the Foundation renegade, who combed the Galaxy for the Second Foundation, wasn't he?

Munn

Not exactly a renegade, Arkady. The Mule had Converted him.

Arkady

Oh, it's the same thing.

Munn

Galaxy, that combing you speak of was a hopeless task. The original records of the Seldon Convention that established both Foundations five hundred years ago make only one reference to the Second Foundation. They say it's located 'at the other end of the Galaxy at Star's End.' That's all the Mule and Pritcher had to go on. They had no method of recognizing the Second Foundation even if they found it. What madness!

Joel

He had gone on speaking to himself, while Arkady listened attentively.

Munn

They have records which must cover nearly a thousand worlds, yet the number of worlds available for study must have been closer to a million. And we are no better off—

Joel

Now Arkady awaits outside of a room in which Homir Munn is being interrogated by a fierce and impatient Lord Stettin. Munn is no longer in his comfort zone as he quails before the majesty of the glowering Stettin.

Stettin

Well, you have had two weeks, and you come to me with tales of nothing. Come, sir, tell me the worst. Is my navy to be cut to ribbons? Am I to fight the ghosts of the Second Foundation as well as the men of the First?

Joel

Munn's stutter had returned in full as his anxiety peaked.

Munn

I . . . I repeat, my lord, I am no p . . . pre . . . predictor. I . . . I am at a complete . . . loss.

Stettin

Or do you wish to go back to warn your countrymen? To deep Space with your play-acting. I want the truth or I'll have it out of you along with half your guts.

Munn

I'm t . . . telling only the truth, and I'll have you re . . . remember, my l . .
. lord, that I am a citizen of the Foundation. Y . . . you cannot touch me
without harvesting m . . . m . . . more than you count on.

Joel

Stettin signaled his absence of intimidation.

Stettin

A threat to frighten children. A horror with which to beat back an idiot.
Come, Mr. Munn, I have been patient with you. I have listened to you for
twenty minutes while you detailed wearisome nonsense to me which must
have cost you sleepless nights to compose. It was wasted effort. I know
you are here not merely to rake through the Mule's dead ashes and to
warm over the cinders you find—you come here for more than you have
admitted. Is that not true?

Joel

Munn's eyes reveal the truth as he stares in horror.

Stettin

Good. Now let us be frank. You are investigating the Seldon Plan. You know
that it no longer holds. You know, perhaps, that I am the inevitable winner
now; I and my heirs. Well, man, what matters it who establishes the Second
Empire, so long as it is established. History plays no favorites, eh? Are you
afraid to tell me? You see that I know your mission.

Munn

What is it y . . . you w . . . want?

Stettin

Your presence. I would not wish the Plan spoiled through overconfidence. You understand more of these things than I do; you can detect small flaws that I might miss. Come, you will be rewarded in the end; you will have your fair glut of the loot. What can you expect at the Foundation? To turn the tide of a perhaps inevitable defeat? To lengthen the war? Or is it merely a patriotic desire to die for your country?

Munn

I . . . I—

Stettin

You will stay. You have no choice. Wait... I have information to the effect that your niece is of the family of Bayta Darell.

Joel

Munn stares blankly, incapable of uttering anything but the truth.

Munn

Yes.

Stettin

It is a family of note on the Foundation?

Munn

To whom they would certainly b . . . brook no harm.

Lord Stettin

Harm! Don't be a fool, man; I am meditating the reverse. How old is she?

Munn

Fourteen.

Stettin

So! Well, not even the Second Foundation, or Hari Seldon, himself, could stop time from passing or girls from becoming women.

Joel

At that moment a timid knock is heard on a nearby door, at which Stettin advances and hurls it open violently.

Stettin

What in Space have you dragged your shivering carcass here for?

Callia

I didn't know anyone was with you.

Stettin

Well, there is. I'll speak to you later of this, but now I want to see your back, and quickly.

Joel

Lady Callia hastily departs, and when the door is again closed, Stettin resumes in a quieter voice.

Stettin

She is a remnant of an interlude that has lasted too long. It will end soon. Fourteen, you say?

Joel

Munn is silent as awareness dawns. This is a far greater horror!

Meanwhile, as Arkady sits quietly in the anteroom, she becomes aware of a side door opening quietly and a figure gestures furtively for her to come and enter. It is Lady Callia, and Arkady complies, tiptoeing quietly to the doorway and entering. She wonders why she is not afraid.

Callia

This was our private way to me . . . to my room, you know, from his office. It's so lucky . . . it's so lucky—

Arkady

Can you tell me—

Callia

No, child, no. There is no time. Take off your clothes. Please. Please. I'll get you more, and they won't recognize you.

Joel

Callia hurriedly rifles through her closet and finds something suitable for Arkady.

Callia

Here, this will do. It will have to. Do you have money? Here, take it all—and this. Just go home—go home to your Foundation.

Arkady

But Homir . . . my uncle!

Callia

He won't leave. Poochie will hold him forever, but you mustn't stay. Oh, dear, don't you understand?

Arkady

No. I don't understand.

Callia

You must go back to warn your people there will be war. Isn't that clear?
Now come!

Joel

Arkady follows Callia as they walk as calmly as their nerves allow past a pair of armed guards until they have left the palace and stand outside the gate.

Arkady

I . . . I . . . don't know why you're doing this, my lady, but thanks—What's going to happen to Uncle Homir?

Callia

I don't know. Can't you leave? Go straight to the spaceport. Don't wait. He may be looking for you this very minute.

Arkady

But what do you care if he does?

Callia

I can't explain to a little girl like you. It would be improper. Well, you'll be growing up and I . . . I met Poochie when I was sixteen. I can't have you about, you know.

Joel

Arkady understands, and freezes at the thought.

Arkady

What will he do to you when he finds out?

Callia

I don't know.

Joel

As Lady Callia hurries off back to the palace we have reached a critical moment in our story, and I will allow Asimov to reveal it in his own words.

Asimov

But for one eternal second, Arcadia still did not move, for in that last moment before Lady Callia left, Arcadia had seen something. Those frightened, frantic eyes had momentarily—flashingly—lit up with a cold amusement.

A vast, inhuman amusement.

It was much to see in such a quick flicker of a pair of eyes, but Arcadia had no doubt of what she saw.

She was running now—running wildly—searching madly for an unoccupied public booth at which one could press a button for public conveyance.

She was not running from Lord Stettin; not from him or from all the human hounds he could place at her heels—not from all his twenty-seven worlds rolled into a single gigantic phenomenon, hallooing at her shadow.

She was running from a single, frail woman who had helped her escape. From a creature who had loaded her with money and jewels; who had risked her own life to save her. From an entity she knew, certainly and finally, to be a woman of the Second Foundation.

Joel

Arcadia is now in a cold panic. She calls an air taxi, but while enroute to the spaceport she realizes she isn't at all sure where she should go. Should she do as Lady Callia urged her to do and quickly return to Terminus to be with her father? She desperately wants to. The thrill of her adventure has vanished in an instant with the dual threats of the predatory Lord Stettin and the mentalic influence of Lady Callia.

Arkady arrives at the spaceport in a fog of confusion. She thinks back to her efforts to manipulate Callia to allow Homir's entrance to the Mule's palace and how she had been so proud of her ability to help the cause. She realizes now that it was Callia who had always been in control, and probably is being led to return home for some nefarious purpose of the Second Foundation. No, she can't go home and obviously can't stay on Kalgan. She looks at the wall of destinations and departure times and ponders her options. Where can she hide?

As she enters the massive spaceport, her mind in a whirl, a new thought strikes her in a powerful flash. She can't even risk sending a message to her father. She can't risk the message being intercepted and she has to evade recapture at all costs because she knows something that no one else does, which makes her the most important person at this moment in all of the galaxy, because she alone knows the location of the Second Foundation!

Arkady knows she has to get off-planet and she can't go home to Terminus. She's overwhelmed by the crowds and confusion at the spaceport and is desperate to find a way out of her situation. She gets in line to buy a ticket still not knowing where she'll go. Eventually she reaches a ticket kiosk and decides to go to Trantor – remember it was her birthplace – but the machine spits a ticket out at her with an indication that she is a little short of funds. She runs off, paranoid that every other person in the crowd could be members of the Second Foundation and that she will be caught at any

moment and all will be lost. In her blind panic and confusion she bumps into the next significant character and I'll let Asimov describe him.

Asimov

Her captor held her firmly and waited. Slowly, he came into focus for her and she managed to look at him. He was rather plump and rather short. His hair was white and copious, being brushed back to give a pompadour effect that looked strangely incongruous above a round and ruddy face that shrieked its peasant origin.

Joel

The man looks at her kindly. What's the matter? You look scared.

Arkady

Sorry, I've got to go. Pardon me.

Pappa

Watch out, little girl. You'll drop your ticket.

Joel

A woman appeared out of the crowd.

Mamma

Pappa, why do you shout in a crowd like that? People look at you like you were crazy. Do you think you are on the farm? He has manners like a bear.

Sit down, and rest your little feet. It will be no ship yet for an hour and the benches are crowded with sleeping loafers. You are from Trantor?

Arkady

I was born there.

Mamma

One month we've been here and till now we met nobody from home. This is very nice. Your parents—

Arkady

I'm not with my parents.

Mamma

All alone? A little girl like you? How does that come to be?

Pappa

Mamma, let me tell you. There's something wrong. I think she's frightened.

Mamma

So shut your mouth, Pappa. Into you, anybody could bump.

You're running away from somebody, sweetheart? Don't be afraid to tell me. I'll help you.

Joel

Arkady felt trapped, alone, and desperate. She wanted to curl up into a ball, but these people seemed so nice, and they were going to Trantor. All of the panic and confusion had left her weak and she found herself giving in. The next thing she knew she was sobbing uncontrollably in front of these complete strangers.

Arkady

Golly, I—

Mamma

Shhh. Shhh. Don't talk, just sit and rest for a while. Catch your breath. Then tell us what's wrong, and you'll see, we'll fix it up, and everything will be all right.

Joel

Arkady knew she couldn't tell the truth but was too worn out to invent a lie.

Arkady

I'm better now.

Mamma

Good. Now tell me why you're in trouble. You did nothing wrong? Of course, whatever you did, we'll help you; but tell us the truth.

Pappa

For a friend from Trantor, anything, eh, Mamma?

Mamma

Shut your mouth, Pappa.

Joel

Arkady reaches into her purse which she has somehow held on to in all the rush. She pulls out a document with signatures from Foundation and Kalgan showing that she is on an official visit to Kalgan.

Pappa

You're from the Foundation?

Arkady

Yes. But I was born in Trantor. See, it says that—

Pappa

Ah-hah. It looks all right to me. You're named Arcadia, eh? That's a good Trantorian name. But where's your uncle? It says here you came in the company of Homir Munn, uncle.

Arkady

He's been arrested,

Mamma

Arrested!

Pappa

What for? He did something?

Arkady

I don't know. We were just on a visit. Uncle Homir had business with Lord Stettin but—

Pappa

With Lord Stettin. Mm-m-m, your uncle must be a big man.

Arkady

I don't know what it was all about, but Lord Stettin wanted me to stay—

Pappa

And why you?

Arkady

I'm not sure. He . . . he wanted to have dinner with me all alone, but I said no, because I wanted Uncle Homir along. He looked at me funny and kept holding my shoulder.

Mamma

How old are you, Arcadia?

Arkady

Fourteen and a half, almost.

Mamma

That such people should be let live. The dogs in the streets are better.

Pappa, go right to Information and find out exactly when the ship to Trantor comes to berth. Hurry!

Joel

Her husband begins to comply with his wife's demand when they are interrupted by a loud voice resounding throughout the terminal.

Public Address Announcer

Men and women, the airport is being searched for a dangerous fugitive, and it is now surrounded. No one can enter and no one can leave. The search will, however, be conducted with great speed and no ships will reach or leave berth during the interval, so you will not miss your ship. I repeat, no one will miss his ship. The grid will descend. None of you will move outside your square until the grid is removed, as otherwise we will be forced to use our neuronics whips.

Joel

Arkady stands frozen in sheer terror. She knows it can only be her they are seeking. She is horrified at the thought of getting these nice people in trouble and wants to shout out her surrender. Before she can act, though, the woman called Mamma acts for her.

Mamma

Quick! Quick! We'll go to the ladies room before they start.

Joel

They squeeze their way quickly through the stunned crowd and find their way to the restrooms.

Asimov describes the horrifying technology that had been announced as it began its process.

Asimov

The grid was descending now, and Pappa, open-mouthed, watched it come down. He had heard of it and read of it, but had never actually been the object of it. It glimmered in the air, simply a series of cross-hatched and tight radiation-beams that set the air aglow in a harmless network of flashing light. It always was so arranged as to descend slowly from above in order that it might represent a falling net with all the terrific psychological implications of entrapment.

It was at waist-level now, ten feet between glowing lines in each direction. In his own hundred square feet, Pappa found himself alone, yet the adjoining squares were crowded. He felt himself conspicuously isolated but knew that to move into the greater anonymity of a group would have meant crossing one of those glowing lines, stirring an alarm, and bringing down the neuronic whip. He waited.

Joel

The way this lockdown investigation proceeded was pretty simple. The police would enter each square in turn and demand identification until the person they sought was invariably located. People who had momentarily escaped to the restrooms were retrieved and accounted for. By the time they get to Pappa's square his wife and Arkady are on the way to join him. He offers his papers on demand and explains the absence of his wife and his niece who is traveling with them. Within moments they arrive, and it appears Mamma is not happy.

The police officer in charge asks sharply,

Police Inspector

Is this noisy old woman your wife?

Pappa

Yes, sir .

Police Inspector

Then you'd better tell her she's liable to get into trouble if she talks the way she does to the First Citizen's police. Is this your niece?

Pappa

Yes, sir.

Police Inspector

I want her papers.

Pappa

I don't think I can do that.

Police Inspector

What do you mean you can't do that? Hand it over.

Pappa

Diplomatic immunity.

Police Inspector

What do you mean?

Pappa

I said I was trading representative of my farm co-operative. I'm accredited to the Kalganian government as an official foreign representative and my papers prove it. I showed them to you and now I don't want to be bothered anymore.

Police Inspector

I've got to see your papers. It's orders.

Joel

The police lieutenant disappears briefly and momentarily reappears with a firm expression.

Police Inspector

Her papers, if you please?

Pappa

I have already explained—

Police Inspector

I know what you have explained, and I'm sorry but I have my orders, and I can't help them. If you care to make a protest later, you may. Meanwhile, if necessary, I must use force.

Pappa

Give me your papers, Arcadia. Don't be afraid. Give them to me.

Joel

Arkady now had no choice but to do as he said. In Asimov's words, Helplessly she reached out and let the documents change hands. Pappa fumbled them open and looked carefully through them, then handed them over. The lieutenant in his turn looked through them carefully. For a long moment, he raised his eyes to rest them on Arcadia, and then he closed the booklet with a sharp snap.

Police Inspector

All in order. All right, men.

Joel

Arkady is stunned. How can this be? The papers should have immediately revealed the lie. Pappa later explained to her that he had inserted a 500 credit Kalganid bill and that this had been enough to turn the tide and allow their escape. Later, aboard the ship to Trantor, she wondered if it was true. Was the Second Foundation allowing her to leave? Was she heading straight into another trap?

Wow - a lot happened in this part of the story! Quite a whirlwind, and there are significant developments remaining in part III. This episode brings to mind how much Asimov loved mystery writing and there are quite a few mysteries still to clear up. What made Arkady so sure that Callia was from the Second Foundation? Why does she think she now knows their

location and that she is the only one who knows it? What has Homir Munn discovered in the Mule's palace? Will the Foundation with or without the help of the Second Foundation be able to stop Lord Stettin's imperial ambitions? Where did Mamma and Pappa come from and are they what they seem to be? Most enigmatic of all, because it's the mystery we've been chasing since the middle of Foundation and Empire, where is that darned Second Foundation after all?

This episode was all action from start to finish and we've learned very little about the Second Foundation since the end of part I. There are no ruminations between the First Speaker and his student about what guides their thinking. We do get the minor scene back on Terminus where Dr. Darell is musing about their intentions which he is committed to oppose, but all we really know is that he and his deceased patron Kleise were certain that they must be stopped.

We have learned one important fact – if we can take the word of a terrified and confused teenage girl who is clearly over her head – that Lady Callia was never who she appeared to be. Rather than the muddle headed mistress of Lord Stettin being dominated by his whims and the events surrounding her, we know that, if it is true that she is Second Foundation we can also assume that she has been driving the narrative. This implies that she has reasons to be in the position she is, that she is very likely at least attempting to guide Lord Stettin in some way. I think my favorite scene in this episode is the first involving Lady Callia and Arkady, when the girl falls for the Lady's dumb-dumb routine and tries to explain to her the importance of the Second Foundation and the likely ascension of Kalgan, presumably under Lord Stettin, to become the nucleus of a second empire. This begs the questions, though, did Lady Callia need this information to complete her mission? If so, this implies that Arkady is not completely lacking in understanding, and knows some important things that the Second Foundation does not. After all, she did divine the truth, if

she is to be believed, that Callia was a spy for them, and somehow seems to have intuited the most important secret in the galaxy, the location of the Second Foundation. When we return to this story we will get to the bottom of this considerable heap of mysteries. I hope you are all enjoying the web of conundrums Dr Asimov has spun for us thus far.

Attentive listeners will likely have recognized a new voice among those that have become familiar so far on Seldon Crisis. We have Amanda Kreidler returning to play three different characters in this episode; the maid Polly we met last episode, but also Lady Callia and Mamma. Jon Blumenfeld returned to play the anxiety-ridden librarian and Mule expert Homir Munn, but the new voice is that of Lord Stettin, performed by Zac Kreidler who also happens to be Amanda's real life husband. You can hear a lot more of both Zac and Amanda on their RPG podcasts Dimension Door and Severed Fate where they play a multitude of characters. Zac is also a first rate engineer and has been responsible for the beautiful audio quality of all of Amanda's parts in previous episodes. I am very grateful for his contributions.

I'd like to do a tiny bit of housekeeping on the podcast and let you know how things are going and what the future holds. First, my apologies at the greatly reduced cadence of new episodes of late. The decision to add some new voices has greatly increased the complexity of the production of these story episodes. I am learning a lot of important skills as I go, including how to coordinate and direct the performances of four different actors in remote locations and edit their work into a finished product. The Covid beast has also again reared its head and struck against two of our cast since the last episode, requiring some significant downtime. Fortunately, everyone seems to have recovered optimum health and these travails will hopefully be behind us. The next episode is a little less complex than this one so I hope I can get it out without nearly as much delay, but I've learned not to make specific promises about release dates.

Last, before I go, I want to make a couple of requests of you, my dear listeners. It's been quite a while since I've had the pleasure of reading a review, so I urge you to go to the podcast website at the easily remembered address of seldoncrisis.net, click the Reviews tab at the top of the page, and leave a brief review explaining what you like about the podcast. It's always a great pleasure to hear the perspective of my listeners. Speaking of hearing, there's another cool way you can interact through the website. In the lower right corner you'll see a red microphone icon. If you click on that you can leave a short message in your own voice which will be emailed to me. I've set it up to be anonymous and I don't collect your email unless you decide to share it with me. You know my voice quite well by now, and I'd love to hear some of yours. If you like, I can even feature your message on an upcoming podcast.

That's enough for this episode, so I'll just thank the usual suspects; Tom Barnes for the theme music, Mike Topping for the podcast art, and my son Jeremy MacKinnon for the excellent sound design work. Looking forward to being with you again for the third and concluding segment of the final chapter of Second Foundation as well as wrapping up the original Foundation trilogy with Search by the Foundation, part III, here on Seldon Crisis!