

Supplementary Information for the article:

Creating a climate changed future with the sea level rise interactive-fiction game 'Lagos2199'

Full Passage text for 'Lagos2199' game

Author note:

The text below tells a coherent story. However, this text was designed to be read in the game setting, with the corresponding pacing, imagery and music. Nonetheless, the text is shown here since it will permit an easier reading and understanding of the full story in the absence of playing the game itself. The Bold text represents the choices that are clicked to travel to the next story passage.

Opening:

In this game, you can make choices.

Some choices will determine the outcome of the game, while others will not.

You cannot return to previous choices.

The menu on the left hand side of the screen allows you to save your progress in the game, or restart the game. You can also adjust the volume.

1.

Wake up

"BEEP BEEP BEEP"

You wake up, slapping the table next to you to turn off your morning alarm.

"BEEP BEEP BEEP"

You sit up, groggy, unable to figure out why your alarm is still going, then you realize that it's not your alarm, but your Feed.

You click into your Feed, and see that you have the boat today.

Strange, you didn't think it was your turn till next week.

Either way, if its your slot, your slice depends on every shift you can get.

2.

Get ready

More importantly, you look down at the faces projected above your table and smile. Any work beyond your normal shift goes to you - and you hope for their sake that today is busy.

You make your lunch as you listen to the morning newscast.

“In local news, stocks in AbujaTech are up, despite multiple gene hacking scandals. AbujaTech denies all allegations. The African Union has approved the deployment of growing season rain triggers throughout the Sahel. Local authorities in Kano have praised the news, and have suggested yields could be record-breaking. In sport, The Shooting Stars prevailed over Bridge F.C. 4 - nil. With the home advantage in New Ibadan, the Shooting...”

You suck your teeth. The Shooting Stars! Again! Walé will never let you hear the end of this.

“Now over to Ife with the weather.” You start paying attention, “Thank you Samad. It will be hot today, with temperatures reaching 35 C in Eko City and Ikorodu and 30 in New Lekki. No rain today, though the Governmind has suggested that if it gets too hot, it may deploy micro-seeders for a late afternoon shower to cool the bay off. We will keep you updated if and when we learn more.”

“Thank you Ife. Now, over to Chima for the latest on the African Union closing of the border to the ongoing European migrant crisis...”

You grab some water and head out the door, clicking off the lights in your cube and the news in your Feed.

3.

Head toward the Marina

As you take a tube to the dock, you stare out at the city around you. Holoboards flash along the walls of tube...

“Euro-Churn Tours presents ‘THE DUTCH COLLAPSE’. Adventure Awaits!” A giant wave splashes toward you, but you're already onto the next ad.

A giant eye blinks open “HOW MUCH DO YOU TRUST THE GOVERMIND?” It winks out, with a spinning logo of the Nigerian national government.

“If the Governmind can't stop Bat's Mouth, who will? Support a Federal Lagos!” another spinning logo of the Nigerian national government...

You reflect that the Bat Forest has not felt safe since the city of Bat's Mouth set up shop. One visit to that city was enough for you... you can't help agreeing with that Ad. Why hasn't the Governmind done anything?

"Get around the bay in style? HALtech gets you where you need to go." You chuckle and sigh, as you close your eyes from the visual onslaught.

There's a chime, and then "NEXT STOP. MARINA SOUTH"

4.

Prepare to disembark

The sun shines on the marina of Eko City. You look out at the docks and see people disembarking from drone ferries heading into the growing heat of Eko's massive sprawl.

You tap your Feed and your display shows you which boat you're operating today. There must be a glitch. You tap the Feed again. Nope...

5.

Look at the boat

Usually your HALtech boat is standard. This, though... is not.

It's at least an Oba 350, maybe a 400. Turbo boost, custom tap panel, and is that? You walk to the stern, and sure enough on the back is a custom hoverdrive.

Bemused, you shake your head, access HALtech in the Feed, and the boat purrs to life. You check the diagnostics, and the boot sequence looks good.

6.

Glance at the map of Lagos Bay

The city is a thrumming hive of activity. It has many names - New Lagos, Eko City, and Ekopolis - and yet defies easy classification. It sprawls back to the west into Surulere, meeting New Festac behind that, and onward all the way to the Unified Niger Republic. 50 million people by the last estimate.

Here it is easy to see the legacy of sea level rise. Unlike New Lekki to the south, and Ikorodu to the north, Eko City still retains pieces of its past, stretching back many hundreds of years. And despite the chaos of The Churn, the scattered sea walls and flood protection throughout the city have been transformed into elevated parks, also providing much needed escape from the sweltering heat of the city.

You can already see the heat shimmering above the rooftops - it will be hot today.

Look around marina

As you look around the dock, you notice a thin nano-plast item on the dock.

Do you leave your boat to pick it up?

7.

Pick up item¹

You pick-up the item, its an Ares Orbital passport.

8.

Hop back on your boat

You realize your boat is drifting a bit, so you tuck it in your pocket, and quickly forget you have it.

9.

Reconnect to dock

There is a person approaching your boat wearing an agbada.

10.

Ask the person where they are headed

"Nĩn hǎo. The Space Port?"

You smile and nod.

Let me plot a route to the Space Port

Ikorodu first

Ah ah. Before you can deliver the business person to the Space Port, you have to update your boat's permissions. The only way to do that is to approach Ikorodu Bay, so the Govermind can update the AI module accordingly.

The passenger says, "Will that delay the journey to the Space Port."

Not really, you say.

The passenger says "OK. But, I'm not from here, what is the Ikorodu Govermind?"

11.

Tell the passenger about the Ikorodu Govermind

Well, Ikorodu is an AI protectorate, with everything that comes with it. The passenger laughs and says "I have no idea what any of that means."

You say that back near the turn of the century, Ikorodu worked with some scientists from Abuja to put an AI in charge of city management. Or rather an Artificial consciousness - you're still not totally clear what the difference is.

¹Or:

Leave item alone: As you turn away from the item, you see a Mars logo, and now you're curious. (back to "Pick up item").

"Really!?" Exclaims the passenger.

Yes, you say. Apparently, it was a first of its kind test in the world. The scientists did not know what would happen, and other countries threatened war over the perception that the region might be destroyed by a rogue computer program. That's part of what led to the Lagos War...

12.

Passenger wants to know more about the Ikorodu Governind

But, reality you say, is much more mundane.

It turns out that the Iko Governind is a pretty boring leader. It cut ties to the Abuja scientists in 2121, and has been independently managing Ikorodu, and much of the bay in general, ever since.

It provides economic, political, and social continuity. Honestly - its helped create a transparent democracy, with a leader that is not susceptible to bribery.

13.

Passenger wants to know more about the Ikorodu Governind ²

"Isn't there any risk that the Governind will go superintelligent?" says the passenger.

You answer, "Sort of. The worry of what will happen if the Governind goes super intelligent is a constant discussion point, but since it hasn't happened anywhere else that machine governance has been tried (and there are many experiments throughout humanity's domain) that people have stopped being concerned.

The running joke is that they wish the Governind was more intelligent - but people always think that of their leaders, don't they?"

You laugh to yourself and turn to your control panel to the initiate the update to your AI.

14.

Talk to business man

You ask the business man why he was in Eko City.

He answers, "I'm here discussing future investments in gene drive technology — are you familiar?"

Yes ³

² Or:

Passenger is checking out of the conversation, skip to #14

³ Or:

No, tell about it: Also goes to #15

15.

Gene drive

"Fair enough," says the business man, "Well, gene driving is now almost two centuries old, so its relatively ancient technology. It is still the directed evolution of a specific organism, but its probably better to say designer evolution..."

You stare... maybe a little blankly.

"Anyway — " says the business man, "I am a trade representative for the Martian guilds. The American team made an impressive presentation today, and I daresay that the Lagosian team was caught flat-footed when the American's pointed out the inability to even keep the Bat Forest healthy...."

You nod, and consider this. The Feed has chattered recently about the health of the Bat Forest and the risks to N'etiti...

16.

Approach the Ikorodu marina

Approaching the Ikorodu marina from the south shows a very different landscape from Eko. The buildings present a much more utilitarian view, with a clear emphasis on functionality and sufficiency, rather than the hodgepodge architecture of Eko City.

"Why do you look nervous?" asks the passenger.

Do you look nervous?

A little... ⁴

17.

Explain approval

"Nervous? Well... I always have some trepidation with the Govermind. Not really nervous — just healthy respect for the Govermind"

The panel on your boat chirps.

Ah, here we are, You say, "Let's go."

18.

Head to space port

You tell the passenger that its only a short trip to the Port from here, and gesture up at the uncanny quiet of a transport gliding overhead.

⁴ Or:

No: Also goes to #17

19.

Steer toward the Space Port

The Lagos Space Port is an odd reflection of the region as a whole. The legacy of past sea ports are visible meters below the surface of the bay. Some of this infrastructure even peeks out of the bay — with pylons and rusty beams covered in vegetation, and populated by crocodiles and the water birds that nest there.

20.

Explain more about the port

As the central hub for the African continent, the Space Port a key point for transporting goods into orbit, especially the weekly transport of dehydrated food from the vast Sahel food production zones. The Space Port, like Ikorodu, employs a machine intelligence to manage all logistics among grounded, transferring and orbiting craft. This is sort of the only way to do it, since the ships all are driven by AI anyway.

21.

Passport is lost

The passenger exclaims, "Ah! I've lost my passport!"

Show them the passport you found on the dock.

22.

Thank you

"Thank you - you have saved me a much delayed trip back home."

Tell them they are welcome.

23.

Drop off

You approach the dock, to drop off your passenger.

"Thank you for the journey. It was much more enjoyable and informative than I expected."

You wave goodbye to the passenger.

24.

Look to the dock to see who is waiting

You wave at someone who looks very tired, with a BAG by their side. "I think you're my ride to Eputu Town?"

Yes, you say, and welcome them onboard.

Let me plot a route to Eputu Town

25.

To Eputu Town

You say, it will take a little bit to get there from here.

"We'll pass by the Bat Forest, if you're interested." you mention to the passenger.

"Ah, right... I don't know how I forgot about the Forest." says the passenger.

26.

Are you from around here?

"Yes, I grew up in Eputu" says the passenger.

The boat's AI is navigating the water easily, so you gaze up at the towering mangroves as you cruise by.

"Did you know" says the passenger, "That these were planted to help stop -"

"Climate change." You finish their sentence. You both smile.

"It was such a massive achievement! Literally, and figuratively..." The passenger stops as you are both caught in the shade of some of the 100 meter tall giant mangroves in the middle of the Bat's Forest. "What's wrong with that patch there?" The passenger points to a yellowing part of a mangrove, set back in the canopy.

"Ah - well, for the last few years or so, the Forest has been changing. Some patches have almost entirely died back - and the scientists don't know why. The Feed says that the Bay hasn't really changed, so its unclear what has happened, or what is happening..."

The passenger looks worried, and asks, "Is it salinity changes? Maybe something with thermal tolerances?" You laugh and say you have no idea, sadly.

You tell the passenger that you used to visit N'etiti quite a lot, making offerings at the shrine. But you haven't been for some time. And Bat's Mouth seems to be creeping outward toward N'etiti making it less desirable to risk a visit...

You look back and realize the passenger is spacing out looking at the water. Easy to do...

27.

Approach Eputu Town

As you near Eputu, it is clear why many consider this the most vibrant part of the Bay. By land and sea (and even sometimes a cobbled together airship) people with nowhere else to go, have come to Eputu Town. The watery, semi-flooded shanty town has been in the same place for centuries. As the water has crept higher, and then jumped in bursts, Eputu just goes up, too.

The passenger, rubbing their eyes, looks up at you and says, "Did you know what governments would do in the past?"

28.

What did they do?

The passenger says, "Way back, before the Churn, apparently the government was so obsessed with economic growth and impressing foreigners, that the military would raze settlements with no warning."

You say that you had not heard this.

"Its true." they say, "But now, Eputu Town is protected by the three Cities, and provided with essential services - well mostly."

The passenger inhales deeply and takes in the smell of the nearby Eputu Coffee Roaster - best in the region. They turn to you and thank you for the trip.

29.

Ask them where they are headed in Eputu.

"I'm here for a funeral" says the passenger. "I'm a student up at Luna University - studying nano-organic engineering. But... my great-grandmother died - would have been 170 years old this Tuesday. She was a wonderful woman, so, the whole family is coming back here." She looks out at Eputu. "It is nice to be back though."

You nod, and give them your condolences.

"Thanks" they say.

The student disembarks and quickly disappears into the throng of people at the Eputu docks.

30.

Look back to your boat

The students BAG was left behind in the boat. You quickly look back at the crowd, craning your neck to see if the student is still visible.

31.

Wait for student to return for BAG ⁵

The BAG begins making a keening sound as it clearly has a proximity sensor in it for security.

You sigh heavily, and guide the BAG onto the dock so you can find the owner.

⁵ Or:

Take BAG onshore and look for student: Skip to #32

32.

Head onshore

You take the BAG up to a dockside kiosk, and see whether you can learn where the student disappeared to...

33.

Ask Kiosk if it knows of a funeral happening locally ⁶

"HELLO!" Shouts the kiosk. You wince and look around. "YOU HAVE ASKED ABOUT FUNERALS. A FUNERAL IS ONE OF MANY CUSTOMS FOR HONORING THE DEATH OF A PERSON. WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE?"

34.

Try to re-ask the kiosk about a funeral that is happening today ⁷

"OF COURSE. FUNERALS TODAY. ON THIS DAY IN 2093, FAMOUS BRITISH-BORN YORUBA PSYCHIATRIST AND AUTHOR TADE THOMPSON DIED AT THE AGE OF 124 YEARS."

You sigh.

35.

"THOMPSON WAS KNOWN FOR PIONEERING WORK IN THE GENRE OF NIGERIAN SCIENCE FANTASY AND AFRICANFUTURISM."

You groan, with resignation and bring the BAG further into the crowd.

36.

Ask a passer-by whether they know of a possible funeral

You manage to stop a young fruit seller before they disappear into the tunnels and walkways of Eputu.

"You wouldn't happen to know of a funeral happening today - for someone who was about 170 years old?" As you say this, you realize how hopeless this is.

"Ah ah! Of course I do. Are you joking? Everyone knows of Mama Aminat's passing."

You light up, gesturing at the BAG...

37.

Explain your situation

⁶ Or:

Ask a passer-by whether they know of a possible funeral: Skip to #36

⁷ Or:

Ask a passer-by whether they know of a possible funeral: Skip to #36

As you explain the situation of the student visiting their great-grandmother. A dawn of recognition passes over the face of the fruit seller, "Come with me" they say.

You hurriedly get the BAG walking beside you and move to keep up with the fruit seller.

"Mama Aminat helped make Eputu Town what it is today. During the last 100 years, so many people have poured into the Bay, and Eputu Town is one of the only places that they could go. Mama Aminat helped negotiate with Old Lagos, before the Churn, and ever since, with Eko City, New Lekki, and even with Ikorodu City. Don't you see? Everyone knows who Mama Aminat is."

You are run walking on the uneven boards to keep up while the gangle-legged BAG staggers to keep up.

38.

Walk across a walkway over water

The fruit seller sweeps aside a curtain and you see the student standing right there looking distraught, then surprised. "Thank you!" they exclaim. "I was so caught up in thinking about the funeral that I completely forgot about my BAG." The BAG shuffles past you, backing next to the student. You swear you hear a purr.

You smile and say they are welcome. "This is really important. I just had my funeral dress tailored at the space port for Grandmother Aminat's funeral, so thank you." You nod looking at what you now realize is a garment bag.

"The period of mourning is almost over and the celebration will begin tomorrow. Please feel welcome to join us as my personal guest."

You thank the student, smile, and wave goodbye.

39.

Return to your boat

As you step through your boat's deterrence field, you start up the boat's engine. And look around for people waiting near the floating market.

40.

Person talking loudly to their Feed about soy vats

"Hi!" says the person waving you over, "Can you take me to New Lekki?"

Yes, you say.

41.

Let me plot a route to New Lekki

As you make your way out of Eputu Town, you ask whether the scientists at the conference are talking about what is making the Bat Forest sick...

"Not really — but I did just read an article about old gene driven species being susceptible to nano-mesh bombarding..."

You stare completely blankly at the scientist.

"Sorry - my interpretation was that old gene-driven species, especially high carbon sequestering species like the Bat Forest, are very good at what they do. But, since they're very good at sucking up carbon, this ability can be hacked. That means that something disguised as a CO₂ molecule or something, can slip in and start messing with the genes of the plant itself."

You look shocked.

"Well — I dunno — I'm just a soy vat scientist after all!" They smile.

42.

Motor around Lambasa Island toward New Lekki

Among the hubbub of Lagos Bay, New Lekki stands apart as a true city of the future. Emblematic of Africa's inevitable ascendance to global power in the 23rd century, New Lekki is evidence of this coming transition. The skyscrapers in New Lekki give meaning to that word in an unexpected way. Built on biological, rather than geophysical, foundations, the buildings of New Lekki are evidence of the profound progress of synthetic construction. The organic nano mesh that interweaves the mangrove base to the top of the steel and glass towers can stretch more than a kilometer tall.

43.

Approach the dock

As you approach the dock, with the buildings reaching far out of sight above you, the scientist collects their things.

"Thank you for that swift trip. I was worried I would be stuck in Eputu much too late, and miss the conference social - truth be told, its my favorite part of the whole thing." They smile at you.

You wait for them to disembark - and then stretch. It already feels like you've been around the whole bay, and its not even noon yet. You notice that someone with a stiff gait is approaching your boat.

44.

Person in Nigerian Coast Guard uniform

The coast guard officer strode briskly toward the boat, with rank and insignia holos flickering in the sun. "I'm headed to Atlantic point. I need you to get me there."

You apologize and say you can't, because you don't have the permissions to enter that part of the bay.

45.

Ask if the coastie would like to go somewhere else?

The officer sighs. "That's fine. I've got permissions. I just need to get there."

You open your permissions menu on your boat's panel, and the coastie holds their hand near the panel till it chirps.

All of a sudden, you look at your map and see that you have access to parts of the bay that you've never been to.

"What are you waiting for?" says the coastie "Lets get out of here..."

46.

Let me plot a route to Atlantic Point

"Did you see the Chinese have taken the Americans to the International Criminal Court?" asks the coast guard officer.

You answer that you did not know this.

"Yes, apparently the Americans were caught messing with Chinese supertuna or something..."

You nod, but is a little strange — why would anyone want to mess with China? You shake your head, and pay attention to boat traffic as you near the port.

The Port of New Lekki is a deepwater port dedicated to regional and global trade, including being the primary port of entry for most of Nigeria and points inland, as well as the O'Neill Vactrain that connects Lagos Bay south to Cape Town, east to Nairobi, and north to Marrakesh and Cairo. And, while the old hyperloop terminal is still technically functioning, it only services regional transport.

47.

Arriving into the Port

The New Lekki Port was literally sliced open, from the flooded Eti-osa peninsula in 2090, and over time has been dredged, deepened, and widened to become the primary point of entry into Lagos Bay. With the continuing failure to address the Drone Sentry problem in Old Lagos, this is the only method of entry that is considered safe (let alone, insurable).

48.

Notice somebody waving frantically at you

Waving frantically — no, excitedly — from the dock, is someone in a custom, yet ill-fitting Agbada, and a multi-holo projection. Must be a hologger.

You ask the Nigerian coast guard officer if they mind the extra passenger, and they wave their hand distractedly as their eyes glaze, reading the news.

You let HALtech know you're accepting another fare, and approach the dock. The person says, "Salam! Can you take me to the Snake islands? I am visiting a friend". You raise your eyebrows, but welcome them aboard.

You tell the tourist you'll be taking this Nigerian coast guard officer to Atlantic Point first, and they nod clearly just excited to be in the Bay.

49.

Add Snake Islands to your route

You sweep past the coastline, now outside the harbor, and look back.

From here, you can see how the Port is also equipped with force deterrence. Apparently, the New Lekki Port Authority works together with the Ikorodu Governmind to assess threats, both digital and physical.

You mutter something about being in the open water, and ask N'etiti for protection...

The tourist says "What was that?"

50.

Explain the mantra

You look at the Tourist, and explain that the mantra is just a saying. You're not that superstitious. N'etiti is the shrine in the Bat Forest. It is said to offer protection in the Bay, especially to people who live and work on the water.

The Tourist nods appreciatively, and you smile back a little sheepishly.

You mention that you have not been to the shrine in N'etiti in quite some time, that its probably worth a return visit...

51.

Continue west to Atlantic Point

You reach a point where you must choose a route. You can skirt the flooded waterfront of the Eti Osa peninsula, traveling through the swamp of Ekolantic. Its collapsed towers, buildings, and overgrown canals can be risky with hackers or pirates. Or at least so you've heard.

Or, you can risk taking the open ocean route along the coastline, but you're not sure if your boat can handle it. You assume the AI wouldn't take you where you can't manage, but then again, you've never had the permissions changed like this....

52.

Open ocean ⁸

You begin heading out along the coastline and you see that the water is calm today. You zoom along the shoreline, and you have a fantastic view of the coastal mangroves, as well as the flooded interior of the mangroves

You look down at your panel to check the sonar for debris on the bottom, and you hear the Tourist let out a shriek.

53.

You look up just in time

Your boat's AI veers to the right around a fresh shipwreck! Now you find you are in a path snaking through the mangroves. The tourist stops shrieking behind you.

You shiver at the close call, and look ahead as your boat more or less makes it's way back to the route it would have taken before.

54.

Emerge into Ekolantic

As you enter the overgrown canals of Ekolantic you turn to your passengers. You tell them that we will go a bit slower through here to avoid attention, and to also watch out for debris.

The tourist is wide-eyed, and nodding at you. The coast guard officer looks bored, and says something to themselves about how the Govermind really should do something to clean this up. You smirk to yourself, since this is all administered by the National government, and the Govermind has no jurisdiction in this part of the bay.

As you slide quietly over the canal, the mangoves form a tunnel around you. Then, turning a corner, the tunnel opens up, and you're in the open sun, and you see the Ekolantic towers listing to the side, collapsing in the center, and smaller buildings covered in greenery. You glance back and see the Tourist is gesturing at several of the holo screens. Apparently this adventure might make it onto this guy's channel...

The canal provides two directions and your boat AI says both get you to Atlantic Point, at the same time.

55.

Towers overgrown ⁹

This canal takes you closer to one of the old towers. A century ago this was a luxury complex, and you can see the hints of that beneath the mud and decay. You see a mudflat, with covered in broken, half-submerged boats. A restaurant peaks out from behind a retaining wall. Set back

⁸ Or:

Ekolantic: Skip to #54

⁹ Both 'Left' and 'Right' take you to the same destination.

from the canal, you think you see a swimming pool, overgrown with ferns, and even a few crocodiles on deck, basking in the sun.

At the same time your boat stops humming, and you feel the bow drifting. You tap your panel, and groan — surprised.

56.

What happened?

You look over your shoulder to your passengers, and tell them not to be alarmed but that you've been bricked. The tourist says okay, looking unalarmed.

The coastie, though, is now alert, and looking around. They flip down an apparently recessed AR display and turn, in a slow, systematic circle, taking in all the buildings and some of the driverless boats moored around. They pause, chuckle, and turn back a half inch.

57.

What is it?

"Over there, on the shoreline." they say. "A couple hacks. One with a shoulder mounted Syncer by the look of it."

You turn and see two people on the shore. One with with a large piece of cobbled electronics over their shoulder, and the other with an all-too-familiar weapon trained on your crew.

58.

Definitely panic ¹⁰

"Don't panic." said the coastie. "They clearly did not see that I was with you, otherwise, they would not have just done this very stupid thing."

"Tell them that you're a free vessel taking passengers to Atlantic Point." says the coastie.

As you drift over toward them, you shout this over the closing water. They bark with laughter.

"Yea right. Only coasties go there, and you're not..."

The coast guard officer stands up, before they can finish the sentence.

59.

Reach to stop them ¹¹

¹⁰ Or:

Don't panic: Takes you to the same destination, #58.

¹¹ Or:

Sit back: Takes you to the same destination, #59.

The officer moves too quickly for you — or anyone — to stop them. You're shocked since you took this person for a lethargic, uncommitted bureaucrat.

As they move forward, the tele-scoping boathook in their hand whips out to snag the gun away and fling it in a high arc overhead into the water. The person loses their balance and splashes into the water, cursing.

Almost before the other one can register what has happened, the butt of the boat hook thumps the person in the gut, and whips up to their chin flinging them onto their back, while the hooks whips back around, snags the strap of the shoulder mounter syncer and tele-scopes back in. The coastie retrieves the syncer, and looks at you with a grin. "I like souvenirs" they say. With a few taps, the boat's AI is back online.

As the first one slumps back onto the edge of the canal, and the other one is coughing after having the wind knocked out, the coastie says "I don't want to see you again."

They nod, cursing, from the shore as your boat glides away, the coastie chuckling, and the tourist — frantic and wide-eyed — gesticulating into their holo screens for an unseen audience.

60.

Head toward Atlantic Point

As your heart thumps, you finally exit Ekolantic, and start gliding toward Atlantic Point.

This was the ancient entry to Lagos lagoon. The Churn changed all of that and it is now a military outpost for the Nigerian Coast Guard.

Unlike most of the rest of the Bay, Atlantic Point, as well as Ekolantic and Old Lagos, are all the territory of the National government. The Three cities, let alone the Governmind, have no jurisdiction, and most of the area is completely restricted.

The outpost has two primary purposes: First, help rescue ships that are sent to sea by the Drone Sentries on Old Lagos. Second, deter ships trying to enter Lagos Bay illegally. If the reputation is accurate, they pursue this second task with gusto.

61.

Approach the dock

As you near the outpost dock, the officer mutters a, "Thanks." And then they're gone. You laugh to yourself out of shock, since that was hands-down the most exciting trip you've taken through the Bay.

You are about to push away for the Snake Islands, when your Feed chimes and you see you have another passenger.

That's odd since you shouldn't even be here without that coastie's permissions.

62.

Look to the dock

A Drone Tech stands waiting, eyes focused more clearly than almost anyone you've seen. No Feed?

They look down at you. "New Festac?" they ask.

63.

Sure, let's plot a route

You nod, and they hop on board. Clearly very comfortable on boats.

"What were you doing back there?" Asks the tourist, surprised, and taking in the drone tech's analog kit.

"Well," says the drone tech, "Mostly just getting diagnostics. It's almost impossible to remotely monitor the drone sentries, so we have to go tap in directly." The tech gestures at the analog equipment. "The sentries can't mess with this gear since it doesn't connect to the net. But the ghosts have been surprisingly active the last week or so and we don't quite know why. Anyway, I shouldn't say anything else about it."

The tech looks guiltily back toward the docks, but no one is looking your way. The Tourist, wide-eyed, blurts out "What's a Drone Sentry?"

64.

What's a Drone Sentry?

The bemused drone tech looks at the tourist, tilting their head to the side. "Not from around here?" The tourist shakes their head no...

"The Sentries on Old Lagos are relics of the Lagos War... During the Churn, they were set there to fight a cold war of deterrence between the Nigerian Government, some foreign navies, and what we now call The Three Cities. As the coastline disappeared, tensions snapped. But then things got settled and they were just left there ever since."

"Now they're acting up — in ways we've not seen before. Their signals are being detected as far as the Space Port, but don't seem to be bricking any ships lately. So we're stumped" the tech says. "I'm trying to triangulate the path of the outgoing signal, so that we can at least figure out who or what the sentries are communicating with."

The Tourist is wide-eyed.

The drone tech wiggles their fingers and says "Sometimes we call them... the Ghosts of Old Lagos."

The Tourist grins nervously, and you assure them you're not going near Old Lagos today. Then, you remind the passengers that getting through the channel will be a little dicey, given all the debris. "Slow and steady" smiles the tech.

Slow and steady you say to yourself...

65.

Continue slowly toward the Snake Islands

As you navigate the flooded warehouses, port facilities, and apartment blocks, Atlantic Point feels miles away. The interiors of the buildings seem to watch you — but truth be told that here, at least, you've never had a problem.

"What is all this" gestures the Tourist expansively at the overgrown, half-sunken forest of shipping containers.

"This is the Port of Old Lagos" you say. Given the Tourist's surprise, you realize that the Churn would have been different everywhere — but the devastation here might be worse than some...

66.

Approach Snake Islands drop-off

The Snake islands have become a quasi-biodiversity preserve, with extraordinary bird life, flourishing ecosystems, and a sizeable crocodile population that has become endemic. And of course, lots of snakes. Historically, this was the heart of the Port of Lagos... but the sentries put a stop to that.

The Cities have created a more or less protected area. Some boat traffic is allowed, particularly tourist traffic, but broadly speaking it is seen as an ecological experiment in restorative conservation.

67.

Continue onward

As you approach the destination, it's amazing how run down it looks. The Tourist is surprised too, saying that they thought a Snake Island research station would be much nicer. Then, as the projection flickers, you both realize it's just holo camouflage. "Pretty good job of it ..." mutters the impressed Drone Tech.

Then, the door in the building opens and a person waves them over. The Tourist, smiling and waving, stands to jump over the water to the dock. You pat their shoulder telling them the crocodiles are very real.

As you pull to a stop, they step onto the station dock. You wave and call out your thank you, and make your way slowly back out of the thicket of metal, concrete, and swamp — toward New Festac.

68.

Head toward New Festac

As you exit the swamp behind you, the open water of New Festac Bay is deceptive. The Port of Old Lagos were massive - with buildings scattered around sticking up out of the water, and if you look down you can see the roofs of low-lying almost directly beneath the surface. You lucked-out getting a hoverdrive today.

69.

Head up to New Festac

This part of the bay has seen some of the most significant loss of land, particularly the densely populated areas of the former Lagos City. During the Churn, Festac Town was in constant flux. As sea level rise has slowed down, New Festac has emerged as a counterpoint to the metropolises of Eko City, Ikorodu, and New Lekki. Exemplifying circular economics, New Festacians have sought to find a balance with the surrounding environment, developing novel gene stocks for tea and coffee, and being a hub for Churn Tourists.

70.

Say goodbye to Drone Tech

"Do you ever go to Old Lagos?" Asks the drone tech.

Not if you can help it, you say.

"Well, this is something that might help if you get into trouble offshore, since the sentries are becoming a little unpredictable." The Tech pulls an item from a bag, and hands you the small device.

"What is this?" You pause. "Does this turn them off?!" You exclaim.

Laughing, "No." Says the tech, "I wouldn't give you that if that's what it did. No, its called a Thumper. It cloaks you as effectively as we can right now. As you're taking people around the bay, I don't want you getting blasted by some random ghost."

The Tech shows you how it works, simple. One large button on the top.

71.

Look for new passengers

As the Drone Tech jumps off, you tap into your Feed and finish your HALtech shift. You stretch, thankful for a busy day - but one that has come to an end.

Then your Feed chimes. You have another passenger!

You're sure you had just turned things off, but here you are, the HAL logo rotating in the corner of your vision. Not taking a passenger looks bad on your ratings, so...

Someone approaches, "Take me across the bay?"

You begin to ask where, but they start climbing aboard.

72.

Uh...

"Bat's Mouth." they say.

You begin to protest but you feel hear a chime realize they've already paid. "A down payment." You check. You say that they've made a mistake you start -

"No. I recognize what I'm asking and you'll receive the same on arrival." This is more than everyone else's payments combined.

You start to explain the risk of the dark city, that Bats Mouth is not just the entry to the Bat Forest, and then you see it. The portable editor under the arm, the phosphorescent tattoo at their waist, and the furtive looks to the security kiosk.

You hold up your hands and start to protest...

"Please. Yes, Obviously I'm a gene editor, but I'm trying to get some results to my superior. I'm not doing what you think I'm doing."

You cross your arms and say you'll need a little more to go on.

73.

Explain this again

"I've been digging into what's going on with Bat's Mouth." says the gene editor.

Huh. You mention the possible gene hacking you heard about to the editor.

"Yes! Exactly. Wait - how do you know that?" they suddenly grow suspicious.

You relate the story from the Scientist earlier.

"Well — yes. That scientist was close. I'm not certain, but the ghosts of Old Lagos might have something to do with this. I don't want to say anything till I get back to Bat's Mouth."

74.

Hmmm...

The Drone Tech appears back on the dock, "I just got a message. Any chance you can drop me off at Old Lagos? You can use the Thumper to safely land on the shore."

You say no. Firstly, no one is permitted to approach Old Lagos. Its restricted by the Nigerian government, Second-

The Gene editor chimes in, "I think you'll find you still have permissions from that nationalist you ferried earlier today."

You start to ask them how in the world they know, and then you look up at the Drone tech, who smiles and shrugs. You look from the gene editor to the drone tech. "Hey..." they say to one another. Maybe you should have guessed that these two would know each other.

The gene editor catches up the drone tech on your plan, and you realize that the gene editor must have been the one that messaged the drone tech...

75.

Demand more details

The Drone Tech says "Let me explain... No, there is too much. Let me sum up. The unexplainable disease in the Bat Forest and the unexplainable activity of the drone sentries on Old Lagos might be related." The tech looks to the Gene Editor for confirmation, and they nod.

"I understand your reluctance — " says the Drone Tech, trying to smooth things over. "This sounds a little zany. But to pull off this heist..."

"It is not a heist" says the Gene Editor.

"So - to pull this off, it sounds like I might need to be on Old Lagos, if there's a connection to the sentries, right?" The Gene Editor nods.

"OK." says the Drone Tech. "If you can drop me off at Old Lagos, then you can get this one " motioning to the Gene Editor "over to the Bat Forest."

"N'etiti, specifically" says the Gene Editor.

"What?" you ask. "Why N'etiti?"

76.

Why N'etiti?

"That..." says the Gene Editor "Is something I cannot tell you right now. But I will once we get there."

You give a long look between the Drone Tech, and the Gene Editor... and you can't help your curiosity. "OK." you say. "Lets get you to Old Lagos."

"The Bat Forest Heist..." whispers the Drone Tech.

"Can you please stop saying that..." mutters the Gene Editor.

"Hey, if it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, its a heist" says the Drone Tech.

"That doesn't even make sense," says the Gene Editor, rubbing their face.

The Drone Tech sits back, and just starts whistling, periodically saying 'Heist!'

Smiling to yourself, you tap in a course for Old Lagos.

77.

Head to Old Lagos

The gene editor and drone tech are speaking quietly in the back of the boat, while you stare out at the water, making sure the boat navigates the way it should. Your thoughts wander to where you are headed, and run down what you know about the drone sentries.

The semi-permanent drone sentries might be left overs from the Churn war, but they were too durable, and programmed in systems that were too well-encrypted. The result has been an impasse of responsibility, and the National government has continued to let them sit for now.

The area denial that the National government has established prohibits any civilian traffic here, but, with your permissions, well.... Either way, the thumper in your pocket gives you a little boost of confidence that you won't get bricked tonight.

78.

Continue to Old Lagos

You see the shape of a sentry, half buried with green creeping all across it.

79.

Approach the shore

As you make a landing at Old Lagos, the Drone Tech splashes out, and approaches what looks like a vault or door into the side of one of the Drone Sentries.

"I discovered this door last year, and haven't been able to get through — its too old." says the tech. "But, the signal is coming from this sentry."

You approach the vault. "Give it a try," says the tech. "It can't hurt..."

Should you try to open the vault door?

80.

Attempt to open the vault ¹²

The vault stays shut

81.

¹² It is only possible to open the vault, after visiting the Shrine in N'etiti. An attempt at this point in the game will fail. If "No" is selected, skipt to #81

Vault is closed

The vault remains closed.

"No surprise there." says the drone tech. "Good luck and keep in communication." The Tech tosses a wrist communicator to you.

You grab it and look at them questioningly. The tech says "Its two-way only."

82.**Continue on toward the Bats Mouth**

The Gene Editor says "When we get to Bat's Mouth, just relax. I'll take care of everything."

You nod, skeptical.

You pass boat made to look like an old Chinese junk. You can see the hover motor at the water's surface though, so you know its just a replica for foreigners.

83.**Continue the passage to Bat's Mouth**

You turn to the gene editor "So we are just going to pass directly through the gate of Bat's Mouth? No problems? Just like that?"

The editor smiles widely, and says "Trust me."

You roll your eyes and open your mouth to speak.

84.**The gene editor interrupts you**

"Look. I know this sounds a bit wild. But how much do you actually know about Bat's Mouth? How much about the Forest itself?" asks the gene editor.

You say that you know its the most dangerous part of the bay.

"Purportedly" says the gene editor. "Do you know anyone personally that has come to harm there?"

You say not really, but that its well-known.

"Hmm." says the gene editor. "And the shrine?" They raise their eyebrows.

You say that before Bat's Mouth became so dangerous in the last decade, that you used to visit the shrine. Quite a lot actually as a child. Its in the heart of the forest, and is a place you can pay respects to the forest for saving humanity. Its been here a long time, since the start of the Churn.

85.

Journey toward entry to Bats Mouth

The gene editor nods.

"You are helping me, and I trust you — " they look directly into your eyes. "So I will let you in on part of the story that you do not know." The gene editor continues "Bat's Mouth is not what it seems. And it is not an accident that it is located so close to N'etiti. Several decades ago the gene curators of the shrine decided that something must be done to increase the protection of the forest - our spies abroad had finally detected what we had feared for some time. Anger at the ascendance of Lagos Bay into something more than a backwater. We - "

You stand-up wide-eyed...

The gene editor looks flustered, then takes a breath. "Yes. We." they say. "I am a representative of the shrine. At another time, you might call me a gene priest. But yes, We decided something must be done. So, Bat's Mouth."

You remind the priest that you know Bat's Mouth is not a fake city. You remind them you've been there, that you've been threatened there.

"Yes, probably by one of my colleagues" says the priest. "But you are not dead, correct?"

You are shocked, and shake your head, indicating you were scared, but no, you did not die.

The setting sun disappears.

86.

Enter Bat's Mouth

The night city, Bats Mouth, towers overhead, in a seamless web of mangrove and neon. It is — well, you thought it was — the most dangerous part of the bay. You look around - and you know that while this priest next to you seems confident that this is a ruse, you realize that this place is still dangerous — and that the reputation it has is not all wrong. It just might not be the murderous hole that you thought it was.

The priest is watching you.

You can't help staring — offerings for illicit gene deals, stem mods, and black market grafts. Then you stare up into the canopy, seeing the neon illumination in the gloom. Then a shout brings you back, as fight breaks out nearby and someone falls into the water. You point at the victim, gesturing as if to say "What about that?"

"Like I said, they aren't dead." You pass by the storefronts covering the roots and trunks of the mangroves, as the Bat Forest residents scowl down at you.

87.

Take Gene Editor to their stop

In the middle of the canal, there are two thugs standing in a canoe, barring your way.

"Si n'uzo puo." threatens the priest.

The two thugs give an almost imperceptible bow, while paddling quickly away. You briefly glimpse the same tattoo as you saw on the priest.

You can't believe it, and you float right past them.

88.

Wait

Wait — You ask if you just say that the next time you're here, as you look back at the Bat's Mouth — which you simply cannot believe you just floated easily through...

"No." the priest laughs "You would not get the pronunciation correct, and they would know." says the priest, then they continue as though you hadn't said anything. "The shrine as you know it, is called N'etiti or 'Ni aarin'. Even we do not know when the shrine started exactly, but it became quite clear something must be done when people began arriving in large numbers."

You duck as the mangroves nearly close around you but then open into a cathedral of open space with other trees towering far overhead.

89.

What are these?

You look around you and ask the Gene priest what kinds of trees these are.

"Now you see why we built Bats Mouth" says the Gene priest. "Despite the best intentions of the visitors to the shrine at N'etiti, they brought gifts of soil and seeds — and many problems. Competition for nutrients, foreign pests, and things still more nefarious. The exotic fruit trees alone have attracted close to a million fruit bats." The gene editor waves absently above you.

"So, while the gene priests of the forest continue to carefully monitoring carbon sequestration by the mangroves, the city of Bat's Mouth helps keep the visitors to manageable number."

You shake your head — everything you thought you understood is turned on its head about this place.

90.

Where are you going?

You ask if you are now headed to the shrine?

"Yes. Well, not exactly. We must enter secretly - since I do not know who is involved. I did not expect to be doing this with the help of a drone tech and a ferry operator, but here we are."

You whisper to yourself that it really is a heist.

The priest rolls their eyes and looks upward at the towering trunks above you.

91.

Pass toward the shrine

You get a buzz on the communicator, realize it's the Drone Tech, "Are you getting close? The signal from behind the vault door is almost perfectly aligned with the signal in the wrist transponder."

You see that you are actually behind the shrine, as you knew it. The priest motions for you to head directly toward a root descending into the water, and as you approach you see a crocodile swimming toward you...

92.

Uhhh

Ahhh!

93.

Steer away from the crocodile! ¹³

Before you can do anything, the crocodile passes through you — and you realize it was just a projection.

You see that the holo projection masked an entryway into further canals into the heart of the shrine. These, however, form concrete alcoves and what appears to be flooded control stations?

The gene editor says something into their Feed, and...

94.

Look at the alcoves

At once, the water disappears, and you see that this area is actually dry, well mostly. The water is a projection also, and the gene editor hops over the flood wall and races along the alcoves until they duck into one.

You hop down into the dry canals, and look over the priest's shoulder.

"Here." The priest says, pointing to a small patch of lichen on the wall.

"This little organism should not be here. In fact this does not grow anywhere in this part of the world. A nice gene hack by some standards, but clumsy to an expert." Taking one of the

¹³This option, and 'Crouch down in the boat!' both take you to the next passage, #93.

instruments from their shoulder, the priest gently opens the lichen, revealing organocircuits beneath. "Hold this" they say handing you the instrument, and a part of the organocircuit.

As you take the instrument, they deftly use another tool that appears to scan the lichen. "There, now. It was a clever job of gene hacking - but its been stopped. It will take time to repair the damage, especially without the original Rhizophora stock. But at least the bombardment has been halted."

95.

Return to Old Lagos

This," they hold up a vial containing a single hair. "Needs to make it back to Old Lagos. It is the key to finishing this."

You let out burst of air, and start to object —

"Come on! Its the Bat Forest Heist!" grins the priest, goading you to object.

You need to know what this is.

The priest says, "It is a key that is more than 100 years old..." They raise their eyebrows. "I will stay here," says the priest, "and make sure this is properly reprogrammed, I may be seeing you around — now that you know some of these secrets..." The priest gives you a long glance, and then goes back to their work.

How did you get mixed up in this?

96.

Back to Old Lagos

You exit N'etiti, and then out of the Bat Forest, into the setting sun. With your batteries at full, recharged apparently in N'eiti, you glide swiftly back across the bay.

Looking down in the boat, you remember to hit the thumper - despite everything, the ghosts of Old Lagos could still brick you.

In a matter of less than an hour, you are pulling up to Old Lagos... again.

97.

Approach the Drone Tech on the shore

"Team Bat Forest Heist!" calls the Drone Tech as you hop ashore.

You explain what transpired in N'etiti. The tech looks surprised about the gene hack discovered at the Shrine, but not that the gene editor is a priest. You stare, open mouthed.

"Well — I've worked a lot of contracts in this Bay..." says the Drone Tech. "Now, lets see that message in a bottle."

You hand the vial to the tech, who carefully opens a panel on the vault door that has been painstakingly cleaned. The Tech drops the hair onto the panel.

"Why don't you try the vault again...?" says the tech.

98.

Try to open the vault door

The vault opens.

99.

Vault opens

The vault opens up before you, as the Drone Tech carefully retrieves the hair and replaces it in the vial. You immediately get a buzz on your wrist.

"Did it work" pants the priest.

Yes, you say. Then you quickly ask whether the priest is safe.

"Of course. There were just a few more surprises waiting for us. Its fine now." they say. "Are they intact?"

You stare into the vault, open mouthed. Row, upon row, upon row, of protected sealed storage containers on the walls. The Drone Tech whistles their surprise, and grabs the communicator "Yes, everything is intact."

You look at one of the labels "Rhizophora colosseus" - then you smudge some dirt away "Colossal Mangrove".

The Drone Tech claps you on the back. "We've got it!" They turn the knob on an ancient looking drawer, and against the odds, it opens with a hiss. The Tech carefully extracts a box, puts it in their front pouch, and says "Lets get this back to N'etiti."

You ask if you're just going to leave all this here.

The Drone Tech says. "We're going to seal this back up, like we were never here. The fewer people that know this is here, the safer these seeds are."

100.

Huh.

You take a step back and stretch. What a day. As you go to leave, you hear a chirp in your Feed, and see a message from HALtech.

Text starts appearing in the corner of your eye...

"Thank you for your assistance to N'etiti, and for restoring balance to the Bat Forest. Though we may seem all powerful, we are not."

What is this?

"Only last week did we discover where the original gene stock for the Bat Forest was kept and that the seal was gene locked to the original scientists who created the vault. Only this morning were we able to identify a suitable courier for all that unfolded today - You. But now we know where the ancient seed vault is, and more importantly, we can fight back against the combined efforts of the nationalist and foreign factions that seek to hobble our home. Again, thank you."

Who is this? Is it the priest?

"No, we are not the priest."

Wha-

"We're the Govermind."

101.

Uh.

You are speechless.

"An appropriate response." the Govermind says. They go on, "Oh yes. You may wonder about your good fortune in securing this boat today. That, too, was not an accident. And, as a small gesture of gratitude, please accept this as your own personal craft. HALtech strives to keep its employees satisfied."

You blink in shock, and the text is gone. Did that just happen?

102.

Exit the vault

As you exit the vault in a daze, the drone tech is doing a little dance. "Should we go celebrate?" they look more closely, "Are you okay? You look like you just had a conversation with a Ghost."

You shake your head, and smile. You say you are fine.

The Drone Tech asks again, "So, lets get this back to the priest. And then go celebrate...." They continue their dance.

You realize that, yea, the excitement of today will not ebb soon.

You sigh, look over at the Drone Tech, and say "OK, where to?"

103.

End the game.