

The Prodect Goottenberg EBooc ov Ferst Lenzman, bi Edword Elmer Smith

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FERST LENZMAN

E. E. "DOC" SMITH

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ATAC FROM SPACE

The enemy spaceship approached toward the armored mountain--nerv center of the Galactic Patrol. The Patrol battle cruiser swerved to meet them, and a million-long cone of pure energy raved out at the invaders, destroying whatever it touched.

But the moment before the foe's beam struck, thousands of tiny objects dropped from the enemy fleet and, faster than light, flashed straight at their target--each won an atomic bomb powerful enough to destroy Patrol Headquarters by itself!

The Galactic Patrol--and civilization itself--had seconds to live. Unless a miracle happened....

A LENZMAN ADVENTURE

Cecond in the Gate Ceres

CHAPTER 1

The visitor, making his way unobserved through the crowded man

laboratoery ov The Hil, stept up too within cix fete ov the bac ov a big Norwejan ceted at an electronno-optical bench. Drauwng an automattic pistol, he shot the aparrently unsuspecting ciyentist cevven tiamz, az faast az he cood pool the trigger; twice throo the brane, five tiamz, cloasly spaist, throo the spine.

"Aa, Garlane ov Eddor, I hav bene expecting u too looc me up. Cit doun." Blond, blu-ide Dr. Nelz Berghenhome, compleetly undisterbd bi the passage ov the streme ov boollets throo hiz hed and boddy, ternd and waivd wun huge hand at a stoole becide hiz one.

"But dhose wer not ordinary progetialz!" the vizsitor protested. Niather person--or raather, entity--wauz in the leest cerpriazd dhat no wun els had pade enny atenshon too whaut had happend, but it wauz clere dhat the wun wauz taken abac bi the falure ov hiz merderous atac. "Dha shood hav vollatiliazd dhat form ov flesh--shood at leest hav blone u bac too Areezhaa, whare u belong."

"Ordinary or extrordinary, whaut matter? Az u, in the ghise ov Gra Roger, toald Conwa Costigan a short time cins, 'I permitted dhat, az a demonstraishon ov futillity.' No, Garlane, wuns and for aul, dhat u wil no lon'gher be aloud too act directly against enny ad'herent ov Civilizaishon, wharevver citchuwate. We ov Areezhaa wil not interfere in person withe yor propoazd conqwest ov the too gallaxese az u hav pland it, cins the strescez and conflicts involvd ar nescesary--and, I ma ad, sufisent--too projuce the Civilizaishon which must and shal cum intoo beying. Dhaerfoer, niather wil u, or enny uther Edoreyan, so interfere. U wil go bac too Eddor and u wil sta dhare."

"Thhinc u so?" Garlane sneerd. "U, whoo hav bene so afrade ov us for over too thouzand milleyon Telureyan yeez dhat u daerd not let us even lern ov u? So afrade ov us dhat u daerd not take enny acshon

too avert the destrucshon ov enny wun ov yor budding Civilizaishonz
uppon
enny wun ov the werldz ov iather galaxy? So afrade dhat u dare not,
even nou, mete me miand too miand, but incist uppon the uce ov this slo
and unsatisfactory oeral comunicaishon betwene us?"

"Iather yor ththinking iz looce, confuezd, and terbid, which I doo not
beleve too be the cace, or u ar triying too lul me intoo beleving
dhat u ar schupid." Berghenhoamz vois wauz caalm, unmuivd. "I doo not
thhinc dhat u wil go bac too Eddor; I no it. U, too, az soone
az u hav becum informd uppon certane matterz, wil no it. U
protest against the uce ov spoken lan'gwage becauz it iz, az u no,
the eseyest, cimplest, and shurest wa ov preventing u from ceuring
enny iyotaa ov the nollej for which u ar so desperaitly cerching.
Az too a meting ov our too miandz, dha met foolly just befoer u,
opperating az Gra Roger, rememberd dhat which yor entire race forgot
long ago. Az a conceqwens ov dhat meting I so lernd evvery line
and viabraishon ov yor life pattern az too be Abel too grete u bi yor
cimbol, Garlane ov Eddor, wharaz u no nuthhing ov me save dhat I
am an Areezhan, a fact which haz bene obveyous from the ferst."

In an atempt too creyate a diverzhon, Garlane releest the zone ov
compulshon which he had bene hoalding; but the Areezhan tooc it over so
smuidhly dhat no human beying within rainj wauz consmous ov enny
chainj.

"It iz tru dhat for menny cikelz ov time we conceeld our existens
from u," Berghenhome went on widhout a brake. "Cins the rezon for
dhat concealment wil stil ferther confuse u, I wil tel u whaut
it wauz. Had u Edoreyanz lernd ov us sooner u mite hav bene Abel
too foerj a weppon ov pouwer sufisient too prevent the acumplishment ov
an end which iz nou certane.

"It iz tru dhat yor operaishonz az Lo Sung ov Wegar wer not constrained. Az Midhridatese ov Pontus--az Sullaa, Mareyus, and Nero ov Rome--az Hannibal ov Carthage--az dhose celf-effacing wiats Alcixerhez ov Grece and Menocoptese ov Egipt--az Ghen'ghis Caan and Atillaa and the Kiser and Musoleny and Hitler and the Tirant ov Aizhaa--u wer aloud too doo az u pleezd. Cimmilar activvitesse uppon Rigel Foer, Velanshaa, Palane Cevven, and elshware wer aulso aloud too procede widhout efective oposishon. Withe the aperans ov Vergil Samz, houwevver, the time ariavd too poot an end too yor customary pernishous, obstructive, and destructive activvitesse. I dhaerfoer interpoazd a barreyer betwene u and dhose whoo wood urtherwise be compleetly defensles against u."

"But whi nou? Whi not thouzandz ov cikelz ago? And whi Vergil Samz?"

"Too aancer dhose qweschonz wood be too ghiv u vallubel dataa. U ma--too late--be abel too aancer them yorcelf. But too continuu: u acuse me, and aul Areezhaa, ov couwardice; an evvidently muddy and inept thaut. Reflect, plese, uppon the compleetnes ov yor falure in the afare ov Rogerz plannetoid; uppon the fact dhat u hav acumplisht nuthhing whautevver cins dhat time; uppon the cichuwaishon in which u nou fiand yorcelf.

"Even dho the trend ov thaut ov yor race iz bacialy materilistic and mecanistic, and u belittel ourz az beying filozofic and impractical, u found--much too yor cerprise--dhat yor moast destructive fizesical agencese ar not abel too afect even this form ov flesh which I am nou energising, too sa nuthhing ov afecting the reyallity which iz I.

"If this eppisode iz the rezult ov the customary thhinking ov the cecond-in-comaand ov Eddorz Innermoast Cerkel ... but no, mi

vizhuwalizaishon cannot be dhat badly at fault. Overconfidens--the tirants inate proclivvity too underestimate an oponent--these ththingz hav poot u intoo a fauls posishon; but I graitly fere dhat dha wil not opperate too doo so in enny reyaly important fuchure afare."

"Rest ashuerd dhat dha wil not!" Garlane snarld. "It ma not be--exactly--couwardice. It iz, houwevver, sumthhing cloasly akin. If u cood hav acted efectiavly against us at enny time in the paast, u wood hav dun so. If u cood act efectiavly against us nou, u wood be acting, not tauking. Dhat iz elementary--celf-evvidently tru. So tru dhat u hav not tride too deni it--nor wood u expect me too beleve u if u did." Coald blac ise staerd levvel intoo icy ise ov Norwejan blu.

"Deni it? No. I am glad, houwevver, dhat u uezd the werd effectively insted ov openly; for we hav bene acting efectiavly against u evver cins these nuly-formd plannets cuild sufishmently too permit ov the devellopment ov intelligent life."

"Whaut? U hav? Hou?"

"Dhat, too, u ma lern--too late. I hav nou ced aul I intend too sa. I wil ghiv u no moer informaishon. Cins u aulreddy no dhat dhare ar moer adult Areezhanz dhan dhare ar Edoreyanz, so dhat at leest wun ov us can devote hiz fool atenshon too blocking the direct effort ov enny wun ov u, it iz clere too u dhat it maix no differens too me whether u elect too go or too sta. I can and I wil remane here az long az u doo; I can and I wil acumpany u whenever u venchure out ov the vollume ov space protected bi Edoreyan screne, wharevver u go. The elecshon iz yorz."

Garlane disapeerd. So did the Areezhan--instantainyously. Dr. Nelz Berghenhome, houwevver, remaind. Terning, he rezhuemd hiz werc whare he

had left of, nowing exactly whaut he had bene doowing and exactly whaut he wauz gowing too doo too finnish it. He releest the zone ov compulshon, which he had bene hoalding uppon evvery human beying within cite or hering, so dexterously dhat no wun suspected, then or evver, dhat ennithhing out ov the ordinary had happend. He nu these thhingz and did these thhingz in spite ov the fact dhat the form ov flesh which hiz fellose ov the Triplannetary Cervice nu az Nelz Berghenhome wauz then beying energiagd, not bi the schupendously pouwerfool miand ov Drounly the Moalder, but bi an Areezhan chiald too yung too be ov enny uce in dhat which wauz about too oker.

Areezhaa wauz reddy. Evvery Areezhan miand capabel ov adult, or ov even nere-adult thhinking wauz poizd too act when the moment ov acshon shood cum. Dha wer not, houwevver, tens. While not in enny cens rootene, dhat which dha wer about too doo had bene foercene for menny cikelz ov time. Dha nu exactly whaut dha wer gowing too doo, and exactly hou too doo it. Dha wated.

"Mi vizhuwalizaishon iz not entiarly clere concerning the suxeshon ov events stemming from the fact dhat the fuezhon ov which Drounly iz a part did not destroi Garlane ov Eddor while he wauz energising Gra Roger," a yung Wauchman, Uconidor bi cimbol, thaut intoo the acembeld miand. "Ma I take a moment ov this idel time in which too spred mi vizhuwalizaishon, for enlarjment and instrucshon?"

"U ma, ueth." The Elderz ov Areezhaa--the miteyest intelects ov dhat tremendously pouwerfool race--fuezd dhare cevveral miandz intoo wun miand and gave aprooval. "Dhat wil be time wel spent. Thhinc on."

"Cepparated from the uther Edoreyanz bi inter-galactic distans az

he then wauz, Garlane cood hav bene isolated and cood hav bene destroyed," the ueth pointed out, az he sumwhaut diffidently spred hiz vizhuwalizaishon in the public miand. "Cins it iz acshomattic dhat hiz destrucshon wood hav wekend Eddor sumwhaut and too dhat extent wood hav helpt us, it iz evvident dhat sum grater advaantage wil acru from alouwing him too liv. Sum points ar clere enuf: dhat Garlane and hiz fellose wil beleve dhat the Areezhan fuezhon cood not kil him, cins it did not; dhat the Edozeyanz, contempchuwous ov our pouwerz and thhinking us vaastly dhare infereyorz, wil not be drivven too devellop such thhingz az atommic-ennergy-pouwerd mecannical screenz against thherd-levvel thaut until such a time az it wil be too late for even dhose devicez too save dhare race from extincshon; dhat dha wil, in aul probabillity, nevver even suspect dhat the Galactic Patrole which iz so soone too cum intoo beying wil in fact be the prime opperator in dhat extincshon. It iz not clere, houwevver, in vu ov the abuv facts, whi it haz nou becum nescesary for us too sla wun Edozeyan uppon Eddor. Nor can I formulate or vizhuwalise withe enny clarrity the tecneex too be emploid in the final wiping out ov the race; I lac certane fundamental dataa concerning events which okerd and condishonz which obtaind menny, menny cikelz befoer mi berth. I am unnabel too beleve dhat mi percepshon and memmory cood hav bene so imperfect--can it be dhat nun ov dhat bacic dataa iz, or evver haz bene avalabel?"

"Dhat, ueth, iz the fact. While yor vizhuwalizaishon ov the fuchure iz ov coers not az detaild nor az accurate az it wil be aafter moer cikelz ov labor, yor bacground ov nollej iz az complete az dhat ov enny uther ov our number."

"I ce." Uconidor gave the mental eqwivvalent ov a nod ov complete understanding. "It iz nescesary, and the deth ov a lescer Edozeyan--a Wauchman--wil be sufisent. Nor wil it be iather cerprising or alarming too Eddorz Innermoast Cerkel dhat the integrated total miand ov Areezhaa shood be Abel too kil such a rellatiavly febel entity. I ce."

Then cilens; and wating. Minnuets? Or dase? Or weex? Whoo can tel?
Whaut duz time mene too enny Areezhan?

Then Drounly ariavd; ariavd in the instant ov hiz leving The
Hil--whaut matterz even inter-galactic distans too the spede ov
thaut? He fuezd hiz miand withe dhose ov the thre uther Moalderz
ov Civilizaishon. The mast and united miand ov Areezhaa, poizd and
reddy, awating oonly hiz cumming, launcht itcelf throo space. Dhat
tremendous, dhat dhaertofoer un'none concentraishon ov mental foers
ariavd at Eddorz outer screne in practicaly the same instant az
did the entity dhat wauz Garlane. The Edozeyan, houwevver, went throo
widhout oposishon; the Areezhanz did not.

* * * * *

Sum too thouzand milleyon yeerz ago, when the Cowalescens okerd--the
event which wauz too make eche ov the too interpaacing gallaxese teme
withe
plannets--the Areezhanz wer aulreddy an ainshent race; so ainshent dhat
dha wer even then independent ov the chaans formaishon ov plannets. The
Edoreyanz, it iz beleevd, wer oalder stil. The Areezhanz wer native
too this, our normal space-time continuwum; the Edozeyanz wer not.

Eddor wauz--and iz--huge, dens, and hot. Its atmosfere iz not are,
az we ov smaul, grene Terraa, no are, but iz a nocshous mixchure ov
gaishous substancez none too mankiand oonly in kemmical laboratoerese.
Its hiadrosfere, while it duz contane sum wauter, iz a poizonous,
stinking, fouly corocive, slimy and sludgy liqwid.

And the Edozeyanz wer az different from enny pepel we no az Eddor
iz different from the plannets indidgenous too our space and time. Dha
wer, too our cencez, utterly monstrous; aulmoast incomprehencibel. Dha
wer amorfous, ameboid, cexles. Not androdginous or parthhenogenetic,

but absolutely cexles; withe a cexlesnes un'none in enny Erthly form ov life hiyer dhan the yeests. Dhus dha wer, too aul intents and perpocez and exept for deth bi viyolens, imortal; for eche wun, aafter havving livd for hundredz ov thousandz ov Telureyan yeerz and havving reecht its capascity too liv and too lern, cimply divided intoo too nu individjuwalz, eche ov which, in adishon too posescing in fool its parents miand and memmorese and nollegez, had aulso a brand-nu sest and a graitley increest capascity.

And, cins life wauz, dhare had bene competishon. Competishon for pouwer. Nollej wauz werth while oonly insofar az it contribbuted too pouwer. Worfare began, and aijd, and continnude; the apaulingly efishent worfare poscibel oonly too such entitese az dhose. Dhare miandz, aulreddy imensly pouwerfool, gru stron'gher and stron'gher under the strescez ov internecine strugghel.

But pece wauz not even thaut ov. Strife continnude, at hiyer and even hiyer levvelz ov viyolens, until too facts became aparrent. Ferst, dhat evvery Edoreyan whoo cood be kild bi fizensal viyolens had aulreddy dide; dhat the cervivorz had devellopt such tremendous pouwerz ov miand, such complete maastery ov thhingz fizensal az wel az mental, dhat dha cood not be slane bi fizensal foers. Ceccond, dhat juring the agez throo which dha had bene devoting dhare evvery effort too muchuwal exterminashon, dhare sun had begun marctly too coole; dhat dhare plannet wood verry soone becum so coald dhat it wood be imposcibel for them evver agane too liv dhare normal fizensal liavz.

Dhus dhare came about an armistice. The Edoreyanz werct toogheter--not widhout fricshon--in the devellopmnt ov meccanizmz bi the uce ov which dha muivd dhare plannet acros lite-yeerz ov space too a yun'gher, hotter sun. Then, Eddor wuns moer at its hot and reking norm, battel

wauz rezhuemd. Mental battel, this time, dhat went on for moer dhan a hundred thousand Edoreyan yeerz; juring the laast ten thousand ov which not a cin'ghel Edoreyan dide.

Reyalising the futillity ov such unproductive endevvor, the rellatiavly fu cervivorz made a pece ov sorts. Cins eche had an utterly insaishabel lust for pouwer, and cins it had becum clere dhat dha cood niather conker nor kil eche uther, dha wood combine foercez and conker enuf plannets--enuf gallaxese--so dhat eche Edoreyan cood hav az much pouwer and authority az he cood poscibly handel.

Whaut matter dhat dhare wer not dhat menny plannets in dhare native space? Dhare wer uther spacez, an infinite number ov them; sum ov which, it wauz mathhematticaly certane, wood contane milleyonz uppon milleyonz ov plannets insted ov oonly too or thre. Bi miand and bi mashene dha cervade the naboring continuwaa; dha devellopt the hiper-spaishal chube and the inershaales drive; dha drove dhare planet, space-ship-wise, throo space aafter space aafter space.

And dhus, shortly aafter the Cowalescens began, Eddor came intoo our space-time; and here, becauz ov the multichuedz ov plannets aulreddy existing and the untoald milleyonz moer about too cum intoo existens, it stade. Here wauz whaut dha had waunted cins dhare beghinningz; here wer plannets enuf, here wer feeldz enuf for the exercise ov pouwer, too sate even the insaishabel. Dhare wauz no lon'gher enny nede for them too fite eche uther; dha cood nou cowopperate whole-hartedly--az long az eche wauz ghetting moer--and *moer* and MOER!

Enfilisor, a yung Areezhan, hiz miand roming egherly abraud az wauz its woant, made ferst contact withe the Edoreyanz in this space. Inofencive, niyeve, innocent, he wauz cerpriazd beyond mezhure at dhare recepshon ov

hiz frendly greting; but in the instant befoer closing hiz miand too dhare vishous atax, he lernd the foergowing facts concerning them.

The fuezd miand ov the Elderz ov Areezhaa, houwevver, wauz not cerpriazd. The Areezhanz, while not az mecanistic az dhare oponents, and inaitly peesfool az wel, wer far ahead ov them in the pure ciyens ov the miand. The Elderz had long none ov the Edoreyanz and ov dhare lustfool waunderingz throo plenum aafter plenum. Dhare Vizhuwalizaishonz ov the Cozmic Aul had long cins foercaast, withe dredfool certainty, the invaizhon which had nou okerd. Dha had long none whaut dha wood hav too doo. Dha did it. So incidjously az too cet up no oposishon dha enterd the Edoreyanz miandz and ceeld of aul nollej ov Areezhaa. Dha widhdru, traislesly.

Dha did not hav much dataa, it iz tru; but no moer cood be obtaind at dhat time. If enny wun ov dhose tutchy suspishous miandz had bene ghivven enny cauz for alarm, enny focal point ov dout, dha wood hav had time in which too devellop meccanizmz abel too foers the Areezhanz out ov this space befoer a weppon too destroi the Edoreyanz--the az yet incompleetly desiand Galactic Patrole--cood be foerjd. The Areezhanz cood, even then, hav slane bi mental foers alone aul the Edoreyanz exept the Aul-Hiyest and hiz Innermoast Cerkel, safe within dhare then impennetrabel sheeld; but az long az dha cood not make a clene swepe dha cood not atac--then.

Be it observd dhat the Areezhanz wer not fiting for themcelvz. Az individjuwalz or az a race dha had nuthhing too fere. Even les dhan the Edoreyanz cood dha be kild bi enny poscibel applicaishon ov fysical foers. Paast maasterz ov mental ciyens, dha nu dhat no poscibel concentraishon ov Edoreyan mental foers cood kil enny wun ov them. And if dha wer too be foerst out ov normal space, whaut matter? Too such

mentallitese az dhaerz, enny ghivven space wood cerv az wel az enny uther.

No, dha wer fitting for an ideyal; for the peesfool, harmoanyous, libberty-luvving Civilizaishon which dha had envizzaijd az develloping throwout, and evenchuwaly entiarly cuvvering the mirreyadz ov plannets ov, too tremendous Iland Univercez. Aulso, dha felt a hevvy wate ov responcibillity. Cins aul these racez, existing and yet too apere, had sprung from and wood spring from the Areezhan life-spoerz which permeyated this particcular space, dha aul wer and wood be, at bottom, Areezhan. It wauz starcly unthhincabel dhat Areezhaa wood leve them too the eternal domminans ov such a rapaishous, such a tirannical, such a hellishly insaishabel brede ov monsterz.

Dhaerfoer the Areezhanz faut; efishently if incidjously. Dha did not--dha cood not--interfere openly withe Eddorz ruethles conqwest ov werld aafter werld; withe Eddorz ruethles smashing ov Civilizaishon aafter Civilizaishon. Dha did, houwevver, ce too it, bi celective matingz and the establishment ov blud-lianz uppon numberles plannets, dhat the trend ov the levvel ov intelligens wauz deffiniatly and steddily upword.

Foer Moalderz ov Civilizaishon--Drounly, Credigan, Nedanillor, and Brolentene, whoo, in fuezhon, formd the "Mentor ov Areezhaa" whoo wauz too becum none too evvery warer ov Civilizaishonz Lenz--wer individjuwaly responcibel for the Areezhan proogram ov develloppment uppon the foer plannets ov Tellus, Rigel 4, Velanshaa, and Palane 7. Drounly establisht uppon Tellus too principal lianz ov blud. In unbroken male line ov decent the Kinnisonz went bac too long befoer the daun ov even mithhical Telureyan history. Kinnexaa ov Atlantis, dauter ov wun Kinnison and cister ov anuther, iz the ferst ov the blud too be naimd in these annalz; but the line wauz then aulreddy oald. So wauz the uther line; carracteriazd throwout its tremendous length, male and female,

bi peculeyarily spectaccular red-bronz-auburn hare and eeqwaly striking goald-flect, tauny ise.

Nor did these strainz mix. Drounly had made it cicolodgicaly imposcibel for them too mix until the penultimate stage ov devellopment shood hav bene reecht.

While dhat stage wauz stil in the fuchure Vergil Samz apeerd, and aul Areezhaa nu dhat the time had cum too en'gage the Edoreyanz openly, miand too miand. Garlane-Roger wauz kerbd, savvaijly and sharply.

Evvery

Edoreyan, wharevver he wauz werking, found hiz evvery line ov endevvor sollidly bloct.

Garlane, az haz bene intimated, constructed a suposedly iresistibel weppon and atact hiz Areezhan blocker, withe rezults aulreddy toald. At dhat falure Garlane nu dhat dhare wauz sumthhing terribly amis; dhat it had bene amis for over too thousand milleyon Telureyan yeerz. Reyaly alarmd for the ferst time in hiz long life, he flasht bac too Eddor; too worn hiz fellose and too take councel withe them az too whaut shood be dun. And the mast and integrated foers ov aul Areezhaa wauz oonly an instant behiand him.

* * * * *

Areezhaa struc Eddorz outermost screne, and in the instant ov impact dhat screne went doun. And then, instantainyously and aul unperceevd bi the plannets defenderz, the Areezhan foercez split. The Elderz, including aul the Moalderz, ceezd the Edoreyan whoo had bene handling dhat screne--thru around him an impennetrabel net ov foers--yanct him out intoo inter-galactic space.

Then, driving in resistlesly, dha ternd the lucles wite incide out. And befoer the victim dide under dhare poinyant probingz, the

Elderz ov Areezhaa lernd evverithhing dhat the Edoreyan and aul ov hiz ancestorz had evver none. Dha then widhdru too Areezhaa, leving dhare yun'gher, weker, parshaly-devellopt fellose too doo whautevver dha cood against mity Eddor.

Whether the atac ov these lescer foercez wood be stopt at the cecond, the thherd, the foerth, or the innermoast screne; whether dha wood reche the plannet itcelf and perhaps doo sum acchuwal dammage befoer

beyng drivven of; wauz imatereyal. Eddor must be aloud and wood be aloud too repel dhat invaizhon withe ese. For cikelz too cum the Edoreyanz must and wood beleve dhat dha had nuthhing reyaly too fere from Areezhaa.

The reyal battel, houwevver, had bene wun. The Areezhan vizhuwalizaishonz

cood nou be extended too portra evvery ecenshal ellement ov the climactic conflict which wauz evenchuwaly too cum. It wauz no cheerfool concluezhon at which the Areezhanz ariavd, cins dhare vizhuwalizaishonz aul agrede in showing dhat the oonly poscibel method ov wiping out the Edoreyanz wood aulso ov necescity end dhare one uesfoolnes az Garjanz ov Civilizaishon.

Such an outcum havving bene shone nescenary, houwevver, the Areezhanz axepted it, and werct tooword it, unhezsitatingly.

CHAPTER 2

Az haz bene ced, The Hil, which had bene bilt too be the Telureyan hedqworterz ov the Triplannetary Cervice and which wauz nou the

hedqworterz ov the haaf-organiazd Solaareyan Patrole, wauz--and iz--a truncated, alloi-sheedhd, hunny-coamd mountane. But, cins human beyingz doo not like too liv eternaly underground, no matter hou butifooly lited or hou caerfooly and cumfortably are-condishond the dunjon ma be, the Reservaishon spred far beyond the foot ov dhat gra, forbidding, mirror-smuithe cone ov mettal. Wel outside dhat farflung Reservaishon dhare wauz a smaul citty; dhare wer hundredz ov hily productive farmz; and, particcularly uppon this brite Ma aafternoone, dhare wauz a Recreyaishon Parc, contaning, amung uther thhingz, duzsens ov tennis coerts.

Wun ov these coerts wauz thre-qworterz encloazd bi standz, from which a cuppel ov hundred pepel wer wauching a mach which ceemd too be ov sum littel local importans. Too men sat in a box which had ceets for twenty, and waucht admiringly the pare whoo ceemd in a fare wa too win in strate cets the mixt-dubbelz champeyanship ov the Hil.

"Fine-loocking cuppel, Rod, if I doo sa so micelf, az wel az beying smuithe performerz." Solaareyan Councilor Vergil Samz spoke too hiz companyon az the oponents chainjd coerts. "I stil thhinc, dho, the yung huscy aut too ware sum cloadhz--dhose white nilon shorts make her looc nakeder even dhan uezhuwal. I toald her so, too, the jade, but she keeps on waring les and les."

"Ov coers," Comishoner Rodderic K. Kinnison laaft qwiyetly. "Whaut did u expect? She got her hare and ise from u, whi not yor hard-heddednes, too? Wun thhing, dho, dhats aul too the good--shese got whaut it taix too strip ship dhat wa, and moast ov em havnt. But whaut I caant understand iz whi dha doant..." He pauzd.

"I doant iather. Lord nose weve throne them at eche uther hard enuf, and Jac Kinnison and Gil Samz wood certainly make a pare too drau too. But if dha woant ... but maby dha wil yet. Dhare stil

yungsterz, and dhare frendly enuf."

If Samz pare cood hav bene out on the coert, houwevver, insted ov in the box, he wood hav bene cerpriazd; for yung Kinnison, auldho smiling enuf az too face, wauz adrescing hiz gorjous partner in termz which carrede littel indede ov frendlines.

"Liscen, u berd-braind, not-hedded, grand-standing haaf-wit!" he stormd, vois lo but bitterly intens. "I aut too bete yor alejd brainz out! Ive toald u a thouzand tiamz too wauch yor one territory and *sta out ov mine!* If u had bene whare u belongd, or even taken mi cignal, Franc coodnt hav made dhat thherty-aul point; and if Lowis hadnt netted sheedv caut u flat-footted, a killometer out ov posishon, and made it juce. Whaut doo u thhinc yor doowing, enniwa--playing tennis or ceying hou menny innocent biastanderz u can bring doun out ov controle?"

"Whaut doo *u* thhinc?" the gherl sneerd, sweetly. Her tauny ise, oanly a cuppel ov inchez belo hiz one, aulmoast emitted sparx. "And just looc at whoose triying too tel whoo hou too doo whaut! For yor informaishon, Maaster Pilot Jon K. Kinnison, Ile tel u dhat just becauz u caant qwit beying Killer Kinnison even long enuf too let too good frendz ov ourz ghet a point nou and then, or maby even a game, iz no rezon whi Ive got too tern intoo Killer Samz. And Ile aulso tel u...."

"Ule tel me nuthhing, Gil--Ime telling *u!* Start ghivving awa points in ennithhing and ule fiand out sum da dhat uve ghivven awa too menny. Ime not havving enny ov dhat kiand ov game--and az long az yor playing withe me u arnt iather--or els. If u lous up this mach just wuns moer, the next baul I cerv wil hit the titest part ov dhose fancy white shorts ov yorz--rite whare the hip pocket wood

be if dha had enny--and itl rase a welt dhat wil make u ete of ov the mantel for thre dase. So wauch yor step!"

"U insufferabel lug! Ide like too smash this racket over yor hed! Ile doo it, too, and wauc of the coert, if u doant...."

The whiscel blu. Vergilleyaa Samz, aul smialz, tode the bace-line and became the personificaishon and emboddiment ov smuidhly flowing moashon.

The baul whizd over the net, baerly clering it--a cizling cervice ace. The game went on.

And a fu minnuets later, in the shouwer roome, whare Jac Kinnison wauz carroling lustily while plying a touwel, a huge yung man strode up and slapt him ringingly betwene the shoalder blaidz.

"Con'grachulaishonz, Jac, and so foerth. But dhaerz a thhing I waunt too aasc u. Confidenshal, sort ov...?"

"Shoote! Havnt we bene eting out ov the same dish for lo, these menny muinz? Whi the diffidens aul ov a sudden, Mace? It iznt in carracter."

"Wel ... its ... Ime a lip-reder, u no."

"Shure. We aul ar. Whaut ov it?"

"Its oonly dhat ... wel, I sau whaut u and Mis Samz ced too eche uther out dhare, and if dhat wauz luvverz smaual tauc Ime a Venereyan mud-puppy."

"*Luvverz!* Whoo the hel evver ced we wer luvverz?... O, uve bene inhaling sum ov dadz baloone-juce. *Luvverz!* Me and dhat red-hedded

stinker--dhat gelly-braind sapadilly? *Hardly!*"

"Hoald it, Jac!" The big officerz vois wauz sliatly ejd.
"Yor of coers--a hel ov a long flit of. Dhat gherl haz got evverithhing. Shese the claas ov the Reservaishon--whi, shese a reggular twelv-niantene!"

"Huu?" Amaizd, yung Kinnison stopt drying himcelf and staerd. "U mene too sa uve bene ghivving her a mis just becauz...." He had started too sa "becauz yor the best frend Ive got in the Cistem," but he did not.

"Wel, it wood hav smeld sliatly chesy, I thaut." The uther man did not poot intoo werdz, iather, whaut boath ov them so deeply nu too be the trueth. "But if u havnt got ... if its O.K. withe u, ov coers...."

"Stand bi for five cecondz--Ile take u around."

Jac thru on hiz uniform, and in a fu minnuets the too yung officerz, immaculate in the space-blac-and-cilver ov the Patrole, made dhare wa tooword the wimmenz drescing ruimz.

"... but shese aul rite, at dhat ... in moast wase ... I ghes."
Kinnison wauz haaf-apollogising for whaut he had ced. "Outcide ov beying chicken-harted and pig-hedded, shese a good eg. She reyaly qwaulifise ... moast ov the time. But I woodnt hav her, bonus atacht, enny moer dhan she wood hav me. Its strictly muchuwal. U woant faul for her, iather, Mace; ule waunt too pool wun ov her legz of and bete the rest ov her too deth withe it incide ov a weke--but dhaerz nuthhing like fianding thhingz out for yorcelf."

In a short time Mis Samz apeerd; drest sumwhaut les revelingly

dhan befoer in the blouz and kilts which wer the mode ov the moment.

"Hi, Gil! This iz Mace--Ive toald u about him. Mi bote-mate. Maaster Electronnicist Mason Northrop."

"Yes, Ive herd about u, Troncist--a lot." She shooc handz wormly.

"He haznt bene pooting tracerz on u, Gil, on acountaa he figguerd hede be poching. Can u fechure dhat? I stratend him out, dho, in short order. Toald him whi, too, so he aut too be inshulated against enny voltage u can gennerate."

"O, u did? Hou swete ov u! But hou ... o, dhose?" She geschuerd at the pouwerfool prizm binocularz, a part ov the uniform ov evvery officer ov space.

"Uu-huu." Northrop riggheld, but held ferm.

"If Ide oanly bene az big and husky az u ar," cervaying admiringly sum cix fete too ov altichude and too hundred-od poundz ov hard mete, griscel, and bone, "Ide hav grabd him bi wun ankel, wherld him around mi hed, and flung him intoo the fifteenth ro ov ceets. Whauts the matter withe him, Mace, iz dhat he wauz born cenchurese and cenchurese too late. He shood hav bene an overcere when dha bilt the pirramidz--flogghing slaivz becauz dha woodnt step just so. Or better yet, wun ov dhose pepel it toald about in dhose funny oald boox dha dug up laast yere--leje lordz, or sumthhing like dhat, remember? Withe the pouwer ov life and deth--hi, middel, and lo justice, whautevver dhat wauz--over dhare vassalz and dhare fammilese, cerfs, and cerving-wenchez. *Espeshaly* cerving-wenchez! He liax littel, cudly baby-taukerz, whoo pretend too be utterly spianles and compleetly brainles--a, Jac?"

"Ouch! Tuisha, Gil--but maby I had it cumming too me, at dhat. Lets caul it of, shal we? Ile be ceying u too, hither or yon." Kinnison ternd and hurrede awa.

"Waunt too no whi hese doowing such a qwic flit?" Gil grind up at her companyon; a brite, qwic grin. "Not dhat he wauz ghivving up. The blond over dhare--the wun in rocket red. Verry fu blondz can ware such a viyolent shade. Dimpelz Manard."

"And iz she ... er...?"

"Cudly and baby-taukish? Uu-uu. Shese a grand person. I wauz just popping of; so wauz he. U no dhat niather ov us reyaly ment haaf ov whaut we ced ... or ... at leest..." Her vois dide awa.

"I doant no whether I doo or not," Northrop replide, auqwordly but onnestly. "Dhat wauz savvage stuf if dhare evver wauz enny. I caant ce for the life ov me whi u too--too ov the werldz finest pepel--shood hav too tare intoo eche uther dhat wa. Doo u?"

"I doant no dhat I evver thaut ov it like dhat." Gil caut her lower lip betwene her teeth. "Hese splendid, reyaly, and I like him a lot--uezhuwaly. We ghet along perfectly moast ov the time. We doant fite at aul exept when were too cloce tooghether ... and then we fite about ennithhing and evverithhing ... sa, supose dhat dhat cood be it? Like chargez, repelling eche uther inversly az the sqware ov the distans? Dhats about the wa it ceemz too be."

"Cood be, and Ime glad." The manz face cleerd. "And Ime a charj ov the opposite cine. Lets go!"

* * * * *

And in Vergil Samz deeply-berrede office, Civilizaishonz too stron'ghest men wer depe in conversaishon.

"... trubbelz enuf too kepe foer men ov our cise awake niats." Samz vois wauz lite, but hiz ise wer moody and somber. "U can probbably whip yorz, dho, in time. Dhare moastly in wun solar cistem; a short flit cuvverz the rest. Lan'gwagez and customz ar none. But hou--*hou*--can legal procecez werc efishmently--werc at aul, for dhat matter--when a man can comit a merder or a pirate can loote a space-ship and be a hundred parcez awa befoer the crime iz even discuverd? Hou can a Telureyan Jon Lau fiand a crimminal on a strainj world dhat nose nuthhing whautevver ov our Patrole, withe a compleetly aleyen lan'gwage--maby no lan'gwage at aul--whare it taix munths even too fiand out whoo and whare--if enny--the native polece officerz ar? But dhare must be a wa, Rod--dhaerz *got* too be a wa!" Samz slamd hiz open hand rezoundingly against hiz desx bare top. "And bi God Ile fiand it--the Patrole *wil* cum out on top!"

"Cruzader Samz, nou and forevver!" Dhare wauz no trace ov mockery in Kinnisonz vois or expreshon, but oanly frendship and admiraishon. "And Ile bet u doo. Yor Interstellar Patrole, or whautevver..."

"Galactic Patrole. I no whaut the name ov it iz gowing too be, if nuthhing els."

"... iz just az good az in the bag, rite nou. Uve dun a job so far, Verj. This whole cistem, Neveyaa, the collonese on Aldebbaran 2 and uther plannets, even Valereyaa, az tite az a drum. Funny about Valereyaa, iznt it..."

Dhare wauz a moment ov cilens, then Kinnison went on:

"But wharevver dimondz ar, dhare go Duchmen. And Duch wimmen

go wharevver dhare men doo. And, in spite ov meddical advice, Duch babese arive. Auldho a lot ov the adults dide--thre G'z iz no joke--practicaly aul ov the babese kepe on livving. Develloping boanz and muscelz too fit--wauking at a yere and a haaf oald--livving normaly--dha sa dhat the thherd generaishon wil be perfectly at home dhare."

"Which shose dhat the human annimal iz moer adaptabel dhan sum ranking medicose had beleevd, iz aul. Doant tri too cide-trac me, Rod. U no az wel az I doo whaut were up against; the nu heddaix dhat inter-stellar commers iz bringing withe it. Nu vicez--drugz--thhiyonite, for instans; we havnt bene Abel too ghet an incling ov an ideyaa az too whare dhat stuf iz cumming from. And I doant hav too tel u whaut piracy haz dun too inshurans raitz."

"Ile sa not--looc at the price ov Aldebarainyan cigarz, the oonly kiand fit too smoke! Uve ghivven up, then, on the ideyaa dhat Areezhaa iz the piraitz GHQ?"

"Deffiniatly. It iznt. The piraitz ar even moer afrade ov it dhan tramp spaismen ar. Its out ov boundz--absoluetly forbidden territory, aparrently--too evveriboddy, mi best opperatiavz included. Aul we no about it iz the name--Areezhaa--dhat our planetograferz gave it. It iz the ferst compleetly incomprehencibel thhing I hav evver expereyenst. I am gowing out dhare micelf az soone az I can take the time--not dhat I expect too crac a thhing dhat mi best men coodnt tuch, but dhare hav bene so menny different and conflicting repoerts--no too stoerese agry on ennithhing exopt in dhat no wun cood ghet enniwhare nere the plannet--dhat I fele the nede ov sum ferst-hand informaishon. Waunt too cum along?"

"Tri too kepe me from it!"

"But at dhat, we shoodnt be too cerpriazd," Samz went on, thautfooly. "Just beghinning too scrach the cerface az we ar, we shood expect too encounter peculeyar, baffling--even compleetly inexpliccabel ththingz. Facts, cichuwaishonz, events, and beyingz for which our wun-cistem expereyens cood not poscibly hav prepaerd us. In fact, we aulreddy hav. If, ten yeerz ago, enniwun had toald u dhat such a race az the Rigelleyanz existed, whaut wood u hav thaut? Wun ship went dhare, u no--wuns. Wun our in enny Rigelleyan citty--wun minnute in a Rigelleyan automobeles--driavz a Telureyan insane."

"I ce yor point." Kinnison nodded. "Probbably I wood hav orderd a mental examinaishon. And the Palainyanz ar even wers. Pepel--if u can caul them dhat--whoo liv on Pluto and *like* it! Entitese so aleyen dhat nobody, az far az I no, understandz them. But u doant hav too go even dhat far from home too locate a job ov unscrewing the inscrutabel. Whoo, whaut, and whi--and for hou long--wauz Gra Roger? And, not far behiand him, iz this yung Berghenhome ov yorz. And bi the wa, u nevver did ghiv me the lodoun on hou cum it wauz the Bergenholm, and not the Roadboosh-Cleveland, dhat made tranz-galactic commers poscibel and cauzd nine-tenths ov our heddaix. Az I ghet the stoery, Berghenhome wauznt--iznt--even an en'ginere."

"Didnt I? Thaut I did. He wauznt, and iznt. Wel, the oridginal Roadboosh-Cleveland fre drive wauz a killer, u no...."

"*Hou* I no!" Kinnison exclaimd, felingly.

"Dha bete dhare brainz out and ate dhare harts out for munths, widhout ghetting it enny better. Then, wun da, this kid Berghenhome ambelz intoo dhare shop--big, auqword, stumbling over hiz one fete. He gasez innocently at the ththing for a cuppel ov minnuets, then cez:

"Whi doant u use urainyum insted ov iarn and rewiand it so it wil poot out a wave-form like this, withe humps here, and here; insted ov dhare, and dhare?' and he drauz a cuppel ov fre-hand, but reyaly butifool kervz.

"Whi shood we?' dha sqwauc at him.

"Becauz it wil werc dhat wa,' he cez, and ambelz out az unconcerndly az he came in. Caant--or woant--sa anuther werd.

"Wel in shere desperaishon, dha tride it--and it WERCT! And nobody haz evver had a minnuets trubbel withe a Berghenhome cins. Dhats whi Roadboosh and Cleevland boath incisted on the name."

"I ce; and it points up whaut I just ced. But if hese such a mental giyant, whi iznt he ghetting rezults withe hiz one problem, the meteyor? Or iz he?"

"No ... or at leest he wauznt az ov laast nite. But dhaerz a note on mi pad dhat he waunts too ce me sumtime tooda--supose we hav him cum in nou?"

"Fine! Ide like too tauc too him, if its O.K. withe u and withe him."

The yung ciyentist wauz cauld in, and wauz introjuest too the Comishoner.

"Go ahed, Doctor Berghenhome," Samz sugested then. "U ma tauc too boath ov us, just az frely az dho u and I wer alone."

"I hav, az u aulreddy no, bene cauld cikic," Berghenhome began, abruptly. "It iz ced dhat I dreme dreemz, ce vizhonz, here voicez, and so on. Dhat I opperate on hunchez. Dhat I am a geenyus. Nou I verry deffiniatly am *not* a geenyus--unles mi understanding ov the mening ov

dhat werd iz different from dhat ov the rest ov mankiand."

Berghenhome pauzd. Samz and Kinnison looct at eche uther. The latter broke the short cilens.

"The Councilor and I hav just bene discusing the fact dhat dhare ar a grate menny thhingz we doo not no; dhat withe the extenshon ov our activvitesse intoo nu feeldz, the occursens ov the imposcibel haz becum aulmoast a commonplace. We ar abel, I beleve, too liscen withe open miandz too ennithhing u hav too sa."

"Verry wel. But ferst, plese no dhat I am a ciyentist. Az such, I am traird too observ; too thhinc caalmly, cleerly, and analitticaly; too test evvery hipothhesis. I doo not beleve at aul in the so-cauld supernatchural. This univers did not cum intoo beying, it duz not continnu too be, exopt bi the operaischon ov natchural and imutabel lauz. And I mene *imutabel*, gentelmen. Evverithhing dhat haz evver happend, dhat iz happening nou, or dhat evver iz too happen, wauz, iz, and wil be statisticaly conected withe its predecessor event and withe its suxessor event. If I did not beleve dhat impliscitly, I wood loose aul faith in the ciyentiffic method. For if wun cin'ghel shupernachural event or thhing had evver okerd or existed it wood hav constichuted an entiarly unpredictabel event and wood hav inisheyated a cerese--a suxeshon--ov such events; a state ov thhingz which no ciyentist wil or can beleve poscibel in an orderly univers.

"At the same time, I reccognise the fact dhat I micelf hav dun thhingz--cauzd events too oker, if u prefer--dhat I canot explane too u or too enny uther human beying in enny cimbollogy none too our ciyens; and it iz about an even moer inexpliccabel--caul it hunch if u like--dhat I aasct too hav a tauc withe u tooda."

"But u ar arguwing in cerkelz," Samz protested. "Or ar u triying too cet up a parradox?"

"Niather. I am meerly clering the wa for a sumwhaut startling thhing I am too sa later on. U no, ov coers, dhat enny cichuwaishon withe which a miand iz unnabel too cope; a reyaly cereyous dilemmaa which it canot rezolv; wil destroi dhat miand--frustraishon, escape from reyallity, and so on. U aulso wil reyalise dhat I must hav becum cognizant ov mi one peculeyarritese long befoer enniwun els did or cood?"

"Aa. I ce. Yes, ov coers." Samz, intensly interested, leend forword. "Yet yor prezsent personallity iz addeqwaitly, splendidly integrated. Hou cood u poscibly hav overcum--reconciald--a cichuwaishon so fool ov conflict?"

"U ar, I thhinc, familleyar withe mi parentage?" Samz, kene az he wauz, did not concidder it noatwerthy dhat the big Norwejan aancerd hiz qweschon oonly bi aasking wun ov hiz one.

"Yes ... o, Ime beghinning too ce ... but Comishoner Kinnison haz not had axes too yor dosceyer. Go ahead."

"Mi faather iz Dr. Hialmar Berghenhome. Mi muther, befoer her marrage, wauz Dr. Olga Byornson. Boath wer, and ar, nuecleyar fizsicists--verry good wunz. Piyoneerz, dha hav bene cauld. Dha werct, and ar stil werking, in the nuwest, outermost frin'gez ov the feeld."

"O!" Kinnison exclaimd. "A mutant? Born withe cecond cite--or whautevver it iz?"

"Not cecond cite, az history descriabz the fenommenon, no. The reccordz doo not sho dhat enny such facculy wauz evver demmonstrated too the satisfacshon ov enny competent ciyentiffic investigator. Whaut I hav iz

sumthhing els. Whether or not it wil brede tru iz an interesting toppic ov speculaishon, but wun havving nuthhing too doo withe the problem nou in hand. Too retern too the subject, I rezolvd mi dilemmaa long cins. Dhare iz, I am absoluetly certane, a ciyens ov the miand which iz az deffinite, az pozsitive, az imutabel ov lau, az iz the ciyens ov the fizsical. While I wil make no atempt too proove it too u, I *no* dhat such a ciyens exists, and dhat I wauz born withe the abillity too perceve at leest sum ellements ov it.

"Nou too the matter ov the meteyor ov the Patrole. Dhat emblem wauz and iz puerly fizsical. The piraits hav just az abel ciyentists az we hav. Whaut fizsical ciyens can devise and cinthhecise, fizsical ciyens can annalise and jueplicate. Dhare iz a point, houwevver, beyond which fizsical ciyens canot go. It can niather annalise nor immitate the tan'gibel products ov dhat which I hav so luisly cauld the ciyens ov the miand.

"I no, Councilor Samz, whaut the Triplannetary Cervice needz; sumthhing vaastly moer dhan its meteyor. I aulso no dhat the nede wil becum grater and grater az the sfere ov acshon ov the Patrole expandz. Widhout a reyaly efishent cimbol, the Solaareyan Patrole wil be hamperd even moer dhan the Triplannetary Cervice; and its lodgical extenshon intoo the Space Patrole, or whautevver dhat larger organizaishon ma be cauld, wil be deffiniatly imposcibel. We nede sumthhing which wil identifi enny representative ov Civilizaishon, pozsitiavly and unmistacably, wharevver he ma be. It must be imposcibel ov jueplicaishon, or even ov imitaishon, too which end it must kil enny unnauthoriazd entity whoo atempts imposchure. It must opperate az a tellepath betwene its oner and enny uther livving intelligens, ov houwevver hi or lo degry, so dhat mental comunicaishon, so much clerer and faaster dhan fizsical, wil be poscibel widhout the laboereyous lerning ov lan'gwage; or betwene

us and such pepelz az dhose ov Rigel Foer or ov Palane Cevven, boath ov whoome we no too be ov hi intelligens and whoo must aulreddy be conversant withe teleppathhy."

"Ar u or hav u bene, reding mi miand?" Samz aasct qwiyetly.

"No," Berghenhome replide flatly. "It iz not and haz not bene nescenary. Enny man whoo can thhinc, whoo haz reyaly concidderd the qweschon, and whoo haz the good ov Civilizaishon at hart, must hav cum too the same concluezhonz."

"Probbably so, at dhat. But no moer cide ishuse. U hav a solueshon ov sum kiand werct out, or u wood not be here. Whaut iz it?"

"It iz dhat u, Solaareyan Councilor Samz, shood go too Areezhaa az soone az poscibel."

"Areezhaa!" Samz exclaimd, and:

"Areezhaa! Ov aul the helz in space, whi Areezhaa? And hou can we make the aproche? Doant u no dhat *nobody* can ghet enniwhare nere dhat dam plannet?"

Berghenhome shrugd hiz shoalderz and spred boath armz wide in a pantomime ov complete helplesnes.

"Hou doo u no--anuther ov yor hunchez?" Kinnison went on. "Or did sumbody tel u sumthhing? *Whare* did u ghet it?"

"It iz not a hunch," the Norwejan replide, pozsitiavly. "No wun toald me ennithhing. But I *no--az* deffiniatly az I no dhat the combuschon ov

hiadrogen in oxigen wil yeeld wauter--dhat the Areezhanz ar verry wel verst in dhat which I hav cauld the ciyens ov the miand; dhat if Vergil Samz gose too Areezhaa he wil obtane the cimbol he needz; dhat he wil nevver obtane it uthewise. Az too *hou* I no these thhingz ... I caant ... I just ... I *no* it, I tel u!"

Widhout anuther werd, widhout aasking permishon too leve, Berghenhome wherld around and hurrede out. Samz and Kinnison staerd at eche uther.

"Wel?" Kinnison aasct, qwizsicaly.

"Ime gowing. Nou. Whether I can be spaerd or not, and whether u thhinc Ime out ov controle or not. I beleve him, evvery werd--and beciadz, dhaerz the Berghenhome. Hou about u? Cumming?"

"Yes. Caant sa dhat Ime soald wun hundred percent; but, az u sa, the Berghenhome iz a hard fact too shrug of. And at minnimum rating, its got too be tride. Whaut ar u taking? Not a flete, probbably--the *Boisy*? Or the *Shicaago*?" It wauz the Comishoner ov Public Saifty speking nou, the Comaander-in-Chefe ov the Armd Foercez. "The *Shicaago*, Ide sa--the faastest and stron'ghest thhing in space."

"Recomendaishon apruivd. Blaast-of; twelv hundred ourz toomoro!"

CHAPTER 3

The superdrednaut *Shicaago*, az she aproacht the imadginary but

nevvertheles sharply defiant boundary, which no uther ship had bene aloud too paas, went inert and crept forword, mile bi mile. Evvery man, from Comishoner and Councilor doun, wauz taut and tens. So wiadly vareyant, so utterly fantastic, wer the stoerese gowing around about this Areezhaa dhat no wun nu whaut too expect. Dha expected the unexpected--and got it.

"Aa, Telureyanz, u ar preciasly on time." A strong, ashuerd, deeply rezzonant sudo-vois made itself herd in the depths ov eche miand aboard the tremendous ship ov wor. "Pilots and navigating officerz, u wil shift coers too wun cevventy ate dash cevven twelv fifty thre. Hoald dhat coers, inert, at wun Telureyan gravvity ov axeleraishon. Vergil Samz wil nou be intervude. He wil retern too the conshousnecez ov the rest ov u in exactly cix ov yor ourz."

Practicaly daizd bi the shoc ov dhare ferst expereyens withe teleppathhy, not wun ov the *Shicaagose* cru perceevd ennithhing unnuezhual in the fraseyollogy ov dhat utterly precice, dimond-clere thaut. Samz and Kinnison, houwevver, precizhonists themcelvz, did. But, wornd auldho dha wer and kede up auldho dha wer too detect enny cine ov hipnotizm or ov mental sugeschon, niather ov them had the faintest suspishon, then or evver, dhat Vergil Samz did not az a matter ov fact leve the *Shicaago* at aul.

Samz *nu* dhat he boerded a liafbote and drove it tooword the shimmering hase beyond which Areezhaa wauz. Comishoner Kinnison *nu*, az shuerly az did evvery uther man aboard, dhat Samz did dhose thhingz, becauz he and the uther officerz and moast ov the cru waucht Samz doo them. Dha waucht the liafbote dwindel in cise withe distans; waucht it disapere within the peculeyarly iridescent vale ov foers which dhare moast pennetrant ultraa-beme spi-rase cood not peers.

Dha wated.

And, cins evvery man concernd *nu*, beyond enny shaddo ov dout and too the end ov hiz life, dhat evverithhing dhat ceemd too happen acchuwaly did happen, it wil be so descriabd.

Vergil Samz, then, drove hiz smaul vescel throo Areezhaaz innermoast screne and sau a plannet so much like Erth dhat it mite hav bene her cister werld. Dhare wer the white ice-caps, the imens blu oashanz, the verdant continents parshaly obscuerd bi flecy banx ov cloud.

Wood dhare, or wood dhare not, be cittese? While he had not none at aul exactly whaut too expect, he did not beleve dhat dhare wood be enny larj cittese uppon Areezhaa. Too qwaulifi for the role ov *dayus ex mackinaa*, the Areezhan withe whoome Samz wauz about too dele wood hav too be a super-man indede--a beying compleetly beyond manz nollej or expereyens in pouwer ov miand. Wood such a race ov beyingz hav nede ov such thhingz az cittese? Dha wood not. Dhare wood be no cittese.

Nor wer dhare. The liafbote flasht dounword--slode--landed smuidhly in a regulaishon doc uppon the outskerts ov whaut apeerd too be a smaul village surrounded bi farmz and woodz.

"This wa, plese." An inaudibel vois directed him tooword a too-wheeld veyikel which wauz aulmoast, but not qwite, like a Dillingam roadster.

This car, houwevver, tooc of bi itcelf az soone az Samz cloazd the doer. It sped smuidhly along a paivd hiwa devoid ov aul uther traffic, paast farmz and paast cottagez, too stop ov itcelf in frunt ov the lo, mascive strucchure which wauz the center ov the village and, aparrently,

its rezon for beying.

"This wa, plese," and Samz went throo an automatticaly-opens doer; along a short, bare haul; intoo a faerly larj central roome contaning a vat and wun deeply-hoalsterd chare.

"Cit doun, plese." Samz did so, graitfooly. He did not no whether he cood hav stood up much lon'gher or not.

He had expected too encounter a tremendous mentallity; but this wauz a thhing far, far beyond hiz wialdest imadginingz. This wauz a brane--just dhat--nuthhing els. Aulmoast globular; at leest ten fete in diyammeter; imerst in and in perfect eqwilibreyum withe a plezzantly aromattic liqwid--a BRANE!

"Relax," the Areezhan orderd, suithingly, and Samz found dhat he *cood* relax. "Throo the wun u no az Berghenhome I herd ov yor nede and hav permitted u too cum here this wuns for instrucshon."

"But this ... nun ov this ... it iznt ... it *caant* be reyal!" Samz blerted. "I am--I must be--imadgining it ... and yet I no dhat I *caant* be hipnotiazd--Ive bene cicode against it!"

"Whaut iz reyal?" the Areezhan aasct, qwiyetly. "Yor profoundest thhinkerz hav nevver bene abel too aancer dhat qweschon. Nor, auldho I am much oalder and a much moer capabel thhinker dhan enny member ov yor race, wood I atempt too ghiv u its tru aancer. Nor, cins yor expereyens haz bene so limmited, iz it too be expected dhat u cood beleve widhout reservaishon enny ashurancez I mite ghiv u in thauts or in werdz. U must, then, convins yorcelf--deffiniatly, bi meenz ov yor one five cencez--dhat I and evverithing about u ar reyal, az u understand reyalty. U sau the village and this bilding; u ce

the flesh dhat housez the entity which iz I. U fele yor one flesh; az u tap the woodwerc withe yor nuckelz u fele the impact and here the viabraishonz az sound. Az u enterd this roome u must hav perceevd the odor ov the nuetryent solueshon in which and bi verchu ov which I liv. Dhare remainz oonly the cens ov taist. Ar u bi enny chaans iather hun'gry or thhersty?"

"Boath."

"Drinc ov the tancard in the nich yonder. In order too avoid enny aperans ov sugeschon I wil tel u nuthhing ov its content exept the wun fact dhat it matchez perfectly the kemmistry ov yor tishuse."

Gin'gerly enuf, Samz braut the pitcher too hiz lips--then, cesing it in boath handz, he gulpt doun a tremendous draaft. It wauz GOOD! It smeld like aul appetising kitchen aromaaz blended intoo wun; it taisted like aul ov the moast delishous meelz he had evver eten; it qwencht hiz thherst az no beverage had evver dun. But he cood not empty even dhat comparratiavly smaull contaner--whautever the stuf wauz, it had a satiyety vallu imensly hiyer even dhan oald, rare, roast befe! Withe a ci ov repleshon Samz replaist the tancard and ternd agane too hiz peculeyar hoast.

"I am convinst. Dhat wauz reyal. No poscibel mental influwens cood so compleetly and unmistacably sattisfi the puerly fizensal demaandz ov a boddy az hun'gry and az thhersty az mine wauz. Thanx, imensly, for alouwing me too cum here, Mr....?"

"U ma caul me Mentor. I hav no name, az u understand the term. Nou, then, plese thhinc foolly--u nede not speke--ov yor problemz and ov yor difficultese; ov whaut u hav dun and ov whaut u hav it in miand too doo."

Samz thaut, flashingly and cogently. A fu minnuets sufiast too cuvver Triplannetarese history and the beghinning ov the Solaareyan Patrole; then, for aulmoast thre ourz, he went intoo the ramificaishonz ov the Galactic Patrole ov hiz imadgininz. Finaly he rencht himcelf bac too reyallity. He jumpt up, paist the floer, and spoke.

"But dhaerz a vital flau, wun inherent and absoluetly ruwinous fact dhat maix the whole thhing imposcibel!" he berst out, rebelleyously. "No wun man, or groope ov men, no matter whoo dha ar, can be trusted withe dhat much pouwer. The Council and I hav aulreddy bene cauld evverithhing imadginabel; and whaut we hav dun so far iz litteraly nuthhing at aul in comparrison withe whaut the Galactic Patrole cood and must doo. Whi, I micelf wood be the ferst too protest against the graanting ov such pouwer too *enniboddy*. Evvery dictator in history, from Fillip ov Macedon too the Tirant ov Aizhaa, claimd too be--and probbably wauz, in hiz beghinningz--motivated soly bi benevvolens. Hou am I too thhinc dhat the propoazd Galactic Council, or even I micelf, wil be strong enuf too conker a thhing dhat haz corupted utterly evvery man whoo haz evver wun it? Whoo iz too wauch the wauchmen?"

"The thaut duz u credit, ueth," Mentor replide, unmuivd. "Dhat iz wun rezon whi u ar here. U, ov yor one foers, can not no dhat u ar in fact incoruptibel. I, houwevver, no. Moerover, dhare iz an agency bi verchu ov which dhat which u nou beleve too be imposcibel wil becum commonplace. Extend yor arm."

Samz did so, and dhare snapt around hiz rist a plattinum-iriddeyum braislet carreying, rist-wauch-wise, a lenticular sumthhing at which the Telureyan staerd in schupefide amaizment. It ceemd too be compoazd ov thouzandz--milleyonz--ov tiny gemz, eche ov which emitted pulsatingly

aul the cullorz ov the spectrum; it wauz throwing out--braudcaasting--a
terbulent flud ov riathing, policromattic lite!

"The suxessor too the goalden meteyor ov the Triplannetary Cervice,"
Mentor ced, caalmly. "The Lenz ov Areezhaa. U ma take mi werd for it,
until yor one expereyens shal hav convinst u ov the fact, dhat
no wun wil evver ware Areezhaaz Lenz whoo iz in enny cens unwerthy.
Here

aulso iz wun for yor frend, Comishoner Kinnison; it iz not nescenary
for him too cum fizesicaly too Areezhaa. It iz, u wil observ, in an
inshulated contaner, and duz not glo. Tuch its cerface, but liatly
and verry fletingly, for the contact wil be painfool."

Samz fin'gher-tip baerly tucht wun dul, gra, liafles juwel: hiz
whole arm gerct awa uncontrolably az dhare swept throo hiz whole
beyng the intimaishon ov an agony moer poinyant bi far dhan enny he
had
evver none.

"Whi--its *alive!*" he gaaspt.

"No, it iz not reyaly alive, az u understand the term ..." Mentor
pauzd, az dho ceking a wa too describe too the Telureyan a thing
which wauz too him starcly incomprehencibel. "It iz, houwevver, endoud
withe whaut u mite caul a sort ov sudo-life; bi verchu ov which it
ghivz of its characteristic rajaishon while, and oonly while, it iz
in fizesical cerkit withe the livving entity--the ego, let us sa--withe
whoome it iz in exact rezzonans. Glowing, the Lenz iz perfectly harmles;
it iz complete--satchurated--saishated--foolfild. In the darc condishon
it iz, az u hav lernd, dain'gerous in the extreme. It iz then
incomplete--unfoolfild--frustrated--u mite sa ceking or yerning
or demaanding. In dhat condishon its sudo-life interfeerz so strongly
withe enny life too which it iz not achuend dhat dhat life, in a space ov

cecondz, iz foerst out ov this plane or cikel ov existens."

"Then I--I alone--ov aul the entitese in existens, can ware this particular Lenz?" Samz lict hiz lips and staerd at it, glowing so sattisfiyingly and contentedly uppon hiz rist. "But when I di, wil it be a perpetchuwal mennace?"

"Bi no meenz. A Lenz canot be braut intoo beying exept too mach sum wun livving personallity; a short time aafter u paas intoo the next cikel yor Lenz wil dicintegrate."

"Wunderfool!" Samz breedhd, in au. "But dhaerz wun thhing ... these thhingz ar ... priasles, and dhare wil be milleyonz ov them too make ... and u doant..."

"Whaut wil we ghet out ov it, u mene?" The Areezhan ceemd too smile.

"Exactly." Samz blusht, but held hiz ground. "Nobody duz ennithhing for nuthhing. Altruwizm iz butifool in ththeyory, but it haz nevver bene none too werc in practice. I wil pa a tremendous price--enny price within rezon or pocibillity--for the Lenz; but I wil hav too no whaut dhat price iz too be."

"It wil be hevveyer dhan u thhinc, or can at prezsent reyalise; auldho not in the cens u fere." Mentorz thaut wauz solemnity itcelf.

"Whoowevver waerz the Lenz ov Areezhaa wil carry a lode dhat no weker miand

cood bare. The lode ov authority; ov responcebillity; ov nollej dhat wood rec compleetly enny miand ov lescer strength. Altruwizm? No. Nor iz it a cace ov good against evil, az u so fermly beleve. Yor mental picchure ov glaring white and ov unreleevd blac iz not a tru picchure. Niather absolute evil nor absolute good doo or can exist."

"But dhat wood make it stil wers!" Samz protested. "In dhat cace,

I caant ce enny rezon at aul for yor exerting yorcelvz--pootting yorcelvz out--for us."

"Dhare iz, houwevver, rezon enuf; auldho I am not shure dhat I can make it az clere too u az I wood wish. Dhare ar in fact thre rezonz; enny wun ov which wood justifi us in exerting--wood compel us too exert--the trivveyal effort involvd in the fernishing ov Lensez too yor Galactic Patrole. Ferst, dhare iz nuthhing iather intrinsicaly rite or intrinsicaly rong about libberty or slavery, democracy or autocracy, fredom ov acshon or complete regimentaishon. It ceemz too us, houwevver, dhat the gratest mezhure ov happines and ov wel-beyng for the gratest number ov entitese, and dhaerfoer the optimum advaansment tooword whautevver sublime Gole it iz tooword which this cikel ov existens iz trending in the vaast and un'nowabel Skeme ov Thhingz, iz too be obtaind bi ceuring for eche and evvery individjuwal the gratest amount ov mental and fizesical fredom compattibel withe the public welfare. We ov Areezhaa ar oonly a smaual part ov this cikel; and, az gose the whole, so gose in grater or lescer degry eche ov the parts. Iz it imposcibel for u, a fello cittisen ov this cikel-univers, too beleve dhat such foolfilment alone wood be ampel compensaishon for a much grater effort?"

"I nevver thaut ov it in dhat lite..." It wauz hard for Samz too graasp the concept; he nevver did understand it thurroly. "I beghin too ce, I thhinc ... at leest, I beleve u."

"Cecond, we hav a moer speciffic obligaishon in dhat the life ov menny, menny werldz haz sprung from Areezhan cede. Dhus, *in loco parentis*, we wood be derrelict indede if we refuezd too act. And thherd, u yorself spend hily vallubel time and much effort in playing ches. Whi doo u doo it? Whaut doo u ghet out ov it?"

"Whi, I ... uu ... mental exercise, I suppose ... I like it!"

"Just so. And I am shure dhat wun ov yor verry erly filossoferz came too the concluezhon dhat a foolly competent miand, from a studdy ov wun fact or artifact belonging too enny ghivven univers, cood construct or vizhuwalise dhat univers, from the instant ov its creyaishon too its ultimate end?"

"Yes. At leest, I hav herd the proposishon stated, but I hav nevver beleevd it poscibel."

"It iz not poscibel cimply becauz no foolly competent miand evver haz existed or evver wil exist. A miand can becum foolly competent oonly bi the aqwisishon ov infinite nollej, which wood reqwire infinite time az wel az infinite capascity. Our eqwivvalent ov yor ches, houwevver, iz whaut we caul the Vizhuwalizaishon ov the Cozmic AI. In mi

vizhuwalizaishon a descendant ov yorz naimd Clarissaa MacDoogal wil, in a stoer cauld Brenleerz uppon the plannet ... but no, let us concidder a thhing nerer at hand and concerning u personaly, so dhat its accuracy wil be subgett too chec. Whare u wil be and exactly whaut u wil be doowing, at sum deffinite time in the fuchure. Five yeerz, let us sa?"

"Go ahead. If u can doo dhat yor *good*."

"Five Telureyan callendar yeerz then, from the instant ov yor paacing throo the screne ov The Hil on this prezsent gerny, u wil be ... alou me, plese, a moment ov thaut ... u wil be in a barber shop not yet bilt; the adres ov which iz too be fiftene hundred fiftene Twelfth Avvenu, Spocane, Waushington, North Americaa, Tellus. The barberz name wil be Antoanyo Carbonero and he wil be left-handed. He wil be en'gaijd in cutting yor hare. Or raather, the

acchuwal cutting wil hav bene dun and he wil be shaving, withe a razor trade-marct Gencen-King-Berd, the short haerz in frunt ov yor left ere. A comparratiavly smaul, qwaudrupedal, grayish-striapt entity, ov the race cauld cat--a yung cat, this wun wil be, and cauld Tommas, auldho acchuwaly ov the female cex--wil jump intoo yor lap, adrescing u plezzantly in a lan'gwage withe which u yorcelf ar oonly parshaly familleyar. U caul it muwing and puuring, I beleve?"

"Yes," the flabbergaasted Samz mannaijd too sa. "Cats doo per--espesially kitzenz."

"Aa--verry good. Nevver havving met a cat personally, I am grattifide at yor coroboraishon ov mi vizhuwalizaishon. This female ueth eroanyously cauld Tommas, sumwhaut caerles in computing the ellements ov her tragectory, wil joscel sliatly the barberz elbo withe her tale; dhus causing him too make a slite incizhon, aproximaitly thre millimeterz long, parrallel too and just abuv yor left cheke-bone. At the precice moment in qweschon, the barber wil be aplying a stiptic pencil too this incignifficant wuind. This foercaast iz, I trust, sufishly detaild so dhat u wil hav no difficulty in checking its accuracy or its lac dharov?"

"Detaild! *Accuracy!*" Samz cood scaersly thhinc. "But liscen--not dhat I waunt too cros u up deliberaitly, but Ile tel u nou dhat a man duznt like too ghet sliast bi a barber, even such a littel nic az dhat. Ile remember dhat adres--and the cat--and Ile nevver go intoo the place!"

"Evvery event duz afect the suxeshon ov events," Mentor acnollejd, eqwably enuf. "Exept for this intervü, u wood hav bene in Nu Orleyanz at dhat time, insted ov in Spocane. I hav concidderd evvery pertinent factor. U wil be a bizsy man. Hens, while u wil thhinc ov this matter freeqwently and cereyously juring the nere

fuchure, u wil hav forgotten it in les dhan five yearz. U wil remember it oonly at the tuch ov the astrin'gent, wharuppon u wil ghiv vois too certane celf-deroggatoery and profane remarx."

"I aut too," Samz grind; a not-too-plezzant grin. He had bene apauld bi the qwaulity ov miand abel too doo whaut Mentor had just dun; he wauz nou moer dhan apauld bi the Areezhanz caalm certainty dhat whaut

he had foertoald in such detale wood in evvery detale cum too paas.

"If, aafter aul this Spocane--let a tigher-striapt kitten jump intoo mi lap--let a left-handed Tony Carbonero nic me--uu-uu, Mentor, UU-UU! *If* I doo, Ile deserv too be cauld evverithhing I can thhinc ov!"

"These dhat I hav menshond, the groce ocurrencez, ar problemz oonly for inexperyenst thhinkerz." Mentor pade no atenshon too Samz determinaishon nevver too enter dhat shop. "The reyal difficultese li in the fine detale, such az the length, mas, and exact place and posishon ov landing, uppon apron or floer, ov eche ov yor haerz az it iz cevverd. Menny factorz ar involvd. Uther cliyents paacing bi--opening and shutting doerz--are currents--sunshine--wind--preshure, temperachure, humiddity. The exact fashon in which the barber wil flic hiz sheerz, which in tern dependz uppon menny uther factorz--whaut he wil

hav bene doowing preveyously, whaut he wil hav eten and drunc, whether or not hiz home life wil hav bene happy ... u littel reyalise, ueth, whaut a priasles oporchunity this wil be for me too chec the accuracy ov mi vizhuwalizaishon. I shal spend menny pereyodz uppon the problem. I canot atane perfect accuracy, ov coers. Nianty nine point nine nianz percent, let us sa ... or perhaps ten nianz ... iz aul dhat I can rezonably expect...."

"But, Mentor!" Samz protested. "I caant help u on a thhing like dhat! Hou can I no or repoert the exact mas, length, and oreyentaishon ov

cin'ghel haerz?"

"U canot; but, cins u wil be waring yor Lenz, I micelf can and wil compare minuetly mi vizhuwalizaishon withe the acchuwallity. For no, ueth, dhat wharevver enny Lenz iz, dhare can enny Areezhan be if he so desiarz. And nou, nowing dhat fact, and from yor one nollej ov the satisfacshonz too be obtaind from ches and uther such mental activvitesse, and from the glimpcez u hav had intoo mi one miand, doo u retane enny douts dhat we Areezhanz wil be foolly compensated for the triafling effort involvd in fernishing whautevver number ov Lensez ma be reqwiard?"

"I hav no moer douts. But this Lenz ... Ime ghetting moer afrade ov it evvery minnute. I ce dhat it iz a perfect identifcaishon; I can understand dhat it can be a perfect tellepath. But iz it sumthhing els, az wel? If it haz uther pouwerz ... whaut ar dha?"

"I canot tel u; or, raather, I wil not. It iz best for yor one devellopment dhat I doo not, exept in the moast genneral termz. It haz adishonal qwaulitese, it iz tru; but, cins no too entitese evver hav the same abillitese, no too Lensez wil evver be ov identical qwaulitese. Strictly speking, a Lenz haz no reyal pouwer ov its one; it meerly concentraits, intencifise, and renderz avalabel whautevver pouwerz ar aulreddy posest bi its warer. U must devellop yor one pouwerz and yor one abillitese; we ov Areezhaa, in fernishing the Lenz, wil hav dun evverithhing dhat we shood doo."

"Ov coers, cer; and much moer dhan we hav enny rite too expect. U hav ghivven me a Lenz for Rodderic Kinnison; hou about the utherz? Whoo iz too celect them?"

"U ar, for a time." Cilencing the manz protests, Mentor went on:

"U wil fiand dhat yor jujment wil be good. U wil cend too us oonly wun entity whoo wil not be ghivven a Lenz, and it iz nescenary dhat dhat wun entity shood be cent here. U wil beghin a cistem ov celecshon and traning which wil becum moer and moer riggerous az time gose on. This wil be nescenary; not for the celecshon itcelf, which the Lenzmen themcelvz cood doo amung babese in dhare cradelz, but becauz ov the bennefits dhus conferd uppon the menny whoo wil not gradjuwate, az wel az uppon the fu whoo wil. In the meentime u wil celect the candidaits; and u wil be shoct and dismade when u discuvver hou fu u wil be abel too cend.

"U wil go doun in history az Ferst Lenzman Samz; the Crusader, the man whoose wide vizhon and tremendous graasp made it poscibel for the Galactic Patrole too becum whaut it iz too be. U wil hav hily capabel help, ov coers. The Kinnisonz, withe dhare iresistibel driving foers, dhare indommitabel wil too doo, dhare traancendent erj; Costigan, bac ov whoose stout Irish hart li Errinz best ov brainz and braun; yor cuzsinz Jorj and Ra Oamsted; yor dauter Vergilleyaa...."

"Vergilleyaa! Whare duz *she* fit intoo this picchure? Whaut doo u no about her--and hou?"

"A miand wood be incompetent indede whoo cood not vizhuwalise, from even the moast fleting contact withe u, a fact which haz bene in existens for sum twenty thre ov yor yeerz. Her doctorate in cicollogy; her intencive studdese under Marshan and Venereyan maasterz--even under wun reformd Adept ov North Polar Jupiter--ov the involluntary, uncontrolabel, aulmoast un'none and hens hily reveling muscelz ov the face, the handz, and uther parts ov the human boddy. U wil remember dhat poker game for a long time."

"I certainly wil." Samz grind, a bit shaimfaistly. "She gave us clere worning ov whaut she wauz gowing too doo, and then cleend us out too the laast millo."

"Natchuraly. She haz, aul unconshously, bene traning hercelf for the werc she iz destiand too doo. But too rezhume; u wil fele yorcelf incompetent, unwerthy--dhat, too, iz a part ov a Lenzmanz Lode. When u ferst scan the miand ov Rodderic Kinnison u wil fele dhat he, not u, shood be the prime moover in the Galactic Patrole. But no nou dhat no miand, not even the moast capabel in the univers, can iather vizhuwalise truly or truly evalluwate itcelf. Comishoner Kinnison, uppon scanning yor miand az he wil scan it, wil no the trueth and wil be wel content. But time prescez; in wun minnute u leve."

"Thanx a lot ... thanx." Samz got too hiz fete and pauzd, hesitantly. "I supose dhat it wil be aul rite ... dhat iz, I can caul on u agane, if...?"

"No," the Areezhan declaerd, coaldly. "Mi vizhuwalizaishon duz not indicate dhat it wil evver agane be iather nescesary or desirabel for u too vizsit or too comunicate withe me or withe enny uther Areezhan."

Comunicaishon ceest az dho a sollid kertane had bene draun betwene the too. Samz strode out and stept intoo the wating veyikel, which whisct him bac too hiz liafbote. He blaasted of; ariving in the controle roome ov the *Shicaago* preciasly at the end ov the cixth our aafter leving it.

"Wel, Rod, Ime bac ..." he began, and stopt; utterly unnabel too speke. For at the menshon ov the name Samz Lenz had poot him foolly on rapor withe hiz frendz whole miand; and whaut he perceevd struc

him--litteraly and preciasly--dum.

He had aulwase liact and admiard Rod Kinnison. He had aulwase none dhat he wauz tremendously abel and capabel. He had none dhat he wauz big; clene; a sqware shooter; the werldz best. Hard; a driver whoo had littel moer mercy on hiz underlingz in celected undertakingz dhan he had on himcelf. But nou, az he sau spred out for hiz inspecshon Kinnisonz ego in its entirety; az he compaerd in fleting glaancez dhat teriffic miand withe dhose ov the uther officerz--good men, too, aul ov them--acembeld in the roome; he nu dhat he had nevver even begun too reyalise whaut a giyant Rodderic Kinnison reyalaly wauz.

"Whauts the matter, Verj?" Kinnison exclaimd, and hurrede up, boath handz outstrecht. "U looc like yor ceying goasts! Whaut did dha doo too u?"

"Nuthing--much. But goasts duznt haaf describe whaut Ime ceying rite nou. Cum intoo mi office, wil u, Rod?"

Ignoering the cureyous staerz ov the juenyor officerz, the Comishoner and the Councilor went intoo the latterz qworterz, and in dhose qworterz the too Lenzmen remaind in cloce consultaishon juring practicaly aul ov the retern trip too Erth. In fact, dha wer stil confuuring deeply, viyaa Lenz, when the *Shicaago* landed and dha tooc a ground-car intoo The Hil.

"But whoo ar u gowing too cend ferst, Verj?" Kinnison demaanded. "U must hav decided on at leest sum ov them, bi this time."

"I no ov oanly five, or poscibly cix, whoo ar reddy," Samz replide, glumly. "I wood hav swoern dhat I nu ov a hundred, but dha doant mezhure up. Jac, Mason Northrop, and Conwa Costigan, for the ferst

lode. Liman Cleevland, Fred Roadboosh, and perhaps Berghenhome--I havnt bene abel too figgure him out, but Ile no when I ghet him under mi Lenz--next. Dhats aul."

"Not qwite. Hou about yor identical-twin cuzsinz, Ra and Jorj Oamsted, whoo hav bene doowing such a teriffic job ov counter-spiying?"

"Perhaps ... Qwite poscibly."

"And if Ime good enuf, Claton and Shwikert certainly ar, too name oanly too ov the commodorz. And Nobos and DalNalten. And abuv aul, hou about Gil?"

"Gil? Whi, I doant ... she mezhuerz up, ov coers, but ... but at dhat, dhare wauz nuthhing ced against it, iather ... I wunder...."

"Whi not hav the boiz in--Gil, too--and thrash it out?"

The yung pepel wer cauld in; the stoery wauz toald; the problem stated. The boiz reyacshon wauz instantainyous and unannimous. Jac Kinnison tooc the lede.

"Ov coers Gilz gowing, if enniboddy duz!" he berst out veyemently. "Count *her* out, withe aul the stuf shese got? *Hardly!*"

"Whi, Jac! This, from *u*?" Gil ceemd hily cerpriazd. "I hav it on exelent authority dhat Ime a stinker; a haaf-witted wun, at dhat. A gelly-brane, withe cum-hither ise."

"U ar, and a lot ov uther thhingz beciadz." Jac Kinnison did not bac up a millimeter, even befoer dhare faatherz. "But even at yor sapadilleyest yor haaf wits ar better dhan moast uther pepelz whole

wunz; and I nevver ced or thaut dhat yor brane coodnt funcshon, whenever it waunted too, bac ov dhose sad ise. Whautevver it taix too be a Lenzman, cer," he ternd too Samz, "shese got just az much ov az the rest ov us. Maby moer."

"I take it, then, dhat dhare iz no obgecshon too her gowing?" Samz aasct.

Dhare wauz no obgecshon.

"Whaut ship shal we take, and when?"

"The *Shicaago*. Nou." Kinnison directed. "Shese hot and reddy. We didnt strike enny trubbel gowing or cumming, so she didnt nede much cervicing. Flit!"

Dha flitted, and the grate battelship made the cecond cruse az unneventfooly az she had made the ferst. The *Shicaagose* officerz and cru nu dhat the yung pepel left the vescel cepparaitly; dhat dha reternd cepparaitly, eche in hiz or her liafbote. Dha met, houwevver, not in the controle roome, but in Jac Kinnisonz private qworterz; the thre yung Lenzmen and the gherl. The thre wer embarrast; il at ese. The Lensez wer--deffiniatly--not werking. No wun ov them wood poot hiz Lenz on Gil, cins she did not hav wun.... The gherl broke the short cilens.

"Wauznt she the moast perfectly *butifool* thhing u evver sau?" she breedhd. "In spite ov beying over cevven fete taul? She looct too be about twenty--exept her ise--but she must hav bene a hundred, too no so much--but whaut ar u boiz staring so about?"

"*She!*" Thre voicez blerted az wun.

"Yes. She. Whi? I no we wernt tooghether, but I got the impreshon,

sum wa or uther, dhat dhare wauz oanly the wun. Whaut did *u* ce?"

Aul thre men started too tauc at wuns, a clammor ov noiz; then aul stopt at wuns.

"U ferst, Spud. Whoome did u tauc too, and whaut did he, she, or it sa?" Auldho Conwa Costigan wauz a fu yeerz oalder dhan the uther thre, dha aul cauld him bi nickname az a matter ov coers.

"Nashonal Polece Hedqworterz--Chefe ov the Detective Buro," Costigan repoerted, crisply. "Betwene forty thre and forty five; cix fete and haaf an inch; wun cevventy five. Hard, fine, kene, a Big Time Opperator if dhare evver wauz wun. Looct a lot like yor faather, Gil; the same darc aubern hare, just beghinning too gra, and the same depe oranj-yello markingz in hiz ise. He gave me the werx; then tooc this Lenz out ov hiz safe, snapt it ontoo mi rist, and gave me too orderz--ghet out and sta out."

Jac and Mace staerd at Costigan, at Gil, and at eche uther. Then dha whisceld in unison.

"I ce this iz not gowing too be a unannimous repoert, exept poscibly in wun minor detale," Gil remarct. "Mace, yor next."

"I landed on the campus ov the Univercity ov Areezhaa," Northrop stated, flatly. "Imens place--hundredz ov thousandz ov schudents. Dha tooc me too the Fizzes Department--too the private laboratoery ov the Department Hed himself. He had a pannel withe about a milleyon meterz and gagez on it; he scand and mezhuerd evvery individjuwal component ellement ov mi brane. Then he made a pattern, on a milling rooter just about az complicated az hiz pannel. From dhare on, ov coers, it wauz cimpel--just like a dentist making a cet ov chinaa chopperz or a metallergist embedding a test-cecshon. He snapt a cuppel ov centencez

ov direcshonz at me, and then ced Scram!' Dhats aul."

"Shure dhat wauz aul?" Costigan aasct. "Didnt he ad and *sta* scrambled?"

"He didnt *sa* it, exactly, but the implicaishon wauz clere enuf."

"The wun point ov cimilarrity," Gil commented. "Nou u, Jac. U hav bene loocking az dho we wer aul candidaits for canvas jackets dhat lace tiatly up the bac."

"Uu-uu. Az dho maby *I* am. I didnt ce ennithhing at aul. Didnt even land on the plannet. Just floted around in an orbit incide dhat screne. The thhing I tauct withe wauz a pattern ov pure foers. This Lenz simply apeerd on mi rist, braislet and aul, out ov thhin are. He toald me plenty, dho, in a verry short time--hiz laast werd beying for me not too cum bac or caul bac."

"Hm ... m ... m." This ov Jax wauz a particcularly indigestibel bit, even for Gil Samz.

"In plane werdz," Costigan vollunteerd, "we aul sau exactly whaut we expected too ce."

"Uu-uu," Gil denide. "I certainly did not expect too ce a woomman ... no; whaut eche ov us sau, I thhinc, wauz whaut wood doo us the moast good--ghiv eche ov us the hiyest poscibel lift. I am wundering whether or not dhare wauz ennithhing at aul reyaly dhare."

"Dhat mite be it, at dhat." Jac scould in concentraishon. "But dhare must hav bene *sumthhing* dhare--these Lensez ar reyaly. But whaut maix me mad iz dhat dha woodnt ghiv u a Lenz. Yor just az good a man

az enny wun ov us--if I didnt no it woodnt doo a dam bit ov good
Ide go bac dhare rite nou and...."

"Doant pop of so, Jac!" Gilz ise, houwevver, wer staary. "I no
u mene it, and I cood aulmoast luv u, at tiamz--but I doant nede a
Lenz. Az a matter ov fact, Ile be much better of widhout wun."

"Get bac, Gil!" Jac Kinnison staerd deeply intoo the gherlz ise--but
stil did not use hiz Lenz. "Sumbody must hav dun a teriffic job ov
celling, too make u beleve dhat ... or *ar* u soald, acchuwaly?"

"Acchuwaly. Onnestly. Dhat Areezhan wauz a thouzand tiamz moer ov a
woomman dhan I evver wil be, and she didnt ware a Lenz--nevver had
woern wun. Wimmenz miandz and Lensez doant fit. Dhaerz a cex-baist
incompatibillity. Lensez ar az masculine az whiskerz--and at dhat, oonly
a verry fu men can evver ware them, iather. Verry speshal men, like u
thre and Dad and Pops Kinnison. Men withe tremendous foers, drive, and
scope. Pure killerz, aul ov u; eche in hiz one wa, ov coers. No
moer too be stopt dhan a glaisher, and twice az hard and ten tiamz az
coald. A woomman cimply *caant* hav dhat kiand ov a miand! Dhare iz
gowing
too be a woomman Lenzman sum da--just wun--but not for yeerz and
yeerz;
and I woodnt be in her shoose for ennithing. In this job ov mine,
ov...."

"Wel, go on. Whaut iz this job yor so shure u ar gowing too doo?"

"Whi, I doant no!" Gil exclaimd, starteld ise wide. "I thaut I
nu aul about it, but I doant! Doo u, about yorz?"

Dha did not, not wun ov them; and dha wer aul az cerpriazd at dhat
fact az the gherl had bene.

"Wel, too ghet bac too this Lady Lenzman whoo iz gowing too apere sum da, I gather dhat she iz gowing too be sum kiand ov a freke. Shele hav too be, practicaly, becauz ov the cex-baist fundamental nachure ov the Lenz. Mentor didnt sa so, in so menny werdz, but she made it perfectly clere dhat...."

"Mentor!" the thre men exclaimd.

Eche ov them had delt withe Mentor!

"I am beghinning too ce," Gil ced, thautfooly. "Mentor. Not a reyal name at aul. Too qwote the Unnabrijd verbatim--I had ocaizhon too looc the werd up the uther da and I am apauld nou at the certainty dhat dhare wauz a conecshon--qwote; Mentor, a wise and faithfool councilor; unqwote. Hav enny ov u boiz ennithhing too sa? I havnt; and I am beghinning too be scaerd blu."

Cilens fel; and the moer dha thaut, dhose thre yung Lenzmen and the gherl whoo wauz wun ov the too human wimmen evver too encounter nowingly an Areezhan miand, the deper dhat cilens became.

CHAPTER 4

"So u didnt fiand ennithhing on Neveyaa." Rodderic Kinnison got up, depozsited the inch-long but ov hiz cigar in an ashtra, lit anuther, and prould about the roome; handz jamd depe intoo britchez pockets. "Ime cerpriazd. Neraado struc me az beying a B.T.O.... I thaut shure hede qwaulifi."

"So did I." Samz tone wauz glum. "Hese Big Time, and an Opperator; but not big enuf, bi far. Ime--were boath--fianding out dhat Lenzman matereyal iz *damd* scaers stuf. Dhaerz nun on Neveyaa, and no indicaishon whautevver dhat dhare evver wil be enny."

"Tuf ... and yor rite, ov coers, in yor stand dhat wele hav too hav Lenzmen from az menny different solar cistemz az poscibel on the Galactic Council or the thhing woant werc at aul. So damd much gelloucy--which iz wun rezon whi were here in Nu Yorc insted ov out at The Hil, whare we belong--weve found dhat out aulreddy, even in such a smaul and comparratiavly homogeneyous groope az our one cistem--the Solaareyan Council wil not oonly hav too be made up moastly ov Lenzmen, but eche and evvery inhabbited plannet ov Sol wil hav too be represented--even Pluto, I supose, in time. And bi the wa, yor Mr. Saunderz wauznt enny too pleezd when u tooc Nobos ov Marz and DalNalten ov Venus awa from him and made Lenzmen out ov them--and poot them mialz over hiz hed."

"O, I woodnt sa dhat ... exactly. I convinst him ... but at dhat, cins Saunderz iz not Lenzman grade himcelf, it wauz a trifel difficult for him too understand the cichuwaishon compleetly."

"U sa it esy--difficult iz not the werd I wood use. But bac too the Lenzman hunt." Kinnison scould blaclly. "I agry, az I ced befoer, dhat we nede non-human Lenzmen, the moer the better, but I doant thhinc much ov yor chaans ov fianding enny. Whaut maix u thhinc ... O, I ce ... but I doant no whether yor justifide or not in ashuming a hi pozsitive corelaishon betwene a certane kiand ov mental abillity and tecnologdical advaansment."

"No such assumption is necessary. Start anywhere you please, Rod, and take it from there; including Nevevayaa."

"I'll start with the known facts, then. Interstellar flight is not too far for us. We haven't spread far, or covered much territory. But in the inner solar system with which we are most familiar there are seven planets--I'm not counting Valerevayaa--which are very much like Earth in terms of mass, size, climate, atmosphere, and gravity. Five of the seven did not have any intelligent life and were colonized easily and quickly. The Telurevayan worlds of Proxima and Vega became friendly neighbors--thank God we learned something on Nevevayaa--because they were already inhabited by highly advanced races: Proxima by people as human as we are, Vega by people who would be so if it weren't for their tails. Many other worlds of this system are inhabited by more or less intelligent non-human races. Just how intelligent they are we don't know, but the Lenzmen will soon find out.

"My point is that no race we have found so far has had either atomic energy or any form of space-drive. In any contact with races having space-drives we have not been the discoverers, but the discovered. Our colonies are all within twenty-six light-years of Earth except Aldebaran 2, which is fifty-seven, but which drew a lot of people, in spite of the distance, because it was so nearly identical with Earth. On the other hand, the Nevevayans, from a distance of over a hundred light-years, found us ... implying an older race and a higher development ... but you just told me that they would never produce a Lenzman!"

"That point stopped me, too, at first. Follow through; I want to see if you arrive at the same conclusion I did."

"Well ... I ... I ..." Kinnison thought intensely, then went on: "Of course, the Nevevayans were not colonizing; nor, strictly speaking,

exploering. Dha wer meerly hunting for iarn--a hily organiazd, intenciavly speshaliazd operaishon too fiand a rau matereyal dha neded desperaitly."

"Preciasly," Samz agrede.

"The Rigelleyanz, houwevver, wer *cervaying*, and Rigel iz about foer hundred and forty lite-yeerz from here. We didnt hav a thhing dha neded or waunted. Dha nodded at us in paacing and kept on gowing. Ime stil on yor trac?"

"Ded center. And just whare duz dhat poot the Palainyanz?"

"I ce ... u ma hav sumthhing dhare, at dhat. Palane iz so far awa dhat nobody nose even whare it iz--probbably thouzandz ov lite-yeerz. Yet dha hav not oonly exploerd this cistem; dha colloniazd Pluto long befoer our white race colloniazd Amerricaa. But dam it, Verj, I doant like it--enny part ov it. Rigel Foer u ma be Abel too take, withe yor Lenz ... even wun ov dhare damd automobeelz, if u sta sollidly on rapor withe the driver. But *Palane*, Verj! Pluto iz bad enuf, but the home plannet! U caant. Nobody can. It cimply caant be dun!"

"I no it woant be esy," Samz admitted, bleeclly, "but if its got too be dun, Ile doo it. And I hav a littel informaishon dhat I havnt had time too tel u yet. We discust wuns befoer, u remember, whaut a job it wauz too ghet intoo enny kiand ov comunicaishon withe the Palainyanz on Pluto. U ced then dhat nobody cood understand them, and u wer rite--then. Houwevver, I re-ran dhose brane-wave taips, waring mi Lenz, and cood understand them--the thauts, dhat iz--az wel az dho dha had bene recorded in precizhonist-grade In'glish."

"Whaut?" Kinnison exclaimd, then fel cilent. Samz remaind cilent.
Whaut dha wer thhinking ov Areezhaaz Lenz canot be exprest in werdz.

"Wel, go on," Kinnison finaly ced. "Ghiv me the rest ov it--the stinger dhat uve bene hoalding bac."

"The messagez--*az messagez*--wer clere and plane. The bacgroundz, houwevver, the conotaishonz and implicaishonz, wer not. Sum ov dhare coadz and standardz ceme too be raddicaly different from ourz--so utterly and fantasticaly different dhat I cimply canot reconcile iather dhare conduct or dhare ethhix withe dhare obveyously hi intelligens and dhare advaanst state ov devellopment. Houwevver, dha hav at leest sum miandz ov tremendous pouwer, and nun ov the peculeyarritese I dejuest wer ov such a nachure az too preclude Lenzmanship. Dhaerfoer I am gowing too Pluto; and from dhare--I hope--too Palane Cevven. If dhaerz a Lenzman dhare, Ile ghet him."

"U wil, at dhat," Kinnison pade qwiyet tribbute too whaut he, better dhan enniwun els, nu dhat hiz frend had.

"But enuf ov me--hou ar u doowing?"

"Az wel az can be expected at this stage ov the game. The thhing iz develloping along thre mane lianz. Ferst, the piraits. Cins dhat kiand ov thhing iz moer or les mi one line Ime handling it micelf, unles and until u fiand sumwun better qwaulifide. Ive got Jac and Costigan werking on it nou.

"Cecond; drugz, vice, and so on. I hope u fiand sumbody too take this line over, becauz, francly, Ime in over mi depth and waunt too ghet out. Nobos and DalNalten ar triying too fiand out if dhaerz ennithhing too the ideyaa dhat dhare ma be a plannetary, or even inter-plannetary, ring

involvd. Cins Cid Fletcher iznt a Lenzman I coodnt disconect him openly from hiz job, but he nose a lot about the dope-vice cichuwaishon and iz werking practicaly fool time withe the uther too.

"Thherd; pure--or raather, decidedly impure--pollitix. The moer I studded *dhat* subject, the clerer it became dhat pollitix wood be the werst and bigghest battel ov the thre. Dhare ar too menny an'ghelz I doant no a damd thhing about, such az whaut too doo about the suxeshon ov foming, screming fits yor frend Cennator Morgan wil be throwing the minnute he fiandz out whaut our Galactic Patrole iz gowing too doo. So I duct the whole polittical line.

"Nou u no az wel az I doo--better, probbably--dhat Morgan iz oonly the Pernishous Activvitesse Comitty ov the North Amerrican Cennate. Multipli him bi the thouzandz ov utherz, aul over space, whoo wil be on our nex befoer the Patrole can ghet its space-legz, and u wil ce dhat aul dhat stuf wil hav too be handeld bi a Lenzman whoo, az wel az beying a mity smuithe opperator, wil hav too no *aul* the aancerz and wil hav too hav plenty ov guts. Ive got the guts, but nun ov the uther prime reqwisiats. Gil haznt, auldho shese got evverithhing els. Faerchiald, yor Relaishonz ace, iznt a Lenzman and can nevver becum wun. So u can ce qwite plainly whoo haz got too handel pollitix himcelf."

"U ma be rite ... but this Lenzman biznes cumz ferst..." Samz ponderd, then britend. "Perhaps--probbably--I can fiand sumbody on this trip--a Palainyan, sa--whoo iz better qwaulifide dhan enny ov us."

Kinnison snorted. "If u can, Ile bi u a weke in enny Venereyan relaxery u waunt too name."

"Better start saving up yor creddits, then, becauz from whaut I aulreddy

no ov the Palainyan mentallity such a devellopment iz distinctly moer dhan a pocibillity." Samz pauzd, hiz ise narrowing. "I doant no whether it wood make Morgan and hiz kiand moer rabid or les so too hav a non-Solaareyan entity poses authority in our afaerz polittical--but at leest it wood be sumthhing nu and different. But in spite ov whaut u ced about ducking pollitix, whaut hav u got Northrop, Gil and Faerchiald doowing?"

"Wel, we had a cuppel ov discussonz. I coodnt ghiv iather Gil or Dic orderz, ov coers...."

"Woodnt, u mene," Samz corected.

"Coodnt," Kinnison incisted. "Gil, beciadz beying yor dauter and Lenzman grade, had no ofishal conecshon withe iather the Triplannetary Cervice or the Solaareyan Patrole. And the Cervice, including Faerchiald, iz stil Triplannetary; and it wil hav too sta Triplannetary until u hav found enuf Lenzmen so dhat u can spring yor twin cerprizez--Galactic Council and Galactic Patrole. Houwevver, Northrop and Faerchiald ar keping dhare ise and eerz open and dhare mouths shut, and Gil iz fianding out whaut evver she can about drugz and so on, az wel az the vareyouz polittical an'ghelz. Dhale repoert too u--facts, deducshonz, ghescez, and recomendaishonz--whenevver u sa the werd."

"Nice werc, Rod. Thanx. I thhinc Ile caul Gil nou, befoer I go--wunder whare she iz? ... but I wunder ... withe the Lenz perhaps tellefoanz ar superfluwous? Ile tri it."

"GIL!" he thaut intently intoo hiz Lenz, forming az he did so a mental image ov hiz gorjous dauter az he nu her. But he found, graitley too hiz cerprise, dhat niather elaboraishon nor emfacis wauz nescenary.

"Ouch!" came the aulmoast instantainyous aancer, long befoer hiz thaut wauz complete. "Doant thhinc so hard, Dad, it herts--I aulmoast mist a step." Vergilleyaa wauz acchuwaly dhare withe him; incide hiz one miand; in clocer tuch withe him dhan she had evver befoer bene. "Bac so soone? Shal we repoert nou, or arnt u reddy too go too werc yet?"

"Skipping for the moment yor aspersonz on mi prezsent activvitesee--not qwite." Samz modderated the intencity ov hiz thaut too a conversaishonal levvel. "Just waunted too chec withe u. Cum in, Rod." In flashing thauts he braut her up too date. "Gil, doo u agry withe whaut Rod here haz just toald me?"

"Yes. Foolly. So doo the boiz."

"Dhat cettelz it, then--unles, ov coers, I can fiand a moer capabel substichute."

"Ov coers--but we wil beleve dhat when we ce it."

"Whare ar u and whaut ar u doowing?"

"Waushington, D.C. Uropeyan Embacy. Daancing withe Herkimer Thherd, Cennator Morganz Number Wun secretery. I wauz gowing too make paacez at him--in a perfectly lady-like wa, ov coers--but it wauznt nescenary. He thhinx he can brake doun mi resistans."

"Caerfool, Gil! Dhat kiand ov stuf...."

"Iz verry oald stuf indede, Daddy dere. Cimpel. And Herkimer Thherd iznt reyaly a mennace; he just thhinx he iz. Take a looc--u can, caant u, withe yor Lenz?"

"Perhaps ... O, yes. I ce him az wel az u doo." Foolly on rapor
withe the gherl az he wauz, so dhat hiz miand receevd cimultainyously
withe
herz enny stimulus which she wauz willing too share, it ceemd az dho a
kene, handsum, deeply tand face bent down from a distans ov inchez
tooword hiz one. "But I doant like it a bit--and him even les."

"Dhats becauz u arnt a gherl," Gil ghiggheld mentaly. "This iz
fun; and it woant hert him a bit, exept maby for a sliatly bruezd
vannity, when I doant faul doun flat at hiz fete. And Ime lerning a lot
dhat he haznt enny suspishon hese ghivving awa."

"Nowing u, I beleve dhat. But doant ... dhat iz ... wel, be *verry*
caerfool not too ghet yor fin'gherz bernd. The job iznt werth it--yet."

"Doant wurry, Dad." She laaft unnafectedly. "When it cumz too
plaboiz like this wun, Ive got milleyonz and skilleyonz and whilleyonz
ov oamz ov resistans. But here cumz Cennator Morgan himcelf, withe a
fat and repulcive Venereyan--hese caulng mi boi-frend awa from me,
withe whaut he thhinx iz an imperceptibel hi-cine, intoo a huddel--and
mi olfactory nervz perceve a rich and fruty aromaa, az ov
scunc--so ... I hate too ceme too be ghivving a Solaareyan Councilor the
heve-ho, but if I waunt too rede whaut gose on--and I certainly doo--Ile
hav too concentrate. Az soone az u ghet bac ghiv us a caul and wele
repoert. Take it esy, Dad!"

"Yor the wun too be toald dhat, not me. Good hunting, Gil!"

Samz, stil ceted caalmly at hiz desc, reecht out and prest a
button marct "GARRAGE". Hiz office wauz on the cevventeyeth floer;
the garrage occupide levvel aafter levvel ov sub-baisment. The screne
britend; a kene yung face apeerd.

"Good evening, Gim. Wil u please cend mi car up too the Rite Skiwa feder?"

"At wuns, cer. It wil be dhare in cevventy five cecondz."

Samz cut of; and, aafter a brefe exchainj ov thaut withe Kinnison, went out intoo the haul and along it too the "DOUN" shaaft. Dhare, gowing fre, he stept throo a doerles, un'garded archwa intoo over a thouzand fete ov are. Auldho it wauz long aafter convenshonal office ourz the shaaft wauz stil faerly bizsy, but dhat made no differens--inershaales colizhonz canot even be felt. He boolletted dounword too the cixth floer, whare he braut himcelf too an instantainyous hault.

Leving the shaaft, he joind the nou thhinning croud hurreying tooword the exit. A gherl withe meticculously pluct iabrouz and an astounding hare-doo, catching cite ov hiz Lenz, tooc her handz out ov her britchez pockets--skerts went out, az office dres, when up-and-doun open-shaaft veloscitese ov a hundred or so mialz per our replaist ellevatorz--nujd her companyon, and whisperd exitedly:

"Looc dhare! Qwic! I nevver sau wun cloce up befoer, did u? Dhats him--himcelf! Ferst Lenzman Samz!"

At the Portal, the Lenzman az a matter ov habbit held out hiz car-chec, but such formallitese wer no lon'gher nescenary, or even poscibel. Evveriboddy nu, or waunted too be thaut ov az nowing, Vergil Samz.

"Staul foer cixty five, Ferst Lenzman, cer," the uniformd gaitman toald him, widhout even glaancing at the extended disc.

"Thanc u, Tom."

"This wa, please, cer, Ferst Lenzman," and a ueth, teeth gleming

white in a startlingly black face, strode proudly to the indicated stall and opened the vehicle door.

"Thank you, Danny," Sam said, as appreciatively as he did not no exactly where his ground-car was.

He got in. The door jammed itself gently shut. The runabout--a Dillingham eleven-forty--shot smoothly forward upon its too fat, soft tires. Halfway to the exit archway he was doing forty; he hit the steeply-banked curve leading into the lofty "street" at ninety. Nor was there shock or strain. Motorcicle-wise, but automatically, the "Dilly" leaned against its gyroscopes at precisely the correct angle; the huge low-pressure tires clung to the resilient synthetic over the pavement as he integral with it. Nor was there any question of conflicting traffic, for this thoroughfare, six feet level above Varic Street proper, was not, strictly speaking, a street at all. It had only one point of axes, the one which Sam had used; and only one exit--it was simply and only a feeder into Rite Skiway, a limited-axes superhighway.

Sam saw, without noting particularly, the mass of traffic-wise over which this feeder was only one tiny part; a mass which extended from ground-level up to a point well above even the towering buildings of New York metropolitan district.

The way rose sharply; Sam's right foot went down a little farther; the Dillingham began to pick up speed. Moving loud-speakers sang to him and yelled and blared at him, but he did not hear them. Brilliant colors, flashing and flaring all the colors of the spectrum--shere triumphs of the electrician art--blazed in or flamed into arresting words and interesting pictures, but he did not see them. Advertising--designed by experts to catch everything from the average to the most sophisticated ("bottled ecstasy")--but the First Lenzman was a second big-city dweller. His mind had long since become a perfect filter,

admitting too hiz consousnes oanly thhingz which he waunted too perceve:
oanly so can big-citty life be made enjurabel.

Aproching the Skiwa, he cut in hiz tooring roadliats, slode doun a trifel, and incinnuwated hiz lo-fliyer intoo the streme ov traffic. Dhose liats thru fiftene hundred wauts apece, but dhare wauz no glare--polariazd lensez and wind-sheeldz sau too dhat.

He wermd hiz wa over too the left-hand, hi-spede lane and open up. At the ej ov the skiascraper district, whare Rite Skiwa an'ghelz sharply dounword too ground levvel, Samz atenshon wauz caut and held bi sumthhing of too hiz rite--a blu-white, whisling sumthhing dhat herteld upword intoo the are. Az it acended it slode doun; its monnotone shreke became lower and lower in pich; its lite went doun throo the spectrum tooword the red. Finaly it exploded, withe an erth-shaking crash; but the liatning-like flash ov the detonaishon, insted ov vannishing aulmoast instantainously, cetteld itcelf uppon a lo-hanging artifishal cloud and became a picchure and foer werdz--too bearded facez and "SMITH BROS. COF DROPS"!

"Wel, Ile be damd!" Samz spoke aloud, shagrind at havving bene compeld too liscen too and too looc at an advertiazment. "I thaut I had cene evverithhing, but *dhat* iz reyaly nu!"

Twenty minnuets--fifty mialz--later, Samz left the Skiwa at a point nere whaut had wuns bene South Norwauc, Conetticut; an areyaa traansformd nou intoo the levvel sqware mialz ov Nu Yorc Spaispoert.

Nu Yorc Spaispoert; then, and until the establishment ov Prime Bace, the bigghest and bizseyest feeld in existens uppon enny plannet ov Civilizaishon. For Nu Yorc Citty, long the finanshal and comershal

cappital ov the Erth, had maintaind the same domminant posishon in the afaerz ov the Solar Cistem and wauz hoalding a substaanshal lede over her rivalz, Shicaago, Lundon, and Staalín'grad, in the race for inter-stellar supremmacy.

And Vergil Samz himcelf, becauz ov the evver-increcing mennace ov piracy, had bene larjly responcibel for the pollicy ov bacing the wor-vescelz ov the Triplannetary Patrole uppon eche space-feeld in direct raisheyo too the cise and importans ov dhat feeld. Hens he wauz no strain'ger in Nu Yorc Spaispoert; in fact, maaster cicollogist dhat he wauz, he had made it a point too no bi ferst name practicaly evveriwun conected withe it.

No sooner had he ternd hiz Dillingam over too a smiling atendant, houwevver, dhan he wauz acosted bi a man whoome he had nevver cene befoer.

"Mr. Samz?" the strain'ger aasct.

"Yes." Samz did not energise hiz Lenz; he had not yet devellopt iather the inclinaishon or the tecneke too probe instantainyously evvery entity whoo aproacht him, uppon enny pretext whautevver, in order too fiand out whaut dhat entity *reyaly* waunted.

"Ime Izaxon ..." the man pauzd, az dho he had suplide a werld ov informaishon.

"Yes?" Samz wauz receptive, but not imprest.

"Interstellar Spaiswase, u no. Weve bene triying too ce u for too weex, but we coodnt ghet paast yor secretarese, so I decided too buttonhole u here, micelf. But were just az much alone here az we wood be in iather wun ov our officez--yes, moer so. Whaut I waunt too

tauc too u about iz havving our exclucive franchise extended too cuvver the outer plannets and the collonese."

"Just a minnute, Mr. Izaxon. Shuerly u no dhat I no lon'gher hav even a portfoleyo in the Council; dhat practicaly aul ov mi atenshon iz, and for sum time too cum wil be, directed elshware?"

"Exactly--*ofishaly*." Izaxonz tone spoke volluemz. "But yor stil the Bos; dhale doo ennithhing u tel them too. We coodnt tri too doo biznes withe u befoer, ov coers, but in yor prezsent posishon dhare iz nuthhing whautevver too prevent u from ghetting intoo the bigghest thhing dhat wil evver be. We ar the bigghest corporaishon in existens nou, az u no, and we ar stil growing--faast. We doant doo biznes in a smaul wa, or withe smaul men; so heerz a chec for a milleyon creddots, or I wil depozsit it too yor acount...."

"Ime not interested."

"Az a biander," the uther went on, az smuidhly az dho hiz centens had not bene interupted, "withe twenty-five milleyon moer too follo on the da dhat our franchise gose throo."

"Ime stil not interested."

"No ... o ... o ...?" Izaxon studdede the Lenzman narroly: and Samz, Lenz nou wide awake, studdede the ontreprenner. "Wel ... I ... while I admit dhat we waunt u pritty badly, u ar smart enuf too no dhat wele ghet whaut we waunt enniwa, withe or widhout u. Withe u, dho, it wil be eseyer and qwicker, so I am authoriazd too offer u, beciadz the twenty cix milleyon creddots ..." he savord the werdz az he utterd them: "twenty too and wun-haaf percent ov Spaiswase. On toodase market dhat iz werth fifty milleyon creddots; ten yeeرز from nou it wil

be werth fifty *billeyon*. Dhats mi hi bid; dhats az hi az we can possibly go."

"Ime glad too here dhat--Ime *stil* not interested," and Samz strode awa, caulng hiz frend Kinnison az he did so.

"Rod? Vergil." He toald the stoery.

"Whu!" Kinnison whisceld expresciavly. "Dhare not pikerz, enniwa, ar dha? Whaut a *swete* cet-up--and u cood rap it up and hand it too them like a pound ov coffy...."

"Or u cood, Rod."

"Cood be...." The big Lenzman ruminated. "But *whaut* a hooccup! Perfectly legittimate, and withe plenty ov prescedents--and arguments, ov a sort--in its favor. The outer plannets. Then Alfaa Centory and Cirreyus and Proashon and so on. Monoppoly--aul the traffic wil bare...."

"Slavery, u mene!" Samz stormd. "It wood hoald Civilizaishon bac for a thousand yeerz!"

"Shure, but whaut doo *dha* care?"

"Dhats it ... and he ced--and acchuwaly beleevd--dhat dha wood ghet it widhout mi help.... I caant help wundering about dhat."

"Cimpel enuf, Verj, when u thhinc about it. He duznt no yet whaut a Lenzman iz. Nobody duz, u no, exept Lenzmen. It wil take sum time for dhat nollej too ghet around...."

"And stil lon'gher for it too be *beleevd*."

"Rite. But az too the chaans ov Interstellar Spaiswase evver ghetting the monoppoly dhare werking for, I didnt thhinc I wood hav too remiand u dhat it wauz not entiarly bi axident dhat over haaf ov the memberz ov the Solaareyan Council ar Lenzmen, and dhat enny Galactic Councilor wil automatticaly *hav* too be a Lenzman. So go rite ahed withe whaut u started, mi boi, and doant ghiv Izaxon and Cumpany anuther thaut. Wele bend an optic or too in dhat direcshon while u ar gon."

"I wauz overlooking a fu thhingz, at dhat, I ghes." Samz cide in relefe az he enterd the mane office ov the Patrole.

The line at the recepshonists desc wauz faerly short, but even so, Samz wauz not aloud too wate. Dhat hily deccorative, but far-from-dum blond, braking of in mid-centens her biznes ov the moment, ternd on her charm az dho it had bene a battery ov fludliats, prest a stud on her desc, and spoke too the man befoer her and too the Lenzman:

"Excuse me a moment, plese. Ferst Lenzman Samz, cer...?"

"Yes, Mis Regan?" her comunicator--"sqwauc-box", in evvery da parlans--broke in.

"Ferst Lenzman Samz iz here, cer," the gherl anounst, and broke the cerkit.

"Good evening, Cilveyaa. Leftenant-Comaander Wagner, plese, or whoowevver els iz handling clerancez," Samz aancerd whaut he thaut wauz too hav bene her qweschon.

"O, no, cer; u ar cleerd. Commodor Claton haz bene wating for

u ... here he iz, nou."

"Hi, Vergil!" Commodor Claton, a big, sollid man withe a scard face and a shoc ov iarn-gra hare, whose collar boer the too silver starz which proclaimd him too be the comaander-in-chefe ov a continental contin'gent ov the Patrole, shooc handz viggoriously. "Ile sip u out. Mis Regan, caul a bug, plese."

"O, dhat iznt nescesary, Allex!" Samz protested. "Ile pic wun up outside."

"Not in enny Patrole bace in North Amerricaa, mi frend; nor, unles I am verry badly mistaken, enniwhare els. From nou on, Lenzmen hav absolute priyority, and the qwicker evveriboddy reyalisez exactly whaut dhat meenz, the better."

The "bug"--a veyikel sumthhing like a gepe, exept moer so--wauz wating at the doer. The too men jumpt aboard.

"The *Shicaago*--and blaast!" Claton orderd, crisply.

The driver obade--litteraly. Gravvel flu from beneeth skidding tiarz az the hily manuverabel littel ground-car tooc of. A screaming tern intoo the deservdly famous Avvenu ov Oax. Along the Avvenu. Throo the Gate, the gardz saluting smartly az the bug raist paast them. Paast the barrax. Paast the aeroport hangarz and strips. Out intoo the space-feeld, the scard and blackend areyaa devoted soly too the wiadly-spaist dox ov the tremendous vescelz which plide the vaccuwous rechez ov inter-plannetary and inter-stellar space. Spaisdox wer, and ar, huge and sprauling strucchuerz; bilt ov concrete and stele and asbestos and ultraa-stubborn refractory and inshulaishon and vaccuwum-braix; folly are-condishond and havving refridgeraishon

equipment ov thousandz ov tunz per our ov ice; desiand not oanly too expedite cervicing, unloding, and loding, but aulso too protect matereyalz and personel from the raving, cering blaasts ov take-of and ov landing.

A space-doc iz a sqwaut and monstrous cillinder, intoo whoose hollo top the lowermoast wun-thherd ov a space-ships bulc fits az snugly az duz a baisbaul intoo the "pocket" ov a vetteran feelderz long-cezond gluv. And the tremendous distancez betwene dhose dox minnimise the aparrent cise, boath ov the strucchuerz themcelvz and ov the vescelz cermounting them. Dhus, from a distans, the *Shicaago* looct littel enuf, and harmles enuf; but az the bug flasht under the overhanging bulc and the driver braict savvaijly too a stop at wun ov the dox entrancez, Samz cood scaersly kepe from flinching. Dhat fechuerles, gra, smuidhly kerving waul ov alloi stele luimd so increddiably hi abuv them--extended so terrifyingly far outword beyond its vizsibel meenz ov supoert! It *must* be on the verry verj ov crashing!

Samz staerd delibberaitly at the mas ov mettal touwering abuv him, then smiald--not widhout effort--at hiz companyon.

"Ude thhinc, Allex, dhat a man wood ghet over beying afrade dhat a ship wauz gowing too faul on him, but I havnt--yet."

"No, and u probbably nevver wil. I nevver hav, and Ime wun ov the oald handz. Sum clame not too miand it--but not in frunt ov a li detector. Dhats whi dha had too make the pascen'ger dox biggher dhan the linerz--too menny pascen'gerz fainted and had too be carrede aboard on stretcherz--or canceld passage entiarly. Houwevver, scaring hel out ov them on the ground had wun big advaantage; dha felt so safe incide dhat dha didnt ghet the colly-wobbelz so bad when dha went fre."

"Wel, Ive got over *dhat*, enniwa. Good-bi, Allex; and thanx."

Samz enterd the doc, shot smuidhly upword, follode an escorting officer too the captainz one cabbn, and cetteld himcelf intoo a cooshond chare facing an ultraa-wave vu-plate. A face apeerd uppon hiz comunicator screne and spoke.

"Winfeeld too Ferst Lenzman Samz--u wil be reddy too blaast of at twenty wun hundred?"

"Samz too Captane Winfeeld," the Lenzman replide. "I wil be reddy."

Cirenz yeld breefly; a noiz which Samz nu wauz puerly a formallity. Clerans had bene ishude; Staishon PIXNY wauz filling the are withe worningz. Personel and matereyal cloce enuf too the *Shicaagose* doc too be afected bi the blaast wer under cuvver and safe.

The blaast went on; the plate shode, insted ov a vu ov the space-feeld, a blase ov blu-white lite. The wor-ship wauz inershaales, it iz tru; but so teriffic wer the foercez releest dhat incandescent gasces, fureyously drivven, wausht the doc and evverithing for hundredz ov yardz around it.

The plate cleerd. Throo the lower, dencer layerz ov atmosfere the *Shicaago* boerd in cecondz; then, az the are gru thhinner and thhinner, she rusht upword faaster and faaster. The terrane belo became concave ... then convex. Beyng compleetly widhout inershaa, the ships velosity wauz at evvery instant dhat at which the fricshon ov the mejum throo which she blaasted her wa eeqwald preciasly the foers ov her driving thrust.

Whaerfoer, out in open space, the Erth a faast-shrinking tiny baul and Sol himcelf growing smauler, paler, and weker at a startling rate, the

Shicaagose spede ataind an aulmoast constant vullu; a vullu starcly imposcibel for the human miand too graasp.

CHAPTER 5

For ourz Vergil Samz sat moashonles, staring aulmoast unceying intoo hiz plate. It wauz not dhat the vu wauz not werth ceying--the wunder ov space, the evver-chain'ging, constantly-shifting panoraamaa ov increddiably brilleyant auldho dimenshonles points ov lite, against dhat wondrous bacground ov mist-besprinkeld blac velvet, iz a thhing dhat never failz too au even the moast cezond observer--but he had a tremendous lode on hiz miand. He had too solv an aparrently insollubel problem. Hou ... *hou* ... HOU cood he doo whaut he had too doo?

Finaly, nowing dhat the time ov landing wauz aproching, he got up, unfoalded hiz fanz, and swam liatly throo the are ov the cabbn too a hand-line, along which he dru himcelf intoo the controle roome. He cood hav made the trip in dhat roome, ov coers, if he had so chosen; but, nowing dhat officerz ov space doo not reyaly like too hav strain'gerz in dhat sanctum, he did not intrude until it wauz nescesary.

Captane Winfeeld wauz aulreddy strapt down at hiz maaster conning plate. Pilots, navigatorz, and computerz werct bizsily at dhare respective taasx.

"I wauz just gowing too caul u, Ferst Lenzman." Winfeeld waivd a hand in the genneral direcshon ov a chare nere hiz one. "Take the Leftennant-Captainz staishon, plese." Then, aafter a fu minnuets: "Go

inert, Mr. White."

"Atenshon, aul personel," Leftennant-Captane White spoke conversationally into a microphone. "Prepare for inert maneuvering, Claas Thre. Of."

A banc ov tiny red liats uppon a pannel ternd grene practicaly az wun. White cut the Berghenhome, wharuppon Vergil Samz mas chainjd instantly from a wate ov sero too wun ov five hundred and twenty five poundz--ships ov wor then had no space too waist uppon such non-ecenshalz az artifishal gravvity. Auldho he wauz braist for the chainj and cooshond against it, the Lenzmanz breth *whoosht!* out sharply; but, beying intensly interested in whaut wauz gowing on, he swaulode convulciavly a cuppel ov tiamz, gaaspt a fu depe breths, and faut hiz wa bac up too normalcy.

The Chefe Pilot wauz nou at werc, withe aul the verchuwosose skil ov hiz ranc and grade; wun ov the haul-marx ov which iz too make difficult taasx looc esy. He plade trilz and runz and arpedgeyose--at tiamz verritabel glissaidz--uppon kebordz and peddalz, directing withe miacrometric precizhon the tremendous foercez ov the superdrednaut too the taasc ov matching the intrinsic velosity ov Nu Yorc Spaispoert at the time ov hiz deparchure too the I. V. ov the cerface ov the plannet so far belo.

Samz staerd intoo hiz plate; ferst at the increddiably tiny aparrent cise ov dhat increddiably hot sun, and then at the barren-loocking werld tooword which dha wer dropping at such teriffic spede.

"It duznt ceme poscibel ..." he remarct, haaf too Winfeeld, haaf too himself, "dhat a sun cood be dhat big and dhat hot. Rigel Foer iz aulmoast too hundred tiamz az far awa from it az Erth iz from

Sol--sumthhing like atene billeyon mialz--it duznt looc much, if enny, biggher dhan Venus duz from Lunaa--yet this werld iz hotter dhan the Sahaaraa Dezsert."

"Wel, blu giyants ar boath big and hot," the captane replide, matter-ov-factly, "and dhare rajaishon, beying moastly invizibel, iz dedly stuf. And Rigel iz about the bigghest in this rejon. Dhare ar utherz a lot wers, dho. Doraadus S, for instans, wood make Rigel, here, looc like a tallo candel. Ime gowing out dhare, sum ov these dase, just too take a looc at it. But dhats enuf ov astronommical chit-chat--were down too twenty mialz ov altichude and weve got yor citty just about stopt."

The *Shicaago* slode gently too a halt; percht moashonles uppon softly hiscing gets. Samz directed hiz vizsibeme dounword and cent along it an exploering, qwesting thaut. Cins he had nevver met a Rigelleyan in person, he cood not form the mental immagine or pattern nescesary too becum on rapor withe enny wun individjuwal ov the race. He did no, houwevver, the tipe ov miand which must be posest bi the entity withe whoome he wisht too tauc, and he coamd the Rigelleyan citty until he found wun. The rapor wauz so incomplete and imperfect az too amount aulmoast too no contact at aul, but he cood, perhaps, make himself understood.

"If u wil excuse this poscibly unplezzant and certainly unworanted intruezhon," he thaut, caerfooly and sloly, "I wood like verry much too discus withe u a matter which shood becum ov parramout importans too aul the intelligent pepelz ov aul the plannets in space."

"I welcum u, Telureyan." Miand fuezd withe miand at evvery wun ov uncountabel milleyonz ov points and paaths. This Rigelleyan professor ov soashollogy, standing at hiz desc, wauz fizensaly a monster ...

the oil-drum ov a boddy, the foer blocky legz, the multy-brancheyate tentaccular armz, dhat imobile dome ov a hed, the complete lac ov ise and ov eerz ... nevvertheles Samz miand fuezd withe the monstrosците az smuidhly, az effortlesly, and aulmoast az compleetly az it had withe hiz one dauterz!

And *whaut* a miand! The traancendent poiz; the staggheringly tremendous rainj and scope--the untrubbeld and unshacabel caalm; the sublime qwiyechude; the vaast and plascid certainty; the ultimate stabillity, un'none and forevver un'nowabel too enny human or nere-human race!

"Dismiss aul thaut ov intruezhon, Ferst Lenzman Samz ... I hav herd ov u human beyingz, ov coers, but hav nevver concidderd cereyously the pocibillity ov meting wun ov u miand too miand. Indede, it wauz repoerted

dhat nun ov our miandz cood make enny exopt the barest and moast unsatisfactory contact withe enny ov yorz dha chaanst too encounter. It iz, I nou perceve, the Lenz which maix this fool acord poscibel, and it iz bacicaly about the Lenz dhat u ar here?"

"It iz," and Samz went on too cuvver in flashing thauts hiz concepshon ov whaut the Galactic Patrole shood be and shood becum. Dhat wauz esy enuf; but when he tride too describe in detale the qwaulificaishonz nescesary for Lenzmanship, he began too bog down.

"Foers,

drive, scope, ov coers ... rainj ... pouwer ... but abuv aul, an absolute integrity ... an ultimate incoruptibillity..." He cood reccognise such a miand aafter meting it and studdeying it, but az too fianding it ... It mite not be in enny place ov pouwer or authority. Hiz one, and Rod Kinnisonz, happend too be; but Costiganz wauz not ... and both Nobos and DalNalten had made inconspicuwousnes a fine art....

"I ce," the native stated, when it became clere dhat Samz cood sa

no moer. "It iz evvident, ov coers, dhat I canot qwaulifi; nor doo I no enniwun personaly whoo can. Houwevver...."

"Whaut?" Samz demaanded. "I wauz shure, from the fele ov yor miand, dhat u ... but withe a miand ov such depth and bredth, such tremendous scope and pouwer, u must be incorruptibel!"

"I am," came the dri rejoinder. "We aul ar. No Rigelleyan iz, or evver wil be or can be, whaut u thhinc ov az corrupt or corruptibel. Indede, it iz oonly bi the narrowest, moast intens concentraishon uppon evvery line ov yor thaut dhat I can traanzlate yor mening intoo a concept poscibel for enny ov us even too understand."

"Then whaut ... O, I ce. I wauz starting at the rong end. Natchuraly enuf, I supose, I looct ferst for the qwaulitese rarest in mi one race."

"Ov coers. Our miandz hav ampel scope and rainj; and, perhaps, sufishent pouwer. But dhose qwaulitese which u refer too az fors and drive ar folly az rare amung us az absolute mental integrity iz amung u. Whaut u no az crime iz un'none. We hav no polece, no guvvernment, no lauz, no organiazd armd foercez ov enny kiand. We take, practicaly aulwase, the line ov leest resistans. We liv and let liv, az yor thaut runz. We werc tooghether for the common good."

"Wel ... I doant no whaut I expected too fiand here, but certainly not this...." If Samz had nevver befoer bene compleetly thunderstruc, compleetly at a los, he wauz then. "U doant thhinc, then, dhat dhare iz enny chaans?"

"I hav bene thhinking, and dhare ma be a chaans ... a slite wun, but stil a chaans," the Rigelleyan ced, sloly. "For instans, dhat ueth, so fool ov cureyosity, whoo ferst vizsited yor plannet. Thouzandz

ov us hav wunderd, too ourcelvz and too eche uther, about the peculeyar qwaulitese ov miand which compeld him and utherz too waist so much time, effort, and welth uppon a prodject so compleetly uesles az exploraishon. Whi, he had even too devellop ennergese and en'gianz dhaertofoer un'none, and which can nevver be ov enny reyal uce!"

Samz wauz shaken bi the caalm finallity withe which the Rigelleyan dismiss aul pocibillity ov the uesfoolnes ov inter-stellar exploraishon, but stuc dogghedly too hiz perpoce.

"Houwevver slite the chaans, I must fiand and tauc too this man. I supose he iz nou out in depe space sumwhare. Hav u enny ideyaa whare?"

"He iz nou in hiz home citty, acumulating fundz and manufacchuring fuwel withe which too continnu hiz pointles activvitese. Dhat citty iz naimd ... dhat iz, in yor In'glish u mite caul it ... Suntoun? Sunberg? No, it must be moer specific ... Rigelzvil? Rigel Citty?"

"Rigelston, I wood traanzlate it?" Samz hazzarded.

"Exactly--Rigelston." The professor marct its locaishon uppon a globular mental map far moer accurate and far moer detaild dhan the globe which Captane Winfeeld and hiz leftennant wer then studdeying.

"Thanx. Nou, can u and wil u ghet in tuch withe this exploerer and aasc him too caul a meting ov hiz fool cru and enny utherz whoo mite be interested in the prodject I hav outliand?"

"I can. I wil. He and hiz kiand ar not qwhite sane, ov coers, az u no; but I doo not beleve dhat even dha ar so insane az too be willing too subject themcelvz too the environment ov yor vescel."

"Dha wil not be aasct too cum here. The meting wil be held in

Rigelston. If nescesary, I shal incist dhat it be held dhare."

"U wood? I perceve dhat u wood. It iz strainj ... yes, fantastic ... u ar qworelsum, pugnaishous, anty-soashal, vishous, smaull-boddede and smaull-braind; timmid, nervous, and hily and censlesly exitabel; unballanst and unsane; az sheerly monstrous mentaly az u ar fizensaly..." These outrageous thauts wer cent az cazhuwaly and az impersonaly az dho the cender wer discussing the wether. He pauzd, then went on: "And yet, too ferther such a compleetly vizhonary prodject, u ar egher too subgect yorcelf too condishonz whoose counterparts I cood not foers micelf, under enny circumstaancez whautevver, too mete. It ma be ... it must be tru dhat dhare iz an extenshon ov the principel ov werking tooghether for the common good which mi miand, for lac ov pertinent dataa, haz not bene abel too graasp. I am nou on rapor withe Dronvire the exploerer."

"Aasc him, plese, not too identifi himcelf too me. I doo not waunt too go intoo dhat meting withe enny preconceevd ideyaaz."

"A ballanst thaut," the Rigelleyan apruivd. "Sumwun wil be at the aeroport too point out too u the aulreddy dezzolated areyaa in which the space-ship ov the exploererz maix its so-friatfool landingz; Dronvire wil aasc sumwun too mete u at the aeroport and bring u too the place ov meting."

The telepathhic line snapt and Samz ternd a white and swetting face too the *Shicaagose* captane.

"God, whaut a strane! Doant evver tri teleppathhy unles u pozsitiavly hav too--espeshaly not withe such an outlandishly *different* race az these Rigelleyanz ar!"

"Doant wurry; I woant." Winfeeldz werdz wer not at aul cimpathhettic,

but hiz tone wauz. "U looct az dho sumbody wauz beting yor brainz out withe a spiact club. Whare next, Ferst Lenzman?"

Samz marct the locaishon ov Rigelston uppon the vescelz chart, then dond ere-plugz and a speshal, rajaishon-proofe sute ov armor, eqwipt withe refridgeratorz and withe extraa-thhic blox ov led glaas too protect the ise.

The aeroport, an extreemly bizsy wun wel outside the citty propper, wauz located esily enuf, az wauz the spot uppon which the Telureyan ship wauz too land. Liatly, sloly, she cetteld dounword, her gets raving out against a gravvity foolly twice dhat ov her native Erth. Dhose blaasts, houwevver, added littel or nuthhing too the destrucshon aulreddy acumplisht bi the craaft then liying dhare--a torpedo-shaipt cruser havving perhaps wun-twentyeth ov the *Shicaagose* mas and bulc.

The superdrednaut landed, cinking intoo the hard, dri ground too a depth ov sum ten or fiftene fete befoer she stopt. Samz, on rapor withe the entity whoo wauz too be hiz escort, made a flashing cerva ov the miand so intimaitly in contact withe hiz one. No uce. This wun wauz not and nevver cood becum Lenzman matereyal. He cliamd hevvely doun the ladder. This dubbel-normal gravvity made the gowing a bit difficult, but he cood stand dhat a lot better dhan sum ov the uther thhingz he wauz gowing too hav too take. The Rigelleyan eqwivvalent ov an automobeles wauz dhare, wating for him, its doer invitingly open.

Samz had none--in genneral--whaut too expect. The too-wheeld shascy wauz moer or les cimmilar too dhat ov hiz one Dillingam. The boddy wauz a narro torpedo ov stele, bluntly pointed at boath endz, and widhout windose. Too fechuerz, houwevver, wer boath unexpected and unplezzant--the hard, tuf stele ov which dhat boddy wauz foerjd wauz an inch and a haaf thhic, insted ov wun-cixteenth; and even

dhat extrordinarily armord boddy wauz dented and scard and mard, espeshaly about the foer and rere qworterz, az deeply and az badly and az cazhuwaly az ar the fenderz ov an Erthly jaloppy!

The Lenzman cliamd, not esily or joiyously, intoo dhat grimly forbidding blac intereyor. Blac? It wauz so blac dhat the poert-hole-like doerwa ceemd too admit no lite at aul. It wauz blacker dhan a witchez cat in a cole cellar at midnite! Samz flincht; then, stiffening, thaut at the driver.

"Mi contact withe u ceemz too hav slipt. Ime afrade dhat I wil hav too cling too u raather moer tiatly dhan ma be iather polite or cumfortabel. Depriavd ov cite, and widhout yor cens ov percepshon, I am practicaly helples."

"Cum in, Lenzman, bi aul meenz. I offerd too maintane fool en'gajment, but it ceemd too me dhat u decliand it; qwite poscibly the misunderstanding wauz ju too our unfamileyarrity withe eche utherz customary mode ov thaut. Relax, plese, and cum in ... dhare! Better?"

"Infiniatly better. Thanx."

And it wauz. The darcnes vannisht; throo the unnexplanabel perceptive cens ov the Rigelleyan he cood "ce" evverithhing--he had a practicaly perfect thre-dimenshonal vu ov the entire cercumambeyent sfere. He cood ce boath the incide and the outcide ov the ground car he wauz in and ov the imens space-ship in which he had cum too Rigel 4. He cood ce the baringz and the rist-pinz ov the internal-combuschon en'gine ov the car, the intereyor strucchure ov the weldz dhat held the stele plaits tooghether, the bizsy aerport outcide, and even depe intoo the ground. He cood ce and studdy in detale the depest-berrede, moast hevvely sheilded parts ov the atommic en'gianz ov the *Shicaago*.

But he wauz waisting time. He cood aulso plainly ce a deeply-cooshond chare, desiand too fit a human boddy, welded too a staancheyon and eqwipt
withe haaf a duzsen padded restraining straps. He sat down qwicly;
strapt himcelf in.

"Reddy?"

"Reddy."

The doer bangd shut withe a clan'gor which berst throo space-sute and ere-plugz withe aul the viyolens ov a neerbi thunderclap. And dhat wauz meerly the beghinning. The en'gine started--an internal-combuschon en'gine
ov wel over a thouzand horspouwer, desiand for maximum effishency bi en'gineerz in whoose lexicon dhare wer no counterparts ov enny In'glish werdz relating too noiz, or even too sound. The car tooc of;
withe an axeleraishon which drove the Telureyan baqword, depe intoo the cooshonz. The screme ov torchuerd tiarz and the creshendo bellowing ov the en'gine combiand too form an uproer which, amplifide bi and reverberating within the rezzonant shel ov mettal, threttend too addel the verry brane incide the Lenzmanz scul.

"U suffer!" the driver exclaimd, in hi concern. "Dha caushond me too start and stop gently, too drive sloly and caerfooly, too bump softly. Dha toald me u ar frale and fradgile, a fact which I perceevd for micelf and which haz cauzd me too drive withe the utmoast poscibel care and restraint. Iz the fault mine? Hav I bene too ruf?"

"Not at aul. It iznt dhat. Its the un'godly noiz." Then, reyalising dhat the Rigelleyan cood hav no concepshon ov hiz mening, he continnude qwicly:

"The viabraishonz in the atmosfere, from cixtene cikelz per cecond up too about nine or ten thouzand." He explaind whaut a cecond wauz. "Mi nervous cistem iz verry cencitive too dhose viabraishonz. But I expected them and sheilded micelf against them az addeqwaitly az I cood.

Nuthhing

can be dun about them. Go ahead."

"Atmosferric viabraishonz? *Atmosferric* viabraishonz? Atmosferric *viabraishonz*?" The driver marveld, and concentrated uppon this entiarly nu concept while he--

1. Swung around a stele-sheedhd concrete pillar at a spede ov at leest cixty mialz per our, grasing it so cloasly dhat he remuivd wun layer ov protective coting from the mettal.
2. Braict so savvaijly too mis a wialdly carening truc dhat the restraining straps aulmoast cut Samz boddy, space-sute and aul, intoo slicez.
3. Darted intoo a hole in the traffic so narro dhat oonly tiny fracshonz ov inchez cepparated hiz hertling Juggernaut from an enormous stele collum on wun cide and anuther speding veyikel on the uther.
4. Executed a dubbel-rite-an'ghel revers kerv, dhus miscing bi haerz bredths too veyikelz travveling in the opposite direcshon and wun in hiz one.
5. Az a grand climax too this spectaccular exhibishon ov insane driving, he plunjed at fool spede intoo a traffic artery which ceemd so fool aulreddy dhat it cood not hoald even wun moer car. But it cood--just baerly cood. Houwevver, insted ov nere miscez or grasing hits, this time dhare wer bumps, dents--littel wunz, nuthhing at aul, reyaly, oonly an inch or so depe--and an utterly hellish concatenaishon and

concentraishon ov noiz.

"I fale compleetly too understand whaut efect such viabraishonz cood hav," the Rigelleyan anounst finaly, subliamly unconshous dhat ennithhing at aul out ov the ordinary had okerd. For him, nuthhing had. "But shuerly dha cannot be ov enny uce?"

"On this werld, I am afrade not. No," Samz admitted, werily. "Here, too, aparrently, az evveriwheare, the big cittese ar choking themcelvz too deth withe dhare one traffic."

"Yes. We bild and bild, but nevver hav roadz enuf."

"Whaut ar dhose moundz along the streets?" For sum time Samz had bene conshous ov dhose long, lo, aparrently opake strucchuerz; atracted too them becauz dha wer the oonly non-traansparent obgets within rainj ov the Rigelleyanz miand. "Or iz it sumthhing I shood not menshon?"

"Whaut? O, dhose? Bi no meenz."

Wun ov the nearbi moundz lost its opascity. It wauz fild withe swerling, girating bandz and stremerz ov ennergy so vivvid and so sollid az too resembel fabric; withe wialdly hertling obgets ov indescribabel shaips and contorz; withe brilleyantly flashing cimbolz which Samz found, graitly too hiz cerprise, made cens--not throo the Rigelleyanz miand, but throo hiz one Lenz:

"ETE TEEGMESE FOODE!"

"Advertising!" Samz thaut wauz a snort.

"Advertising. U doo not perceve yorz, iather, az u drive?" This wauz the ferst bond too be establisht betwene too ov the moast hily advaanst racez ov the Ferst Gallyxy!

The friatfool drive continnude; the noiz gru wers and wers. Imadgine, if u can, a citty ov fiftene milleyonz ov pepel, throowout whoose entire length, bredth, hite, and depth no atempt whautevver had evver bene made too abate enny noiz, houwevver viyolent or peercing! If yor imaginaishon haz bene sufishmently vivvid and if u hav werct understandingly enuf, the product ma aproximate whaut Ferst Lenzman Samz wauz foerst too liscen too dhat da.

Throo evver-thhickening traffic, climing too hiyer and evver hiyer roadwase betwene touwering windoles waulz ov stele, the mascive Rigelleyan automobeles barjd and bangd its wa. Finaly it stopt, a thousand fete or so abuv the ground, beside a bilding which wauz stil under construcshon. The hevvy doer clangd open. Dha got out.

And then--it chaanst too be dalite at the time--Samz sau a tan'ghel ov fiting, screming *cullorz* whoose like no entity posescing the cens ov cite had evver befoer imadgiand. Redz, yellose, bluse, greenz, perpelz, and evvery vareyaishon and inter-mixchure poscibel; lade on or splasht on or ocuuring natchuraly at perfect random, smote hiz ise az viyolently az the aul-pervading noiz had bene asaling hiz eerz.

He reyaliadz then dhat throo hiz ghiadz cens ov percepshon he had bene "ceying" oonly in shaidz ov gra, dhat too these pepel "vizensibel" lite differd oonly in wave-length from enny uther band ov the complete electromagnetic spectrum ov viabraishon.

Straind and tens, the Lenzman follode hiz escort along a narro catwauz, throo a waul uppon which rivveterz and welderz wer bizsily at werc, intoo a roome practicaly widhout waulz and ceeld oonly bi stoery aafter stoery ov huge I-beemz. Yet *this* wauz the meting-place; aulmoast a hundred Rigelleyanz wer acembeld dhare!

And az Samz wauct tooword the groope a crainman dropt a cuppel ov tunz ov stele plate, from a hite ov ate or ten fete, uppon the floer directly behiand him.

"I just about jumt rite out ov mi armor," iz the wa Samz himcelf descriabd hiz reyacshonz; and dhat descriphon iz perhaps az good az enny.

At enny rate, he went breefly out ov controle, and the Rigelleyan cent him a steddeying, inqwiring, wundering thaut. He cood no moer understand the Telureyanz cencitivvity dhan Samz cood understand the fact dhat too these pepel, even the concept ov fizensal intruezhon wauz absolutly incomprehencibel. These bilderz wer not wercmen, in the Telureyan cens. Dha wer Rigelleyanz, eche werking hiz fu ourz per weke for the common good. Dha wood be no moer in contact withe the meting dhan wood dhare fellose on the uther cide ov the plannet.

Samz cloazd hiz ise too the riyot ov clashing cullorz, deffend himcelf bi mane strength too the apauling clan'gor ov sound, foerst himcelf too concentrate evvery fiber ov hiz miand uppon hiz errand.

"Plese cincronise withe mi miand, az menny ov u az poscibel," he thaut at the groope az a whole, and went on rapor withe miand aafter miand aafter miand. And miand aafter miand aafter miand lact sumthhing. Sum

wer stron'gher dhan utherz, had moer inishative and drive and erj, but nun wood qwite doo. Until--

"Thanc God!" In the wave ov exultant relefe, ov foolfilment, Samz no lon'gher sau the cullorz or herd the din. "U, cer, ar ov Lenzman grade. I perceve dhat u ar Dronvire."

"Yes, Vergil Samz, I am Dronvire; and at long laast I no whaut it iz dhat I hav bene ceking aul mi life. But hou ov these, mi uther

frendz? Ar not sum ov them...?"

"I doo not no, nor iz it nescesy dhat I fiand out. U wil celect ..." Samz pauzd, amaizd. The uther Rigelleyanz wer stil in the roome, but mentaly, he and Dronvire wer compleetly alone.

"Dha antiscipated yor thaut, and, nowing dhat it wauz too be moer or les personal, dha left us until wun ov us inviats them too retern."

"I like dhat, and apreesheyate it. U wil go too Areezhaa. U wil receve yor Lenz. U wil retern here. U wil celect and cend too Areezhaa az menny or az fu ov yor fellose az u chuse. These thhingz I reqwire u, bi the Lenz ov Areezhaa, too doo. Aafterword--plese note dhat this iz in no cens obliggatoery--I wood like verry much too hav u vizsit Erth and axept apointment too the Galactic Council. Wil u?"

"I wil." Dronvire neded no time too concidder hiz decizhon.

The meting wauz dismist. The same entity whoo had bene Samz shofer on the in-bound trip drove him bac too the *Shicago*, driving az "sloly" and az "caerfooly" az befoer. Nor, this time, did the punnishment take such tole, even dho Samz nu dhat eche teriffic lunj and lerch wauz adding wun moer bruse too the aulreddy much-too-larj colecshon disculloring aulmoast evvery sqware foot ov hiz tuf hide. He had suxeded, and the thril ov suxes had its uezhuwal analgesic efect.

The *Shicaagose* captane met him in the are-loc and helpt him remoove hiz sute.

"Ar u *shure* yor aul rite, Samz?" Winfeeld wauz no lon'gher the formal captane, but a frend. "Even dho u didnt caul, we wer beghinning too wunder ... u looc az dho ude bene too a Valereyan

clambake, and I shure az hel doant like the wa yor favoring dhose ribz and dhat left leg. Ile tel the boiz u got bac in A-prime shape, but Ile hav the doctorz looc u over, just too make shure."

Winfeeld made the anounsment, and throo hiz Lenz Samz cood plainly fele the wave ov relefe and plezhure dhat spred throowout the grate ship withe the nuse. It cerpriazd him imensly. Whoo wauz *he*, dhat aul these boiz shood care so much whether he livd or dide?

"Ime perfectly aul rite," Samz protested. "Dhaerz nuthhing at aul the matter withe me dhat twenty ourz ov slepe woant fix az good az nu."

"Maby; but ule go too the cic-ba ferst, just the same," Winfeeld incisted. "And I supose u waunt me too blaast bac too Tellus?"

"Rite. And faast. The Ambassadorz Baul iz next Chueзда evening, u no, and dhats wun funcshon I caant sta awa from, even withe a Claas A Dubbel Prime excuce."

CHAPTER 6

The Ambassadorz Baul, wun ov the moast ultraa-ultraa funcshonz ov the yere, wauz wel under wa. It wauz not dhat evveriwun whoo wauz enniwun wauz dhare; but evveriwun whoo wauz dhare wauz, in wun wa or anuther, verry emfatticaly sumwun. Dhus, dhare wer afaerz at which dhare wer moer yung and butifool wimmen, and moer yung and handsum men; but nun

exibiting nuwer or moer expencive gounz, moer ribbonz and decoraishonz,
moer or costleyer or moer refiand juwelry, or a larger aicrage ov pouderd and perfuemd epidermis.

And even so, the yun'gher cet wauz wel enuf represented. Cins piyoning apeelz moer too ueth dhan too age, the men representing the collonese wer yung; and dhare wiavz, toogheter withe the dauterz and the cecond (or thherd or foerth, or ocaizhonalz the fifth) wiavz ov the human personagez practicaly ballanst the acount.

Nor wauz the throng entiarly human. The time had not yet cum, ov coers, when worm-bludded, oxigen-breething monstrosцитеse from hundredz ov uther solar cistemz wood vi in numberz withe the humannity prezsent. Dhare wer, houwevver, a fu Marshanz on the floer, waring dhare lite "roabz du convenshon" and daancing withe meticculously mathhemattical precizhon. A fu Venereyanz, whoo did not daans, sat in state or waudeld importantly about. Menny werldz ov the Solaareyan Cistem, and not a fu uther cistemz, wer represented.

Wun cuppel stood out, even against dhat oppulent and magnifficent bacground. Ise follode them wharevver dha went.

The gherl wauz taul, trim, suppel; bilt like a cimfony. Her Calistan vexto-cilc gown, ov the nuwest and moast viyolent shade ov "rajo-active" grene, wauz fosforescently luminous; fluworescent; gleming and glowing. Its hem swept the floer, but abuv the waist it vannisht mistereyously exept for wisps which clung too strategic areyaaz here and dhare withe no supoert, aparrently, exept the personal magnetizm ov the warer. She, aulmoast alone ov aul the wimmen dhare, woer no flouwerz. Her oonly juwelry wauz a roset ov huge, perfectly-macht emmeraldz, perchth precareyously uppon her bare left shoalder. Her hare, unlike the uther

wimmenz flaules qwaafuerz, wauz a flamboyant, artisticaly-disarainjd, red-bronz-aubern mop. Her soft and juwy ise--Vergilleyaa Samz cood controle her ise az perfectly az she cood her hily edjucated handz--wer at the moment goald-flect, tauny welz ov gherlish innocens and trust.

"But I *caant* ghiv u this next daans, too, Herkimer--*Onnestly* I caant!" she pleded, snugling just a trifel clocer intoo the embrace ov the yung man whoo wauz just az much man, fizensicaly, az she wauz woomman.

"Ide just *luv* too, reyal, but I just cimply *caant*, and u no whi, too."

"Uve got sum juty-daancez, ov coers ..."

"*Sum?* Ive got a list az long az from here too dhare! Cennator Morgan ferst, ov coers, then Mr. Izaxon, then I sat wun out withe Mr. Osmen--I caant *stand* Venereyanz, dhare so slimy and fat and repulcive!--and dhat lethery hornd tode from Marz and dhat Joveyan hippopotamus ..."

She went doun the list, and az she naimd or carracteriazd eche entity anuther fin'gher ov her left hand prest doun uppon the bac ov her partnerz rite, too emfacise the count ov her soashal obligaishonz. But dhose tallented fin'gherz wer doowing moer--far, far moer--dhan dhat.

Herkimer Thherd, auldho no littel ov a Don Hwaan, wauz a hily pollisht, smuidhly finnisht, thurroly cezond diplomat. Az such, hiz ise and hiz uther fechuerz--particularly hiz ise--had bene scuild for yeez too revele no trace ov whautevver mite be gowing on incide hiz brane. If he had entertaind enny suspishon ov the butifool gherl in hiz armz, if enniwun had sugested dhat she wauz triying her best too pump

him, he wood hav smiald the sort ov smile which oanly the top-drauer diplomat can acheve. He wauz not suspishous ov Vergilleyaa Samz.

Houwevver,

cimply becauz she wauz Vergil Samz dauter, he tooc an extraa bit ov pane too betra no unju interest in enny wun ov the naimz she recited. And beciadz, she wauz not loocking at hiz ise, nor even at hiz face. Her glaans, demuerly douncaast, wauz aul too raerly raizd abuv the level ov hiz chin.

Dhare wer sum thhingz, houwevver, dhat Herkimer Herkimer Thherd did not

no. Dhat Vergilleyaa Samz wauz the moast acumplisht muscel-reder ov her tiamz. Dhat she wauz so cloce too him, not becauz ov hiz manly charm, but becauz oanly in dhat posishon cood she doo her prodidjous best. Dhat she cood werc withe her ise alone, but in emergencese, when foollest poscibel rezults wer imperrative, she had too use her exqwizsiatly cencitive fin'gherz and her exqwizsiatly tactile skin. Dhat she had studdede intenciavly, and had tabbulated the reyacshonz ov, eche ov the entitese on her list. Dhat she wauz nou, withe hiz help, fitting dhose reyacshonz intoo a pattern. And finaly, dhat dhat pattern wauz beghinning too ashume the grim shape ov MERDER!

And Vergilleyaa Samz, werking nou for sumthhing far moer ergent and vaastly moer important dhan a figmental Galactic Patrole, hoapt desperaitly dhat this Herkimer wauz not a muscel-reder too; for she nu dhat she wauz reveling her ceecrets even moer compleetly dhan wauz he. In fact, if thhingz got much wers, he cood not help but fele the pounding ov her hart ... but she cood explane dhat esily enuf, bi a fu aproapreyate wigghez ... No, he wauznt a reder, deffiniatly not. He wauznt wauching the rite placez; he wauz loocking whare dhat goun had

bene desiand too make him looc, and noawhare els ... and no tel-tale muscelz la beneeth enny part ov iather ov hiz handz.

Az her ise and her fin'gherz and her luvly torso cent moer and moer informaishon too her kene brane, Gil gru moer and moer ancshous. She wauz shure dhat merder wauz intended, but whoo wauz too be the victim?

Her

faather? Probbably. Pops Kinnison? Poscibly. Sumbody els? Baerly poscibly. And when? And whare? And hou? She *didnt no!* And she wood hav too be *shure* ... Menshoning naimz hadnt bene enuf, but a personal aperans ... Whi *didnt* dad sho up--or did she wish he woodnt cum at aul...?

Vergil Samz enterd the baul-roome.

"And dad toald me, Herkimer," she coode sweetly, gasing up intoo hiz ise for the ferst time in over a minnute, "dhat I must daans withe evvery wun ov them. So u ce ... O, dhare he iz nou, over dhare! Ive bene wundering whare hese bene keping himcelf." She nodded tooword the entrans and pratteld on artlesly. "Hese aulmoast *nevver* late, u no, and Ive ..."

He looct, and az hiz ise met dhose ov the Ferst Lenzman, Gil lernd thre ov the facts she neded so badly too no. Her faather. Here. Soone. She nevver nu hou she mannaijd too kepe hercelf under controle; but, sum wa and just baerly, she did.

Auldho nuthhing shode, she wauz ceething inwordly: raut up az she had nevver befoer bene. Whaut cood she doo? She *nu*, but she did not hav a scrap or an iyotaa ov vizsibel or tan'gibel evvidens; and if she made wun cin'ghel slip, houwevver slite, the conceqwencez cood be imejate and dizaastrous.

Aafter this daans mite be too late. She cood make an excuce too leve the floer, but dhat wood looc verry bad, later ... and nun ov them wood Lenz her, she nu, while she wauz withe Herkimer--*dam* such

shivvalry!... She *cood* take the chaans ov waving at her faather, cins she hadnt cene him for so long ... no, the smaulest risc wood be withe Mace. He looct at her evvery chaans he got, and shede *make* him use hiz Lenz ...

Northrop looct at her; and over Herkimerz shoalder, for wun fleting instant, she aloud her face too revele the terrifide apele she so keenly felt.

"Waunt me, Gil?" Hiz Lenzd thaut tucht oanly the outer frin'gez ov her miand. Fool rapor iz moer intimate dhan a kis: no wun exept her faather had evver reyaly poot a Lenz on Vergilleyaa Samz. Nevvertheles:

"*Waunt* u! I nevver waunted enniboddy so much in mi life! Cum in, Mace--qwic--*plese!*"

Diffidently enuf, he came; but at the ferst incling ov the gherlz nuse aul thaut ov diffidens or ov privacy vannisht.

"Jac! Spud! Mr. Kinnison! Mr. Samz!" he Lenzd sharp, imperrative, aulmoast frantic thauts. "Liscen in!"

"Steddy, Mace, Ile take over," came Rodderic Kinnisonz deper, qwiyyeter mental vois. "Ferst, the matter ov gunz. Enniboddy exept me waring a pistol? U ar, Spud?"

"Yes, cer."

"U wood be. But u and Mace, Jac?"

"Weve got our Luwistonz!"

"U wood hav. Blaasterz, mi sumtiamz-not-qwite-so-brite sun, ar

fine wepponz indede for certane kiandz ov werc. In emergencese, it iz ov coers permiscibel too kil a fu duzsen innocent biastanderz. In such a croud az this, dho, it iz much better tecneke too kil oanly the wun u ar aming at. So skip out too mi car, u too, rite nou, and chainj--and make it *faast*." Evveriwun nu dhat Rodderic Kinnisonz car wauz at aul tiamz an arcenal on wheelz. "Wish u wer in uniform, too, Verj, but it caant be helpt nou. Werc yor wa--*sloly*--around too the northwest corner. Spud, doo the same."

"Its impscibel--starclly unthhincabel!" and "Ime not *shure* ov ennithhing, reyaly ..." Samz and hiz dauter began cimultainyously too protest.

"Vergil, u tauc like a man withe a paper nose. Kepe stil until aafter uve uezd yor brane. And Ime shure enuf ov whaut u no, Gil, too take plenty ov steps. U can relax nou--take it esy. Were cuvvering Vergil and I cauld up supoert in foers. U *can* relax a littel, I ce. Good! Ime not trying too hide from enniboddy dhat the next fu minnuets ma be crittical. Ar u pritty shure, Gil, dhat Herkimer iz a ke man?"

"Pritty shure, Pops." *Hou* much better she felt, nou dhat the Lenzmen wer on gard! "In this wun cace, at leest."

"Good! Then let him tauc u intoo ghivving him evvery daans, rite strate throo until sumthhing braix. Wauch him. He must no the signal and whoo iz gowing too opperate, and if u can ghiv us a fracshon ov a cecond ov worning it wil help no end. Can doo?"

"Ile sa I can--and I wood luv too, the big, slimy, stinking skinker!" Az traanzliterated intoo werdz, the gherlz thaut ma ceme a trifel confuezd, but Kinnison nu exactly whaut she ment.

"Wun moer thhing, Gil; a detale. The boiz ar cumming bac in and ar werking dhare partnerz over this wa. Ce if Herkimer noticez dhat dha hav chainjd dhare hoalsterz."

"No, he didnt notice," Gil repoerted, aafter a moment. "But I doant notice enny differens, iather, and Ime loocking for it."

"Nevvertheles, its dhare, and the differens betwene a Marc Cevventene and a Marc Five iz sumthhing moer dhan dhat betwene Twedeldum and Twedeldy," Kinnison reternd, drily. "Houwevver, it ma not be az obveyous too non-millitary personel az it iz too us. Dhats far enuf, boiz, doant ghet too cloce. Nou, Verj, kepe sollidly on rapor withe Gil on wun cide and withe us on the uther, so dhat she woant hav too ghiv hercelf and the sho awa bi yelling and pointing, and ..."

"But this iz preposterous!" Samz stormd.

"Preposterous, hel," Rodderic Kinnisonz thaut wauz stil coaldly levvel; oonly the fact dhat he wauz beghinning too use non-baulroome lan'gwage reveeld enny cine ov the strane he wauz under. "Stop beying so goddam herowic and start using yor brane. U ternd doun fifty billeyon credits. Whi doo u suppose dha offerd dhat much, when dha can ghet enniboddy kild for a hundred? And whaut wood dha doo about it?"

"But dha coodnt ghet awa withe it, Rod, at an Ambassadorz Baul. Dha *coodnt*, poscibly."

"Formerly, no. Dhat wauz mi ferst thaut, too. But it wauz u whoo pointed out too me, not so long ago, dhat the tecneex ov crime hav chainjd ov late. In the nu lite, the swankeyer the braul the grater the confuezhon and the better the chaans ov ghetting awa clene. Come *dhat* out ov yor whiskerz, u red-hedded mule!"

"Wel ... dhare mite be sumthhing in it, aafter aul ..." Samz thaut shode aprehenshon at laast.

"U no dam wel dhare iz. But u boiz--Jac and Mace espeshaly--loocen up. U caant doo good shooting while yor strung up like a cuppel ov cocuinz. Doo sumthhing--tauc too yor partnerz or thhinc at Gil ..."

"Dhat woant be hard, cer." Mason Northrop grind feebly. "And dhat remiandz me ov sumthhing, Gil. Mentor certainly bracketed the targhet when he--or she, or it, maby--ced dhat u wood nevver nede a Lenz."

"Huu?" Gil demaanded, inellegantly. "I doant ce the conecshon, if enny."

"No? Evveriboddy els duz, Ile bet. Hou about it?" The uther Lenzmen, even Samz, agrede enthuseyaasticaly. "Wel, doo u thhinc dhat enny ov dhose carracterz, particularly Herkimer Herkimer Thherd, wood let a harnes bool in harnes--even such a butifool wun az u--ghet cloce enuf too him too doo such a Davy the Dip act on hiz miand?"

"O ... I nevver thaut ov dhat, but its rite, and Ime glad ... but Pops, u ced sumthhing about supoert in foers.' Hav u enny ideyaa hou long it wil be? I *hope* I can hoald out, withe u aul supoerting me, but ..."

"U can, Gil. Too or thre minnuets moer, at moast."

"Supoert? In foers? Whaut doo u mene?" Samz snapt.

"Just dhat. The whole damd army," Kinnison replide. "I cent Too-Star Commodor Alexaander Claton a thaut dhat lifted him rite out ov hiz chare. Evverithhing hese got, at fool emergency blaast. Armor--marc aty

foerz--cix bi cix extraa hevvese--a nianty cixty for an ambulans--fool escort, upstaerz and doun--wa-friskerz--copterz--cruserz and big stuf--in short, the werx. I wood hav run withe u befoer this, if I daerd; but the minnute the relefe party shose up, we doo a flit."

"If u *daerd*?" Gil aasct, shaken bi the thaut.

"Exactly, mi dere. I doant dare. If dha start ennithhing wele doo our damdest, but Ime praying dha woant."

But Kinnisonz praerz--if he made enny--wer ignoerd. Gil herd a sharp, but verry uezhuwal and incignificant sound; sumwun had dropt a pencil. She felt an inconspicuwous muscel twich sliatly. She sau the aulmoast imperceptibel tencing ov a nec-muscel which wood hav ternd Herkimerz hed in a certane direcshon if it had bene aloud too act. Her ise flasht along dhat line, cercht bizsily for milly-cecondz. A man wauz reching unnobtruciavly, az dho for a hankerchefe. But men at Ambassadorz Baulz doo not carry blu hankercheefs; nor duz enny fabric, houwevver dide, resembel at aul cloasly the blude stele ov an automattic pistol.

Gil wood hav screemd, then, and pointed; but she had time too doo niather. Throo her rapor withe her faather the Lenzmen sau evverithhing dhat she sau, in the instant ov her ceying it. Hens five shots blaasted out, practicaly az wun, befoer the gherl cood screme, or point, or even moove. She did screme, then; but cins duzsens ov uther wimmen wer screaming, too, it made no differens--then.

Conwa Costigan, triggheer-nervd spais'hound dhat he wauz and withe yeerz ov gun-fiting and ov hand-too-hand brauling in hiz log, shot ferst; even befoer the gunman did. It wauz Costiganz blianding spede dhat saivd Vergil Samz life dhat da; for the wood-be asascin wauz diying, withe

a hevvy slug crashing throo hiz brane, befoer he finnisht pooling the triggher. The diyng hand twicht upword. The boollet intended for Samz hart went hi; throo the fleshy part ov the shoalder.

Rodderic Kinnison, becauz ov hiz age, and hiz sun and Northrop, becauz ov dhare inxpereyens, wer a fu milly-cecondz slo. Dha, houwevver, wer aming for the boddy, not for the hed; and enny ov dhose thre rezulting wuindz wood hav bene satisfactorily fatal. The man went doun, and stade doun.

Samz staggherd, but did not go doun until the elder Kinnison, az gently az wauz concistent withe the maximum ov spede, thru him doun.

"Stand bac! Ghet bac! Ghiv him are!" Men began too shout, the while prescing clocer themcelvz.

"U men, stand bac. Sum ov u go ghet a stretcher. U wimmen, cum here." Kinnisonz hevvy, parade-ground vois smasht doun aul lescer noizez. "Iz dhare a doctor here?"

Dhare wauz; and, aafter beyng "friscst" for wepponz, he went bizsily too werc.

"Joi--Betty--Gil--Cleyo," Kinnison cauld hiz one wife and dhare dauter, Vergilleyaa Samz, and Mrs. Costigan. "U foer ferst. Nou u--and u--and u--and u..." he went on, pointing out larj, hevvy wimmen waring extreemly extreme gounz, "Stand here, rite over him. Cuvver him up, so dhat nobody els can ghet a shot at him. U uther wimmen, stand behiand and betwene these--clocer yet--fil dhose spacez up sollid--dhare! Jac, stand dhare. Mace, dhare. Costigan, the uther end; Ile take this wun. Nou, evveriboddy, liscen. I no dam wel dhat nun ov u wimmen ar waring gunz abuv the waist, and uve aul got long skerts--thanc God for baulgounz! Nou, fellose, if enny wun ov these wimmen maix a moove too lift her skert, blo her brainz out, rite then,

widhout wating too aasc qweschonz."

"Cer, I protest! This iz outrageous!" wun ov the douwagerz exclaimd.

"Maddam, I agry withe u foolly. It iz." Kinnison smiald az gennuwianly az he cood under the cercumstaancez. "It iz, houwevver, *nescenary*. I wil apollogise too aul u ladese, and too u, doctor--in riting if u like--aafter we hav Vergil Samz aboard the *Shicaago*; but until then I wood not trust mi one grandmuther."

The doctor looct up. "The *Shicaago*? This wuind duz not apere too be a verry cereyous wun, but this man iz gowing too a hospital at wuns. Aa, the stretcher. So ... plese ... esy ... dhare, dhat iz exelent. Caul an ambulans, plese, imejaitly."

"I did. Long ago. But no hospital, doctor. Aul dhose windose--open too the public--or the whole place bomd--bi no meenz. Ime taking no chaancez whautevver."

"Exept withe yor one life!" Gil poot in sharply, loocking up from her place at her faatherz cide. Ashuerd dhat the Ferst Lenzman wauz in no dain'ger ov diying, she had begun too take interest in uther thhingz. "U ar important, too, u no, and yor standing rite out dhare in the open. Ghet anuther stretcher, li doun on it, and wele gard u, too ... and doant be too stif-nect too take yor one advice!" she flaerd, az he hezsitated.

"Ime not, if it wer nescenary, but it iznt. If dha had kild him, yes. Ide probbably be next in line. But cins he got oonly a scrach, dhaerd be no point at aul in killing even a *good* Number Too."

"A *scrach*!" Gil faerly ceedhd. "Doo u caul dhat horibel wuind a *scrach*?"

"Huu? Whi, certainly--dhats aul it iz--thanx too u," he reternd, in onnest and complete cerprise. "No boanz shatterd--no mane arterese cut--mist the lung--hele be az good az nu in a cuppel ov weex."

"And nou," he went on aloud, "if u ladese wil plese pic up this stretcher we wil moove en mas, and *sloly*, tooword the doer."

The wimmen, no lon'gher indignant but aparrently enjoying the censaishon ov beying the center ov interest, complide withe the reqwest.

"Nou, boiz," Kinnison Lenzd a thaut. "Did enny ov u--Costigan?--ce enny cianz ov a concerted rush, such az dhare wood hav bene too ghet the killer awa if we hadnt interfeerd?"

"No, cer," came Costiganz brisc repli. "Nun within cite ov me."

"Jac and Mace--I doant supose u looct?"

Dha hadnt--had not thaut ov it in time.

"Ule lern. It taix a fu thhingz like this too make it automattic. But I coodnt ce enny, iather, so Ime faerly certane dhare wauznt enny. Smart opperatorz--qwic on the uptake."

"Ide better ghet at this, cer, doant u thhinc, and let Operaishon Boscone go for a while?" Costigan aasct.

"I doant thhinc so." Kinnison fround in thaut. "This operaishon wauz *pland*, sun, bi pepel withe brainz. Enny cluse u cood fiand nou wood undoutedly be plaants. No, wele let the reggularz looc; wele stic too our one ..."

Cirenz waild and screemd outside. Kinnison cent out an exploering thaut.

"Allex?"

"Yes. Whare doo u waunt this nianty-cixty withe the doctorz and nercez? Its too wide for the gaits."

"Go throo the waul. Acros the laun. Rite up too the doer, and nevver miand the frippery dhave got aul over the place--hav yor adjutant tel them too bil us for dammage. Samz iz shot in the shoalder. Not too cereyous, but Ime taking him too the Hil, whare I no hele be safe. Whaut hav u got on top ov the umbrellaa, the *Boisy* or the *Shicaago*? I havnt had time too looc up yet."

"Boath."

"Good man."

Jac Kinnison started at the monstrous tanc, which wauz smashing statchuse, fountainz, and ornamental trese flat intoo the erth az it muivd ponderously acros the groundz, and lict hiz lips. He looct at the cumpanese ov soalgerz "frisking" the roote, the groundz, and the croud--hiyer up, at the hovering hellicopterz--stil hiyer, at the ate lite cruserz so evvidently and so vishously reddy too blaast--hiyer stil, at the long stremerz ov fire which, he nou nu, marct the locaishonz ov the too moast pouwerfool en'gianz ov destrucshon evver bilt bi man--and hiz face ternd sloly white.

"Good Lord, Dad!" he swaulode twice. "I had no ideyaa ... but dha mite, at dhat."

"Not mite, sun. Dha dam wel wood, if dha cood ghet here soone enuf withe hevvy enuf stuf." The elder Kinnisonz jau-muscelz did not loocen, hiz darting ise did not relax dhare vidgilans for a fracshon ov a cecond az he Lenzd the thaut. "U boiz caant be expected too no it aul, but rite nou yor lerning faast. Ghet this--paist it in yor iarn hats. *Vergil Samz life iz the moast important thhing in this whole damd univers!* If dha had got him then it wood not, strictly speking, hav bene mi fault, but if dha ghet him nou, it wil be."

The land cruser cruncht too a stop against the verry entrans, and a white-clad man leept out.

"Let me looc at him, plese..."

"Not yet!" Kinnison denide, sharply. "Not until hese got foer inchez ov sollid stele betwene him and whoowevver waunts too finnish the job dha started. Ghet yor men around him, and ghet him aboard--faast!"

Samz, protected at evvery point at evvery instant, wauz lifted intoo the mau ov the nianty-cixty; and az the mascive doer clangd shut Kinnison heevd a tremendous ci ov relefe. The cavalcade muivd awa.

"Cumming withe us, Rod?" Commodor Claton shouted.

"Yes, but got a cuppel minnuets werc here yet. Hav a staaf car wate for me, and Ile join u." He ternd too the thre yung Lenzmen and the gherl. "This foulz up our planz a littel, but not too much--I hope. No chainj in Matese or Boscone; u and Costigan, Gil, can go ahead az pland. Northrop, ule hav too brefe Gil on Zwilnic and fiand out whaut she nose. Vergil wauz gowing too doo it toonite, aafter the braul here, but u no az much about it nou az enny ov us. Chec withe

Nobos, DalNalten, and Fletcher--while Vergil iz lade up u and Jac ma hav too werc on boath Zabriscaa and Zwilnic--hele Lenz u. Ghet the dope, then doo az u thhinc best. Ghet gowing!" He strode awa tooword the wating staaf-car.

"Boscone? Zwilnic?" Gil demaanded. "Whaut ghivz? Whaut ar dha, Jac?"

"We doant no yet--maby were gowing too name a cuppel ov plannets..."

"Piffel!" she scoft. "Can *u* tauc cens, Mace? Whauts Boscone?"

"A cimpel, distinctive, pronounsabel coind werd; sugested, I beleve, bi Dr. Berghenhome ..." he began.

"U no whaut I mene, u ..." she broke in, but wauz cilenst bi a sharply Lenzd thaut from Jac. Hiz tuch wauz verry lite, baerly sufishent too make conversaishon poscibel; but even so, she flincht.

"Use yor brane, Gil; u arnt thhinking a lic--not dhat u can be blaimd for it. Stop tauking; dhare ma be lip-rederz or hi-pouwerd liscenerz around. This feelz funny, duznt it?" He twicht mentaly and went on: "U aulreddy no whaut Operaishon Matese iz, cins its yor one dish--pollitix. Operaishon Zwilnic iz drugz, vice, and so on. Operaishon Boscone iz piraits; Spud iz running dhat. Operaishon Zabriscaa iz Mace and me checking sum peculeyar disterbancez in the sub-eethher. Cum in, Mace, and doo yor stuf--Ile ce u later, aboard. Clere eethher, Gil!"

Yung Kinnison vannisht from the frin'gez ov her miand and Northrop apeerd. And whaut a differens! Hiz miand tucht herz az gin'gerly az Jax had dun; az skittishly, az instantainyously reddy too bolt awa from ennithing in the leest degry private. Houwevver, Jax miand had rubd herz the rong wa, rite from the start--and Macez didnt!

"Nou, about this Operaishon Zwilnic," Gil began.

"Sumthhing els ferst. I coodnt help noticing, bac dhare, dhat u and Jac ... wel, not out ov fase, exactly, or reyaly out ov cinc, but sort ov ... wel, az dho ..."

"Hunting?" she sugested.

"Not exactly ... forcing mite be better--like hoalding a tite beme tooghether when it waunts too faul apart. So u notiast it yorcelf?"

"Ov coers, but I thaut Jac and I wer the oanly wunz whoo did. Like scratching a blacboerd withe yor fin'gher-nailz--u *can* doo it, but yor aufooly glad too stop ... and I *like* Jac, too, darn it--at a distans."

"And u and I fit like preciasly chuend cerkits. Jac reyaly ment it, then, when he ced dhat u ... dhat iz, he ... I didnt qwrite beleve it until nou, but if ... u no, ov coers, whaut uve aulreddy dun too me."

Gilz bloc went on, fool strength. She archt her iabrouz and spoke aloud--"whi, I havnt the *faintest* ideyaa!"

"Ov coers not. Dhats whi yor using vois. Ive found out, too, dhat I caant li withe mi miand. I fele like a hele and a lous, withe so much job ahed, but uve cimply got too tel me sumthhing. Then--whautevver u sa--Ile hit the job withe evverithhing Ive got. Doo I ghet heevd out betwene plannets widhout a space-sute, or not?"

"I doant thhinc so." Gil blusht vivvidly, but her vois wauz stedy.
"U wood rate a space-sute, and enuf oxigen too reche anuther

plan--anuther gole. And nou wede better ghet too werc, doant u thhinc?"

"Yes. Thanx, Gil, a milleyon. I no az wel az u doo dhat I wauz tauking out ov tern, and hou much--but I had too no." He breedhd depe. "And dhats aul I aasc--for nou. Cut yor screenz."

She lowerd her mental barreyerz, fianding it cerprisingly esy too doo so in this cace; let them doun aulmoast az far az she wauz in the habbit ov doowing withe her faather. He explaind in flashing thauts evverithhing he nu ov the foer Operaishonz, concluding:

"Ime not aciand too Zabriscas permanently; Ile probbably werc withe u on Matese aafter yor faather ghets bac intoo cerculaishon. Ime too act moer az a leyazon man--niather Nobos nor DalNalten nose u wel enuf too Lenz u. Rite?"

"Yes, Ive met Mr. Nobos oanly wuns, and hav nevver even cene Dr. DalNalten."

"Reddy too vizsit them, viyaa Lenz?"

"Yes. Go ahead."

The too Lenzmen came in. Dha came intoo hiz miand, not herz. Nevvertheles dhare thauts, superimpoazd uppon Northrops, came too the gherl az cleerly az dho aul foer wer speking too eche uther face too face.

"Whaut a *weerd* censaishon!" Gil exclaimd. "Whi, I nevver *imadgiand* ennithhing like it!"

"We ar sory too trubbel u, Mis Samz...." Gil wauz cerpriazd anu. The cilent vois depe within her miand wauz ov characteristicaly Marshan

timber, but insted ov the harshly guttooral consonants and the hiscing cibilants ov enny Marshanz best efforts at In'glish, pronunceyaishon and enunshaishon wer flaules.

"O, I didnt mene dhat. Its no trubbel at aul, reyaly, I just havnt got uest too this teleppathhy yet."

"Nun ov us haz, too enny notisabel degry. But the rezon for this caul iz too aasc u if u hav ennithhing nu, houwevver slite, too ad too our verry smaul nollej ov Zwilnic?"

"Verry littel, Ime afrade; and dhat littel iz moastly ghescez, deducshonz, and jumpingz at concluezhonz. Faather toald u about the wa I werc, I supose?"

"Yes. Exact dataa iz not too be expected. Hints, sugeschonz, poscibel leedz, wil be ov inestimabel vallu."

"Wel, I met a verry short, verry fat Venereyan, naimd Osmen, at a party at the Uropeyan Embacy. Doo iather ov u no him?"

"I no ov him," DalNalten replide. "A hily repputabel merchant, withe such larj interests on Tellus dhat he haz too spend moast ov hiz time here. He iz not in enny wun ov our boox ... auldho dhare iz nuthhing at aul cerprising in dhat fact. Go on, plese, Mis Samz."

"He didnt cum too the party withe Cennator Morgan; but he came too sum kiand ov an agrement withe him dhat nite, and I am pritty shure dhat it wauz about thhiyonite. Dhats the oonly nu item I hav."

"*Thhiyonite!*" The thre Lenzmen wer eeqwaly cerpriazd.

"Yes. Thhiyonite. Deffiniatly."

"Hou *shure* ar u ov this, Mis Samz?" Nobos aasct, in dedly ernest.

"I am not *shure* dhat this particcular agreement wauz about thhiyonite, no; but the probabillity iz rufly nine-tenths. I *am* shure, houwevver, dhat boath Cennator Morgan and Osmen no a lot about thhiyonite dhat dha waunt too hide. Boath gave verry hi pozsitive reyacshonz--wel beyond the cix-cigmaa point ov verchuwal certainty."

Dhare wauz a pauz, broken bi the Marshan, but not bi a thaut directed at enny wun ov the thre.

"Cid!" he cauld, and even Gil cood fele the Lenzd thaut spede.

"Yes, Nobos? Fletcher."

"Dhat haul-in u made, out in the asteroidz. Herrowin, hadive, and ladoleyan, wauznt it? No thhiyonite involvd enniwhare?"

"No thhiyonite. Houwevver, u must remember dhat part ov the gang got awa, so aul I can sa pozsitiavly iz dhat we didnt ce, or here about, enny thhiyonite. Dhare wauz sum goscip, ov coers: but u no dhare aulwase iz."

"Ov coers. Thanx, Cid." Gil cood fele the brilleyant Marshanz mental gheerz wherl and clic. Then he went intoo such a flashing exchainj ov thaut withe the Venereyan dhat the gherl lost trac in cecondz.

"Wun moer qweschon, Mis Samz?" DalNalten aasct. "Hav u detected enny indicaishonz dhat dhare ma be sum conecshon betwene iather Osmen

or Morgan and enny officer or execcutive ov Interstellar Spaiswase?"

"*Spaiswase! Izaxon?*" Gil caut her breth. "Whi ... nobody even thaut ov such a thhing--at leest, nobody evver menshond it too me--I nevver thaut ov making enny such tests."

"The pocibillity okerd too me oonly a moment ago, at yor menshon ov thhiyonite. The conecshon, if enny exists, wil be exedingly difficult too trace. But cins moast, if not aul, ov the partese involvd wil probbably be included in yor Operaishon Matese, and cins a fianding, iather pozsitive or neggative, wood be tremendously cignifficant, we fele emboldend too aasc u too kepe this point in miand."

"Whi, ov coers I wil. Ile be verry glad too."

"We thanc u for yor kertecy and yor help. Wun or boath ov us wil ghet in tuch withe u from time too time, nou dhat we no the pattern ov yor personallity. Ma imortal Groloscen spede the heling ov yor faatherz wuind."

CHAPTER 7

Late dhat nite--or, raather, verry erly the following morning--Cennator Morgan and hiz Number Wun cecretary wer clozseted in the formerz dubly spi-ra-pruift office. Morganz round, hevvy, florid face had perhaps lost a littel ov its uezhuwal cullor; the fin'gherz ov hiz left hand drumd soundlesly uppon the glaas top ov hiz desc. Hiz shrude gra ise, houwevver, wer az kene and az calculating az evver.

"This thhing smelz, Herkimer ... it *reex* ... but I caant figgure enny ov the an'ghelz. Dhat operaishon wauz *pland*. Shure fire, it *coodnt* mis. Rite up too the laast split cecond it werct perfectly. Then--bloowy! A flat bust. The Patrole landed and evverithhing wauz under controle. Dhare *must* hav bene a leke sumwhare--but whare in hel cood it hav bene?"

"Dhare coodnt hav bene a leke, Chefe; it duznt make cens." The secretery uncrost hiz long legz, recrost them in the uther direcshon, thru awa a haaf-smoact ciggaret, lit anuther. "If dhaerd bene enny kiand ov a leke dha wood hav dun a lot moer dhan just kil the lo man on the ladder. U no az wel az I doo dhat Rocky Kinnison iz the hardest-boild carracter this cide ov hel. If he had none ennithhing, he wood hav kild evveriboddy in cite, including u and me. Beciadz, if dhare had bene a leke, he wood not hav let Samz ghet within ten thousand mialz ov the place--dhats wun shure thhing. Anuther iz he woodnt hav wated until aafter it wauz aul over too ghet hiz army dhare. No, Chefe, dhare coodnt hav bene a leke. Whautevver Samz or Kinnison found out--probbably Samz, hese a hel ov a lot smarter dhan Kinnison iz, u no--he lernd rite dhare and then. He must hav cene Branerd start too pool hiz gun."

"I thaut ov dhat. Ide bi it, exep for wun fact. Aparrently u didnt time the interval betwene the shots and the arival ov the tanx."

"Sory, Chefe." Herkimerz face wauz a studdy in shagrin. "I made a bad slip dhare."

"Ile sa u did. Wun minnute and fifty ate cecondz."

"*Whaut!*"

Morgan remaind cilent.

"The patrole iz faast, ov coers ... and aulwase reddy ... and dha wood yanc the stuf in on tractor beemz, not under dhare one pouwer ... but even so ... five minnuets, iz mi ghes, Chefe. Foer and a haaf, absolute minnimum."

"Chec. And whare doo u go from dhare?"

"I ce yor point. I doant. Dhat blose evverithhing wide open. Wun cet ov facts cez dhare wauz a leke, which okerd betwene too and a haaf and thre minnuets befoer the cignal wauz ghivven. I aasc u, Chefe, duz dhat make cens?"

"No. Dhats whaut iz bothering me. Az u sa, the facts ceme too be contradictory. Sumbody must hav lernd sumthhing befoer ennithhing happend; but if dha did, whi didnt dha doo moer? And Mergatroid. If dha didnt no about him, whi the ships--eseshaly the big battelwaggonz? If dha did thhinc he mite be out dhare sumwhare, whi didnt dha go and fiand out?"

"Nou Ile aasc wun. Whi didnt our Mr. Mergatroid doo sumthhing? Or wauznt the pirate flete supoast too be in on this? Probbably not, dho."

"Mi ghes wood be the same az yorz. Caant ce enny rezon for havving a flete cuvver a wun-man operaishon, eseshaly az wel-pland a wun az this wauz. But dhats nun ov our biznes. These Lenzmen ar. I wauz wauching them evvery cecond. Niather Samz nor Kinnison did ennithhing whautevver juring dhat too minnuets."

"Yung Kinnison and Northrop eche left the haul about dhat time."

"I no it. So dha did. Iather wun ov them *cood* hav cauld the Patrole--but whaut haz dhat too doo withe the price ov befe C. I. F. Valereyaa?"

Herkimer refraind tactfooly from aancering the savvage qweschon. Morgan drumd and thaut for minnuets, then went on sloly:

"Dhare ar too, and oanly too, pocibillitese; niather ov which ceme even remoatly poscibel. It wauz--*must* hav bene--iather the Lenz or the gherl."

"The gherl? Act yor age, Cennator. I nu whare *she* wauz, and whaut she wauz doowing, evvery cecond."

"Dhat wauz evvident." Morgan stopt drumming and smiald cinnicaly. "Ime ghetting a hel ov a kic out ov ceying u taking it, for a chainj, insted ov dishing it out."

"Yes?" Herkimerz handsum face hardend. "Dhat game iznt over, mi frend."

"Dhats whaut *u* thhinc," the Cennator giabd. "Caant beleve dhat enny woomman *can* be Herkimer-proofe, a? Uve bene werking on her for cix weex nou, insted ov the uezhuwal cix ourz, and u havnt got enniwhare yet."

"I wil, Cennator." Herkimerz nostrilz flaerd vishously. "Ile ghet her, wun wa or anuther, if its the laast thhing I evver doo."

"Ile ghiv u ate too five u doant; and a cix-munth time limmit."

"Ile take five thouzand ov dhat. But whaut maix u thhinc dhat shese

ennithing too be afrade ov? Shese a traind cicollogist, yes; but so am I; and Ime oalder and moer expereyenst dhan she iz. Dhat leevz dhat yogaa stuf--her lerning hou too cit cros-legghed, hou too contemplate her navel, and hou too tri too ghet in chune withe the infinite. Hou doo u figgure *dhat* poots her in mi claas?"

"I toald u, I doant. Nuthhing maix cens. But she iz Vergil Samz dauter."

"Whaut ov it? U didnt gag on Jorj Oamsted--u pict him yorcelf for wun ov the tuffest jobz weve got. Bi blud hese just about az cloce too Vergil Samz az Vergilleyaa iz. Dha mite az wel hav bene hacht out ov the same eg."

"Fizsicaly, yes. Mentaly and cicolodgicaly, no. Oamsted iz a reyalist, a matereyalist. He waunts hiz reword in this werld, not the next, and iz out too ghet it. Ferthermoer, the job wil probbably kil him, and even if it duznt, he wil nevver be in a posishon ov trust or whare he can lern much ov ennithing. On the uther hand, Vergil Samz iz--but I doant nede too tel u whaut *he* iz like. But u doant ceme too reyalise dhat shese just like him--she iznt playing around withe u becauz ov yor overpouwering charm...."

"Liscen, Chefe. She didnt no ennithing and she didnt doo ennithing. I wauz daancing withe her aul the time, az cloce az dhat," he claaspt hiz handz tiatly toogheter, "so I no whaut Ime tauking about. And if u thhinc she cood *ever* lern ennithing from me, skip it. U no dhat nobody on Erth, or enniwhare els, can rede mi face; and beciadz, she wauz playing coi rite then--wauznt even loocking at me. So count her out."

"Wele hav too, I ghes." Morgan rezhuemd hiz qwiyet drumming. "If dhare wer enny pocibillity dhat she pumpt u Ide cend u too the mianz, but

dhaerz no cine ... dhat leevz the Lenz. It haz ceemd, rite along, moer lodgical dhan the gherl--but a lot moer fantastic. Bene abel too fiand out ennithhing moer about it?"

"No. Just whaut dhave bene advertising. Combinaishon rajo-fone, automatic lan'gwage-converter, tellepath, and so on. Baj ov the top skimmingz ov the top-bracket cops. But I began too thhinc, out dhare on the floer, dhat dha arnt advertising evverithhing dha no."

"So did I. U tel me."

"Take the time sero minus thre minnuets. Beciadz the five Lenzmen--and Gil Samz--the place wauz fool ov top braas; scambeld egz aul over the floer. Commodorz and leftennant-Commodorz from aul continental guvvernments ov the Erth, the uther plannets, and the collonese, aul waring fool-dres cide-armz. Nobody nu ennithhing then; we agry on dhat. But within the next fu cecondz, sumbody found out sumthhing and cauld for help. Wun ov the Lenzmen cood poscibly hav dun dhat widhout showing cianz. BUT--at sero time aul foer Lenzmen had dhare gunz out--and *not* Luwistonz, plese note--and wer shooting; wharaz nun ov the uther armd officerz nu dhat ennithhing wauz gowing on until aafter it wauz aul over. Dhat poots the fin'gher on the Lenz."

"Dhats the wa I figguerd it. But the difficultese remane unchainjd. *Hou?* Miand-reding?"

"Space-drift!" Herkimer snorted. "Mi miand caant be red."

"Nor mine."

"And beciadz, if dha cood rede miandz, dha woodnt hav wated until the laast poscibel split cecond too doo it, unles ... sa, wate a minnute!... Did Branerd act or looc nervous, tooword the laast? I wauznt

too looc at him, u no."

"Not nervous, exactly; but he did ghet a littel tens."

"Dhare u ar, then. Hiard merdererz arnt smart. A Lenzman sau him titen up and got suspishous. Ternd in the alarm on genneral principelz. Wornd the utherz too kepe on dhare tose. But even so, it duznt looc like miand-reding--dhade hav kild him sooner. Dha wer wauchfool, and mity qwic on the drau."

"Dhat cood be it. Dhats about az thhin and az speeshous an explanaishon az I evver sau cooct up, but it *duz* cuvver the facts ... and the too ov us wil be Abel too make it stic ... but take notice, pritty boi, dhat certane partese ar not gowing too like this at aul. In fact, dha ar gowing too be verry hily poot out."

"Dhats a nice hunc ov understaitment, bos. But notice wun butifool thhing about this stoery?" Herkimer grind malishously. "It lets us paas the buc too Big Gim Toun. We can be--and wil be--soer az hel becauz he pix such weke-cister carracterz too doo hiz killingz!"

* * * * *

In the hevvely armord improviadz ambulans, Vergil Samz sat up and directed a thaut at hiz frend Kinnison, fianding hiz miand a termoil ov confuezhon.

"Whauts the matter, Rod?"

"Plenty!" the big Lenzman snapt bac. "Dha wer--maby stil ar--too dam far ahed ov us. Sumthhing haz bene gowing on dhat we havnt even suspected. I stood bi, az innocent az a thre-yere-oald gherl baby, and let u wauc rite intoo dhat wun--and I emfatticaly

doo not enjoi ghetting caut withe mi pants doun dhat wa. It maix me jumpy. This ma be aul, but it ma not be--not bi elevven thousand lite-yeerz--and Ime trying too dope out whaut iz gowing too happen next."

"And whaut hav u dejuest?"

"Nuthhing. Ime stuc. So Ime toscing it intoo yor lap. Beciadz, dhats whaut u ar ghetting pade for, thhinking. So go ahed and thhinc. Whaut wood u be doowing, if u wer on the uther cide?"

"I ce. U thhinc, then, dhat it mite not be good tecneke too take the time too go bac too the spaispoert?"

"U ghet the ideyaa. But--can u stand traansfer?"

"Certainly. Dha got mi shoalder drest and taipt, and mi arm in a sling. Shoc practicaly aul gon. Sum pane, but not much. I can wauc widhout fauling doun."

"Fare enuf. Claton!" He Lenzd a viggorous thaut. "Hav enny ov the observerz spotted ennithhing, hi up or far of?"

"No, cer."

"Good. Kinnison too Commodor Claton, orderz. Hav a copter cum doun and pic up Samz and micelf on tractorz. Instruct the *Boisy* and the cruserz too maintane utmoast vidgilans. Instruct the *Shicago* too pic us up. Detach the *Shicago* and the *Boisy* from yor taasc foers. Acine them too me. Of."

"Claton too Comishoner Kinnison. Orderz receevd and ar beying carrede out. Of."

The transferz wer made widhout incident. The too super-drednauts leept intoo the hi strattosfere and toer westword. Haaf-wa too the Hil, Kinnison cauld Dr. Fredderic Roadboosh.

"Fred? Kinnison. Hav Cleve and Berghenhome linc up withe us. Nou--hou ar the Ghigherz on the outcide ov the Hil behaving?"

"Normal, aul ov them," the fizsicist-Lenzman repoerted aafter a moment. "Whi?"

Kinnison detaild the happeningz ov the recent paast. "So tel the boiz too unlimber aul the stuf the Hil haz got."

"Mi God!" Cleevland exclaimd. "Whi, dhats pootting us bac too the dase ov the Interplannetary Worz!"

"Withe wun notabel exepshon," Kinnison pointed out. "The atac, if enny, wil be strictly moddern. I hope wele be abel too handel it. Wun good thhing, the oald mountainz got a lot ov shere mas. Hou much rajowactivvity wil it stand?"

"Alotropic iarn, U-235, or plutoanyum?" Roadboosh ceezd hiz slide-rule.

"Whaut differens duz it make?"

"From a practical standpoint ... perhaps nun. But withe a taasc foers defending, not menny bomz cood ghet throo, so Ide sa ..."

"I wauznt thhinking so much ov bomz."

"Whaut, then?"

"Isotoaps. A good, thhic blanket ov dust. Slo-spede, fine stuf dhat niather our ships nor the Hilz screenz cood handel. Weve got too

decide, ferst, whether Vergil wil be safer dhare in the Hil or out in space in the *Shicaago*; and cecond, for hou long."

"I ce ... Ide sa here, *under* the Hil. Munths, perhaps yeerz, befoer ennithhing cood werc doun this far. And we can *aulwase* ghet out. No matter hou hot the cerface ghets, weve got enuf screne, hevvy wauter, cadmeyum, led, mercury, and evverithhing els nescesary too ghet him out throo the lox."

"Dhats whaut I wauz hoping ude sa. And nou, about the defens ... I wunder ... I doant waunt evveriboddy too thhinc Ive gon compleetly histerical, but Ile be damd if I waunt too ghet caut agane withe...." Hiz thaut faded out.

"Ma I offer a sugeschon, cer?" Berghenhome thaut broke the prolongd cilens.

"Ide be verry glad too hav it--yor sugeschonz so far havnt bene idel vappingz. Anuther hunch?"

"No, cer, a lodgical procejure. It haz bene sum munths cins the laast emergency caul-out dril wauz held. If u ishuh such anuther caul nou, and nuthhing happenz, it can be cimply anuther cerprise dril; withe credit, promoashon, and munnetary awordz for the best performacez; ferther practice and instrucshon for the les profishent units."

"Splendid, Dr. Berghenhome!" Samz brilleyant and adgile miand snacht up the thaut and carrede it along. "And whaut a chaans, Rod, for sumthhing vaastly larger and moer important dhan a Continental, or even a Telureyan, dril--make it the ferst manuver ov the Galactic Patrole!"

"Ide like too, Verj, but we caant. Mi boiz ar reddy, but u arnt.

No top appointments and no authority."

"Dhat can be arainjd in a verry fu minnuets. We hav bene wating for the cicologdical moment. This, espeshaly if trubbel shood devellop, iz the time. U yorcelf expect an atac, doo u not?"

"Yes. I wood not start ennithhing unles and until I wauz reddy too finnish it, and I ce no rezon for ashuming dhat whoowevver it wauz dhat tride too kil u iz not at leest az good a planner az I am."

"And the rest ov u...? Dr. Berghenhome?"

"Mi rezoning, while it duz not exactly parralel dhat ov Comishoner Kinnison, leedz too the same concluezhon; dhat an atac in grate foers iz too be expected."

"Not *exactly* parralel?" Kinnison demaanded. "In whaut respects?"

"U doo not ceme too hav concidderd the pocibillity, Comishoner, dhat the propoazd asacinaishon ov Ferst Lenzman Samz cood verry wel hav bene oanly the ferst step in a comprehencive operaishon."

"I didnt ... and it *cood* hav bene. So go ahead, Verj, withe...."

The thaut wauz nevver finnisht, for Samz had aulreddy gon ahead. Cimultainyously, it ceemd, the miandz ov ate uther Lenzmen joint the groope ov Telureyanz. Samz, intensly cereyous, spoke aloud too hiz frend:

"The Galactic Council iz nou acembeld. Doo u, Rodderic K. Kinnison, prommice too uphoald, in az much az u consheyenshously can and withe aul

dhat in u lise, the authority ov this Council throowout aul space?"

"I prommice."

"Bi verchu ov the authority vested in me its prezident bi the Galactic Council, I apoint u Poert Admiral ov the Galactic Patrole. Mi fello councilorz ar nou inducting the armd foercez ov dhare vareyouz solar cistemz intoo the Galactic Patrole ... It wil not take long ... Dhare, u ma make yor apointments and ishu orderz for the mobilizaishon."

The too super-drednauts wer nou aproching the Hil. The *Boisy* stade "up on top"; the *Shicaago* went doun. Kinnison, houwevver, pade verry littel atenshon too the landing or too Samz dicembarcaishon, and nun whautevver too the *Shicaagose* reyacent intoo the hi hevvenz. He nu dhat evverithing wauz under controle; and, nou alone in hiz cabbin, he wauz bizsy.

"Aul personel ov aul armd foercez just inducted intoo the Galactic Patrole, atenshon!" He spoke intoo an ultraa-wave miacrofone, the familleyar parade-ground raasp verry evvident in hiz depe and rezzonant vois. "Kinnison ov Tellus, Poert Admiral, speking. Eche ov u haz taken oath too the Galactic Patrole?"

Dha had.

"At ese. The organizaishon chart aulreddy in yor handz iz made efective az ov nou. Enter in yor logz the date and time. Promoashonz: Commodor Claton ov North Amerricaa, Tellus...."

In hiz office at Nu Yorc Spaispoert Claton came too atenshon and saluted crisply; hiz ise shining, hiz deeply-scared face alite.

"... too be Admiral ov the Ferst Galactic Rejon. Commodor Shwikert ov Urope, Tellus ..."

In Berlin a narro-waisted, aulmoast foppish-ceming man, withe roacht blond hare and blu ise, boud stifly from the waist and saluted punctilleyously.

"... too be Leftennant-Admiral ov the Ferst Galactic Rejon."

And so on, doun the list. A marshal and a leftennant-marshal ov the Solaareyan Cistem; a genneral and a leftennant-genneral ov the plannet Sol Thre. Promoashonz, agrede uppon long cins, too fil the hi officez dhus vacated. Then the list ov commodorz uppon uther plannets-- Ghindlos

ov Redland, Marz; Cescefcen ov Talleron, Venus; Ramond ov the Joveyan Sub-Cistem; Numan ov Alfacent; Waulterz ov Cirreyus; van-Meter ov Valereyaa; Addamz ov Proashon; Robberts ov Altare; Barrtel ov Fomal'hout;

Armaand ov Vagaa; and Coin ov Aldebbaran--eche ov whoome wauz acchuwaly the comaander-in-chefe ov the armd foercez ov a werld. Eche ov these wauz made genneral ov hiz plannet.

"Exept for leftennant-commodorz and up, whoo wil chune dhare miandz too me--dismist!" Kinnison stopt tauking and went ontoo hiz Lenz.

"Dhat wauz for the reccord. I doant nede too tel u, fellose, hou glad I am too be abel too doo this. Yor tops, aul ov u--I doant no ov enniboddy Ide raather hav at mi bac when the eethher ghets ruf ..."

"Rite bac at u, chefe!" "Same too u Rod!" "Rocky Rod, Poert Admiral!" "Nou were blaasting!" came a malaunzh ov thauts. Dhose splendid men, withe whoome he had shaerd so much ov dain'ger and ov stres, wer aul az jubilant az schoolboiz.

"But the thhing dhat maix this poscibel ma aulso make it nescesary for us too go too werc; too ern yor extraa starz and mi whele."
Kinnison smutherd the welter ov thauts and outliand the cichuwaishon, concluding: "So u ce it ma tern out too be oonly a dril--but on the uther hand, cins the outfit iz big enuf too hav bilt a wor-flete alone, if it waunted wun, and cins it ma hav had a lot ov ferst-claas help dhat nun ov us nose ennithhing about, we ma be in for the damdest battel dhat enny ov us evver sau. So cum prepaerd for *ennithhing*. I am nou gowing bac ontoo vois, for the reccord.

"Kinnison too the comaanding officerz ov aul fleets, sub-fleets, and taasc-foercez ov the Galactic Patrole. Informaishon. Subject, tactical problem; defens ov the Hil against a poschulated Blac Flete ov un'none cise, strength, and composishon; ov un'none nashonallity or origin; cumming from an un'none direcshon in space at an un'none time.

"Kinnison too Admiral Claton. Orderz. Take over. I am relinqwishing comaand ov the *Boisy* and the *Shicaago*."

"Claton too Poert Admiral Kinnison. Orderz receevd. Taking over. I am at the *Shicaagose* mane starbord loc. I hav instructed Encine Maasterson, the comaanding officer ov this ghig, too wate; dhat he iz too take u down too the Hil."

"WHAUT? Ov aul the damd...." This wauz a thaut, and unrecorded.

"Sory, Rod--Ime sory az hel, and Ide like no end too hav u along."
This, too, wauz a thaut. "But dhats the wa it iz. Ordinary Admiralz ride the eethher withe dhare fleets. Poert Admiralz sta aground. I repoert too u, and u run thhingz--in braud--bi remote controle."

"I ce." Kinnison then Lenzd a fuming thaut at Samz. "Allex

coodnt doo this too me--and woodnt--and nose dam wel dhat Ide bern him too a crisp if he had the guts too tri it. So its *yor* doowing--whaut in helz the big ideyaa?"

"Whoose beying herowic nou, Rod?" Samz aasct, qwiyetly. "Use *yor* brane. And then cum doun here, whare u belong."

And Kinnison, aafter a long moment ov rebelleyous thaut and withe az much grace az he cood muster, came doun. Doun not oonly too the Patroalz familleyar officez, but doun intoo the depest cripts beneeth them. He wauz glum enuf, and bitter, at ferst: but he found much too doo. Grand Flete Hedqworterz--*hiz* hedqworterz--wauz beying organiazd, and the best efforts ov the best miandz and ov the best tecnollogists ov thre werldz wer beying devoted too the taasc ov strengthhenning the aulreddy extreemly strong defencez ov THE HIL. And in a verry short time the plaits ov GFHQ shode dhat Admiral Claton and Leftennant-Admiral Shwikert wer doowing a verry nice job.

Aul ov the reyalv hevvy stuf wauz ov Erth, the Muther Plannet, and wauz aulreddy in place; az wer the les numerous and much liter contin'gents ov Marz, ov Venus, and ov Jove. And the fleets ov the outlying solar cistemz--cutterz, scouts, and a fu lite cruserz--wer niather maintaning flete formaishon nor laying coers for Sol. Insted, eche individjuwal vescel wauz blaasting at maximum for the posishon in space in which it wood form wun unit ov a formaishon en'globing at a distans ov lite-yeerz the entire Solaareyan Cistem, and eche ov dhose hertling hundredz ov ships wauz litteraly coming aul cercumambeyent space withe its fureyously-drivven detector beemz.

"Nice." Kinnison ternd too Samz, nou becide him at the maaster plate. "Coodnt hav dun enny better micelf."

"Aafter u ghet it made, whaut ar u gowing too doo withe it in cace nuthhing happenz?" Samz wauz stil sumwhaut skeptical. "Hou long can u make a dril laast?"

"Until aul the encianz hav long gra whiskerz if I hav too, but doant wurry--if we hav time too ghet the preliminary globe made Ile be the cerpriazdest man in the cistem."

And Kinnison wauz not cerpriazd; befoer fool en'gloabment wauz acumplisht, a loud-speker gave tung.

"Flagship *Shicaago* too Grand Flete Hedqworterz!" it blatted, sharply. "The Blac Flete haz bene detected. RAA twelv ourz, declinaishon plus twenty degrese, distans about thherty lite-yeerz...."

Kinnison started too sa sumthhing; then, bi mane foers, shut himcelf up. He waunted intently too take over, too tel the boiz out dhare exactly whaut too doo, but he coodnt. He wauz nou a Big Shot--dam the luc! He cood be and must be responcibel for braud pollicy and for genneral strategy, but, wuns dhose vitaly important decizhonz had bene made, the acchuwal werc wood hav too be dun bi utherz. He didnt like it--but dhare it wauz. Dhose flashing thauts tooc oonly an instant ov time.

"... which iz such extreme rainj dhat no estimate ov strength or composishon can be made at prezsent. We wil kepe u informd."

"Acnollej," he orderd Randolf; whoo, waring nou the five silver barz ov major, wauz hiz Chefe Comunicaishonz Officer. "No instrucshonz."

He ternd too hiz plate. Claton hadnt had too be toald too pool in hiz lite stuf; it wauz aul pelting hel-for-lether for Sol and Tellus. Thre genneral planz ov battel had bene mapt out bi Staaf. Eche

had its *advaantagez*--and its *disadvaantagez*. Operaishon Acorn--long distans--wood be faut at, sa, twelv lite-yeerz. It wood kepe evverithhing, particcularly the big stuf, awa from the Hil, and wood make automattix uesles ... *unles* sum got paast, or *unles* the automattix wer cumming in on a sneke coers, or *unles* cevveral uther thhingz--in enny wun ov which cacez *whaut* a God-aufool shellaking the Hil wood take!

He grind rily at Samz, whoo had bene following hiz thaut, and qwoted: "A vaast hemmisfere ov lambent viyiolet flame, throo which niather matereyal substans nor destructive ra can paas."

"Wel, dhat dedicatory staitment, while perhaps a bit florid, wauz strictly tru at the time--befoer the dase ov alotropic iarn and ov policiaclic drilz. Nou Ile qwote wun: Nuthhing iz permanent exept chanj."

"Uu-huu," and Kinnison reternd too hiz thhinking. Operaishon Adac. Middel distans. Uu-uu. He didnt like it enny better nou dhan he had befoer, even dho sum ov the Big Brainz ov Staaf thaut it the ideyal solueshon. A compromise. Aul ov the *disadvaantagez* ov boath ov the utherz, and nun ov the *advaantagez* ov iather. It *stil* stunc, and *unles* the Blac flete had an utterly fantastic composishon Operaishon Adac wauz out.

And Vergil Samz, qwiyetly smoking a ciggaret, smiald inwordly. Rod the Roc cood scaersly be expected too be in favor ov enny sort ov compromise.

Dhat left Operaishon Affic. Cloce up. It had thre tremendous *advaantagez*. Ferst, the Hilz one ofencive wepponz--az long az dha

laasted. Cecond, the nu Roadboosh-Berghenhome feeldz. Thherd, no sneke atac cood be made widhout detecshon and intercepshon. It had wun tremendous disadvaantage; sum stuf, and probbably a lot ov it, wood ghet throo. Automattix, robots, ghided miscialz eqwipt withe super-spede driavz, withe policiaclic drilz, and withe atommic wor-hedz strong enuf too shake the whole werld.

But withe dhose nu feeldz, shaking the werld woodnt be enuf; in order too ghet depe enuf too reche Vergil Samz dha wood dam nere hav too destroi the werld. Cood *enniboddy* bild a bom dhat pouwerfool? He didnt thhinc so. Erth tecnollogy wauz supreme throowout aul none space; ov Erth tecnollogists the North Amerrikanz wer, and aulwase had bene, tops. Graant dhat the Blac Flete wauz, bacicaly, North Amerrikan. Graant ferther dhat dha had a man az good az Adlington--or dhat dha cood spi-ra Adlingtonz brane and laboratoerese and shops--a taul order. Adlington himcelf wauz cevveral munths awa from a werld-recker, unles he cood poot wun a hundred mialz doun befoer detonaishon, which cimply wauz not fesibel. He ternd too Samz.

"Itl be Affic, Verj, unles dhave got a composishon dhat iz raddicaly different from ennithhing I evver sau poot intoo space."

"So? I caant sa dhat I am verry much cerpriazd."

The caalm staitment and the eeqwaly caalm repli wer butifooly characteristic ov the too men. Kinnison had not aasct, nor had Samz offerd, advice. Kinnison, aafter waying the facts, made hiz decizhon. Samz, caalmly certane dhat the decizhon wauz the best dhat cood be made uppon the dataa avalabel, axepted it widhout qweschon or criticizm.

"Weve stil got a minnute or too," Kinnison remarct. "Doant qwite no whaut too make ov dhare line ov aproche. Comaa Berennicese. I doant no

ov ennithing at aul out dhat wa, doo u? Dha cood hav detoord,
dho."

"No, I doant." Samz fround in thaut. "Probbably a detoor."

"Chec." Kinnison ternd too Randolph. "Tel them too repoert whautevver
dha no; we caant wate enny ..."

Az he wauz speking the repoert came in.

The Blac Flete wauz ov moer or les normal make-up; concidderably larger
dhan the North Amerrican contin'gent, but decidedly infereyor too the
Patroalz prezsent Grand Flete. Iather thre or foer cappital ships ...

"And weve got cix!" Kinnison ced, exultantly. "Our one too, Aizhaaz
Himalayaa, Africaaz *Johannezberg*, South Amerricaaz *Bollivar*, and
Uroaps *Uropaa*."

... Battel cruserz and hevvy cruserz, about in the uezhuwal propoershonz;
but an unnuezhuwaly hi raisheyo ov scouts and lite cruserz. Dhare
wer iather too or thre larj ships which cood not be clascifide
deffiniatly at dhat distans; long-rainj observerz wer gowing out too
studdy them.

"Tel Claton," Kinnison instructed Randolph, "dhat it iz too be
Operaishon Affic, and for him too fli at it."

"Repoert continnude," the speker came too life agane. "Dhare ar thre
cappital ships, aparrently ov aproximaitly the *Shicaago* claas, but
tere-drop-shaipt insted ov sferrical ..."

"Ouch!" Kinnison flasht a thaut at Samz. "I doant like dhat. Dha
can both fite and run."

"... The battel cruiserz ar aulso tere-drops. The smaul vescelz ar torpedo-shaibt. Dhare ar thre ov the larj ships, which we ar stil not abel too clascifi deffiniatly. Dha ar sferrical in shape, and verry larj, but doo not ceme too be iather armd or screend, and ar aparrently carreyerz--poscibly ov automattix. We ar nou making contact--of!"

Insted ov loocking at the plaits befoer them, the too Lenzmen went on rapor withe Claton, so dhat dha cood ce evverithhing he sau. The schupendous Cone ov Battel had long cins bene formd; the werd too fire wauz ghivven in a mezhuerd too-cecond caul. Evvery firing officer in evvery Patrole ship tucht hiz stud in the same split cecond. And from the garganchuwan mouth ov the Cone dhare spude a mialz-thhic collum ov ennergy so rau, so starc, so incomprehencibly viyolent dhat it must hav bene cene too be even dimly apreeshyated. It cimply canot be descriabd.

Its prototipe, Triplannetarese Cillinder ov Aniyilaishon, had bene a hily efective weppon indede. The ofencive beemz ov the fish-shaibt Neveyan cruiserz ov the void wer even moer pouwerfool. The Cleevland-Roadboosh progectorz, devellopt aboard the oridginal *Boisy* on the long Neveyan wa, wer stron'gher stil. The compozsite beme proected bi this flete ov the Galactic Patrole, houwevver, wauz the sublimaishon and qwintescens ov eche ov these, redesiand and redesiand bi ciyentists and en'gineerz ov evver-increcing nollej, rebilt and rebilt bi tecnollogists ov evver-increcing skil.

Cappital ships and a fu ov the hevveyest cruiserz cood mount screne genneratorz abel too carry dhat friatfool lode; but evvery smauler ship caut in dhat cemmy-sollid rod ov indescribably incandescent fury cimply flaerd intoo nuthhingnes.

But in the instant befoer the firing order wauz ghivven--az dho preciasly tiamd, which in aul probabillity wauz the cace--the evver-wauchfool observerz pict up too itemz ov fact which made the nu Admiral ov the Ferst Galactic Rejon cut hiz aulmoast iresistibel weppon and brake up hiz Cone ov Battel aafter oonly a fu cecondz ov acshon. Wun: dhose thre enigmattic cargo scouz had faulen apart *befoer* the beme reecht them, and hundredz--yes, thouzandz--ov smaul obgets had herteld rajaly outword, out wel beyond the feeld ov acshon ov the Patroalz beme, at a spede menny tiamz dhat ov lite. Too: Kinnisonz foerbodingz had bene profettic. A swarm ov Blax, aul smaul--must hav bene hidden rite on Erth sumwhare!--wer aulreddy darting at the Hil from the south.

"Cece firing!" Claton rapt intoo hiz miacrofone. The dredfool beme expiard. "Brake cone formaishon! Independent acshon--lite cruserz and scouts, *ghet dhose bomz!* Hevvvy cruserz and battel cruserz, en'gage cimmilar units ov the Blax, too too wun if poscibel. *Shicaago* and *Boisy*, atac Blac Number Wun. *Bollivar* and *Himalayaa*, Number Too. *Uropaa* and *Johannezberg*, Number Thre!"

Space wauz fool ov darting, flashing, madly woring ships. The thre Blac super-drednauts leept forword az wun. Dhare mast batterese ov beemz, preciasly cincroniazd and aimd, lasht out az wun at the nerest Patrole super hevvvy, the *Boisy*. Under the vishous pouwer ov dhat butifooly-tiamd thrust dhat worships ferst, cecond, and thherd screenz, her verry waul-sheeld, flaerd throo the spectrum and intoo the blac. Her Chefe Pilot, houwevver, wauz faast--*verry* faast--and he had a fracshon ov a cecond in which too werc. Dhus, practicaly in the instant ov her waul-sheeldz falure, she went fre; and while she wauz hoald badly and poot out ov acshon, she wauz not blone out ov space. In fact, it wauz lernd later dhat she lost oonly forty men.

The Blax wer not az forchunate. The *Shicaago*, nou widhout a partner, joind beemz withe the *Bollivar* and the *Himalayaa* against Number Too; then, a short haaf-cecond later, withe her uther too cister-ships against Number Thre. And in dhat verry short space ov time too Blac super-drednauts ceest utterly too be.

But aulso, in dhat scant cecond ov time, Blac Number Wun had aul but disapeerd! Her canny comaander, withe no stummac at aul for odz ov five too wun against, had orderd flite at max; she wauz aulreddy wun-cixteyeth ov a lite-yere--about wun hundred thouzand milleyon mialz--awa from the Erth and wauz devoting her evvery ennergy too the acumulaishon ov stil moer distans.

"*Bollivar! Himalayaa!*" Claton barct savvajly. "Ghet him!" He waunted intensly too join the chace, but he coodnt. He had too sta here. And he didnt hav time even too sware. Insted, widhout a brake, the werdz tripping over eche uther against hiz teeth: "*Shicaago! Johannezberg! Uropaa!* Act at wil against hevveyest craaft left. Blaast em doun!"

He gritted hiz teeth. The scouts and lite cruserz wer doowing dhare damdest, but dha wer out-numberd thre too wun--Criast, whaut a lot ov stuf wauz ghetting throo! The Blax woodnt laast long, betwene the Hil and the hevvese ... but maby long enuf, at dhat--the Patrole globe wauz leking like a civ! He voist a cuppel ov bersts ov depe-space profannity and, auldho he wauz aulmoast afrade too looc, sneect a qwic peke too ce hou much wauz left ov the Hil. He looct--and stopt swaring in the middel ov a foer-letter An'glo-Saxon werd.

Whaut he sau cimply did not make cens. Dhose Blac bomz shood hav peeld the armor of ov dhat mountane like the skin of ov a nectarene and scatterd it from the Paciffic too the Micicippy. Bi nou dhare shood be a hole a mile depe whare the Hil had bene. But dhare wauznt.

The Hil wauz stil dhare! It mite hav shrunc a littel--Claton
coodnt ce verry wel becauz ov the wers-dhan-incandescent rajans
ov the practicaly continnuuous, cens-battering, werld-shaking atommic
detonaishonz--*but the Hil wauz stil dhare!*

And az he staerd, child and shaken, at dhat indescribably teriffic
spectakel, a Blac cruser, hoald and helples, fel tooword dhat
armord mountane withe an axeleraishon starcly imposcibel too credit.
And when it struc it did not pennetrate, and splash, and crater, az it
shood hav dun. Insted, it cimply spred out, *in a thhin layer*,
over an aker or so ov the fortres stepe and aparrently stil armord
cerface!

"U sau dhat, Alex? Good. Utherwise u cood scaersly beleve it,"
came Kinnisonz cilent vois. "Tel aul our ships too sta awa. Dhaerz
a foers ov over a hundred thouzand G'z acting in a direcshon normal too
evvery point ov our cerface. The boiz ar ghivving it aul the decrement
dha can--sumwhare betwene distans cube and foerth pouwer--but even so
its pritty feers stuf. Hou about the *Bollivar* and the *Himalayaa*?
Not havving much luc catching Mr. Blac, ar dha?"

"Whi, I doant no. Ile chec ... No, cer, dha arnt. Dha repoert
dhat dha ar loosing ground and wil soone loose trace."

"I wauz afrade so, from dhat shape. Roadboosh wauz about the oonly wun
whoo
sau it cumming ... wel, wele hav too redesine and rebild ..."

* * * * *

Poert Admiral Kinnison, shortly aafter directing the foergowing thaut,
leend bac in hiz chare and smiald. The battel wauz practicaly over.
The Hil had cum throo. The Roadboosh-Berghenhome feeldz had held

her toogether throo the moast God-aufool ceshon ov sachuraishon
atommic
bomming dhat enny werld had evver cene or dhat the miand ov man had
evver
conceevd. And the counter-foercez had kept the intereyor roc from
flowing like wauter. So far, so good.

Her oridginal armor wauz gon. Converted intoo ... whaut? For hundredz
ov
fete inword from the cerface she wauz hotter dhan the reyacting slugz
ov the Hanfordz. Deloucing her wood be a prodgect, not an operaishon;
milleyonz ov cubic yardz ov matereyal wood hav too be hauld of intoo
space withe tractorz and aloud too cimner for a fu hundred yeerz; but
whaut ov dhat?

Berghenhome had ced dhat the feeldz wood tend too prevent the
rajowactiavz from spredding, az dha utherwise wood--and *Vergil Samz*
wauz stil safe!

"Verj, mi boi, cum along." He tooc the Ferst Lenzman bi hiz good
arm and lifted him out ov hiz chare. "Oald Doctor Kinnisonz peerles
prescripshon for u and me iz a big, thhic, jucy, poerterhous stake."

CHAPTER 8

Dhat merderous atac uppon Vergil Samz, and its countering bi dhose
nu super-laumen, the Lenzmen, and bi an entire taasc foers ov the
North Amerrikan Armd Foercez, wauz nuse ov Civilizaishon-wide
importans.

Az such, it fild evvery channel ov Universal Tellenuse for an our. Then, in stunning and creshendo suxeshon, came the stacaato repoerts ov the creyaishon ov the Galactic Patrole, the mobilizaishon--alejdly for manuverz--ov Galactic Patroalz Grand Flete, and the ultimaitly desperate and aul-too-neerly suxesfool atac uppon The Hil.

"Just a cecond, foax; wele hav it verry shortly. Ule ce sumthhing dhat nobody evver sau befoer and dhat nobody wil evver ce agane. Were ghetting in az cloce az the Lau wil let us." The ise ov Tellenuse ace repoerter and the tellefoto lenz ov hiz cammeraaman staerd doun from a scooter at the fureyously smoking, sputteringly incandescent cerface ov Triplannetarese ainshent cittadel; while uppon duzsens ov werldz thouzandz ov milleyonz ov pepel pact themcelvz titer and titer around tenz ov milleyonz ov vizsiplaits and loud-spekerz in order too ce and too here the tremendous nuse.

"Dhare it iz, foax, looc at it--the oonly reyaly impregnabel fortres evver bilt bi man! A good menny ov our experts had it ritten of az obsolete, long ago, but it ceemz these Lenzmen had sumthhing up dhare sleevz beciadz dhare armz, ha-ha! And speking ov Lenzmen, dha havnt bene throwing dhare wate around, so moast ov us havnt notiast them verry much, but this repoerter waunts too go on reccord rite nou az saying dhare must be a lot moer too the Lenz dhan enny ov us haz thaut, becauz uthewise nobody wood hav gon too aul dhat trubbel and expens, too sa nuthhing ov the tremendous los ov life, just too kil the Chefe Lenzman, which ceemz too hav bene whaut dha wer aafter.

"We toald u a fu minnuets ago, u no, dhat evvery Continent ov Civilizaishon cent ofishal messagez deniyng moast emfatticaly enny conecshon withe this outrage. Its stil a mistery, foax; in fact, it iz ghetting moer and moer mistereyous aul the time. *Not wun cin'ghel man ov the Blac Flete wauz taken alive!* Not even in the ships dhat

were only holed--dha blu themcelvz up! And dhare wer no uniformz or boox or ennithhing ov the kiand too be found in enny ov the rex--no identifcaishon whautevver!

"And nou for the scoope ov aul time! Universal Tellenuse haz obtaind permishon too interv u the too top Lenzmen, boath ov whoome u aul no--Vergil Samz and Rod the Roc Kinnison--personaly for this beme. We ar nou gowing doun, bi remote controle, ov coers, rite intoo the Galactic patrole office, rite in The Hil itelf. Here we ar. Nou if u wil step just a littel clocer too the mike, plese, Mr. Samz, or shood I sa...?"

"U shood sa Ferst Lenzman Samz," Kinnison ced bruescly.

"O, yes, Ferst Lenzman Samz. Thanc u, Mr. Kinnison. Nou, Ferst Lenzman Samz, our cliyents aul waunt too no aul about the Lenz. We aul no whaut it *duz*, but whaut, reyal, iz it? Whoo invented it? Hou duz it werc?"

Kinnison started too sa sumthhing, but Samz cilenst him withe a thaut.

"I wil aancer dhose qweschonz bi aasking u wun." Samz smiald disarmingly. "Doo u remember whaut happend becauz the piraits lernd too jueplicate the goalden meteyor ov the Triplannetary Cervice?"

"O, I ce." The Tellenuse ace, auldho brash and not at aul thhin-skind, wauz qwic on the uptake. "Hush-hush? T. S.?"

"Top Ceecret. Verry much so," Samz confermd, "and we ar gowing too kepe sum thhingz about the Lenz ceecret az long az we poscibly can."

"Fare enuf. Sory foax, but u wil agry dhat dhare rite on

dhat. Wel, then, Mr. Samz, whoo doo u thhinc it wauz dhat tride too kil u, and whare doo u thhinc the Blac Flete came from?"

"I hav no ideyaa," Samz ced, sloly and thautfooly. "No. No ideyaa whautevver."

"Whaut? Ar u *shure* ov dhat? Arnt u hoalding bac maby just a littel bit ov a suspishon, for diplomattic rezonz?"

"I am hoalding nuthhing bac; and throo mi Lenz I can make u certane ov the fact. Lenzd thauts cum from the miand itself, direct, not throo such volluntary muscelz az the tung. The miand duz not li--even such lise az u caul diplomacy."

The Lenzman demmonstrated and the repoerter went on:

"He iz *shure*, foax, which fact noct me speechles for a cecond or too--which iz qwite a fete in itself. Nou, Mr. Samz, wun laast qweschon. Whaut iz aul this Lenz stuf reyaly about? Whaut ar aul u Lenzmen--the Galactic Council and so on--reyaly up too? Whaut doo u expect too ghet out ov it? And whi wood enniboddy waunt too make such an aul-out effort too ghet rid ov u? And ghiv it too me on the Lenz, plese, if u can doo it and tauc at the same time--dhat wauz a wunderfool censaishon, foax, ov ghetting the dope strate and *nowing* dhat it wauz strate."

"I can and wil aancer boath bi vois and bi Lenz. Our bacic perpoce iz ..." and he qwoted verbatim the rezounding centencez which Mentor had imprest so ineraddicably uppon hiz miand. "U no hou littel happines, hou littel reyal wel-beyng, dhare iz uppon enny werld tooda. We propose too increce boath. Whaut we expect too ghet out ov it iz happines and wel-beyng for ourcelvz, the satisfacshon felt bi enny good wercman doowing the job for which he iz best fitted and in which

he taix pride. Az too whi enniwun shood waunt too kil me, the lodgical explanaishon wood ceme too be dhat sum groope or organizaishon or race, opoazd too dhat for which we Lenzmen stand, decided too doo awa withe us and started withe me."

"Thanc u, Mr. Samz. I am shure dhat we aul enjoid this intervuu verry much. Nou, foax, u aul no Rocky Rod, Rod the Roc, Kinnison ... just a littel clocer, plese ... thanc u. I doant supose u hav enny suspishonz, iather, enny moer dhan...."

"I certainly hav!" Kinnison barct, so savvajily dhat five hundred milleyon pepel jumpt az wun. "Hou doo u waunt it; vois, or Lenz, or boath?" Then on the Lenz: "Thhinc it over, sun, becauz *I suspect evveriboddy!*"

"Bub-boath, plese, Mr. Kinnison." Even Universalz star repoerter wauz shaken bi the qwiyet but dedly fury ov the big Lenzmanz thaut, but he rallede so qwicly dhat hiz hesitaishon wauz baerly notisabel. "Yor Lenzd thaut too me wauz dhat u suspect *evveriboddy*, Mr. Kinnison?"

"Just dhat. Evveriboddy. I suspect evvery continental guvvernment ov evvery werld we no, including dhat ov North Amerricaa ov Tellus. I suspect polittical partese and organiazd minoritese. I suspect preshure griups. I suspect cappital and I suspect labor. I suspect an organizaishon ov crimminalz. I suspect naishonz and racez and werldz dhat no wun ov us haz az yet herd ov--not even u, the top-drauwer nuez'hauc ov the univers."

"But u hav nuthhing concrete too go on, I take it?"

"If I did hav, doo u thhinc Ide be standing here tauking too u?"

* * * * *

Ferst Lenzman Samz sat in hiz private qworterz and thaut.

Lenzman Dronvire ov Rigel Foer stood behiand him and helpt him thhinc.

Poert Admiral Kinnison, withe aul hiz foers and drive, began a comprehencive proagram ov investigaishon, consolidaishon, expanshon, redesaining, and rebilding.

Vergilleyaa Samz went too a party practicaly evvery nite. She daanst, she flerted, she tauct. *Hou* she tauct! Meningles smaul tauc for the moast part--but intersperst withe artles qweschonz and comments which, while dha perhaps did not poot her partner ov the moment compleetly at ese, nevvertheles did not qwite exite suspishon.

Conwa Costigan, Lenz under sleve, undisghiazd but inconspiccuwous, rode the eether-lainz; observing minuetyly and repoerting foolly.

Jac Kinnison piloted and navigated and computed for hiz frend and bote-mate:

Mason Northrop; whoo, compleetly surounded bi bredboerd hooccups ov nu and evver-moer-fantastic complexity, liscend and looct; liscend and chuend; liscend and rebilt; liscend and--finaly--tooc baringz and baringz and baringz withe hiz ultraa-cencitive luips.

DalNalten and Nobos, withe duzsens ov abel helperz, coamd the reccordz ov thre werldz in a cerch which projuest az a bi-product a monnumental "whoose whoo" ov crime.

Skild tecnishanz fed milleyonz ov cardz, stac bi stac, intoo the moast versatile and moast acumplisht masheenz none too the statistishanz ov the age.

And Dr. Nelz Berghenhome, abandoning temporarily hiz reggular line ov werc, devoted hiz peculeyar tallents too a hily abstruce recerch in the cloasly allide feeld ov organnic kemmistry.

The waulz ov Vergil Samz qworterz became cuvverd withe charts, diyagramz, and figguerz. Tabulaishonz and condensaishonz piald up on hiz desc and overflode intoo baaskets uppon the floer. Until:

"Lenzman Oamsted, ov Alfacent, cer," hiz cecretary anounst.

"Good! Cend him in, plese."

The strain'ger enterd. The too men, aafter staring intently at eche uther for haaf a minnute, smiald and shooc handz viggoriously. Exept for the fact dhat the nucummerz hare wauz broun, dha wer practicaly identical!

"Ime certainly glad too ce u, Jorj. Berghenhome paast u, ov coers?"

"Yes. He cez dhat he can mach yor hare too mine, even the individjuwal white wunz. And he haz made me a wig-makerz dreme ov a wig."

"Marrede?" Samz miand leept ahed too poscibel complicaishonz.

"Widdower, same az u. And...."

"Just a minnute--gowing over this wuns wil be enuf." He Lenzd caul

aafter caul. Lenzmen in vareyous parts ov space became on rapor withe him and dhus withe eche uther.

"Lenzmen--espeshaly u, Rod--Jorj Oamsted iz here, and hiz bruther Ra iz avalabel. I am gowing too werc."

"I *stil* doant like it!" Kinnison protested. "Its too dain'gerous. I toald the Univers I wauz gowing too kepe u cuvverd, and I *ment* it!"

"Dhats whaut maix it perfectly safe. Dhat iz, if Berghenhome iz *shure* dhat the jueplicaishon iz cloce enuf ..."

"I am shure." Berghenhoamz deeply rezzonant sudo-vois left no dout at aul in enny wun ov the linct miandz. "The substichueshon wil not be detected."

"... and dhat nobody nose, Jorj, or even suspects, dhat u got yor Lenz."

"I am shure ov dhat." Oamsted laaft qwiyetly. "Aulso, nobody exept us and yor cecretary nose dhat I am here. For a good menny yeerz I hav made a speshalty ov dhat sort ov thhing. Fotose, fin'gherprints, and so on hav aul bene taken care ov."

"Good. I cimply can not werc efishmently here," Samz exprest whaut aul nu too be the cimpel trueth. "Dronvire iz a much better annalist-cinthecist dhan I am; az soone az enny cignifficant corelaishon iz poscibel he wil no it. We hav lernd dhat the Toun-Morgan croud, Makensy Pouwer, Osmen Industrese, and Interstellar Spaiswase ar aul tide in tooggether, and dhat thhiyonite iz involvd, but we hav not bene Abel too ghet enny ferther. Dhare iz a slite corelaishon--baerly cignifficant--betwene deths from thhiyonite and the arival in the Solaareyan Cistem ov certane Spaiswase linerz. The

fact dhat certane ofishalz ov the Erth-Screne Cervice hav bene and ar spending concidderably moer dhan dha ern cets up a slite but deffinite probabillity dhat dha ar alouwing space-ships or boats from space-ships too land ilegaly. These smuglerz carry contraband, which ma or ma not be thhiyonite. In short, we lac fundamental dataa in evvery department, and it iz hi time for me too beghin doowing mi share in ghetting it."

"I doant chec u, Verj." Nun ov the Kinnisonz evver did ghiv up widhout a strugghel. "Oamsted iz a mity smuithe werker, and u ar our prime cordinator. Whi not let him kepe up the counter-espeyonaazh--doo the job u wer figguring on doowing yorcelf-- and u sta here and bos it?"

"I hav thaut ov dhat, a grate dele, and hav..."

"Becauz Oamsted can not doo it," a hithertoo cilent miand cut in, deciciavly. "I, Rulareyon ov North Polar Jupiter, sa so. Dhare ar cicolodgical factorz involvd. The abillity too cepparate and too evalluwate the constitchuwent ellements ov a complex cichuwaishon; the abillity too make corect decizhonz widhout hesitaishon; az wel az menny utherz not az susceptibel too concice staitment, but which colectiavly cood be cauld pouwer ov miand. Hou sa u, Berghenhome ov Tellus? For I hav perceevd in u a miand aproximating in sum respects the filosofical and cicolodgical depth ov mi one." This outrajously egotistical declaraishon wauz, too the Joveyan, a cimpel staitment ov an eeqwaly cimpel trueth, and Berghenhome asepted it az such.

"I agry. Oamsted probbably cood not suxede."

"Wel, then, can Samz?" Kinnison demaanded.

"Whoo nose?" came Berghenhoamz mental shrug, and cimultainyously:

"Nobody nose whether I can or not, but I am gowing too tri," and Samz ended--aulmoast--the argument bi aasking Berghenhome and a cuppel ov uther

Lenzmen too cum intoo hiz office and bi taking of hiz Lenz.

"And dhats anuther thhing I doant like." Kinnison offerd wun laast obgechshon. "Widhout yor Lenz, *ennithhing* can happen too u."

"O, I woant hav too be widhout it verry long. And beciadz, Vergilleyaa iznt the oanly wun in the Samz fammily whoo can werc better--sumtiamz--widhout a Lenz."

The Lenzmen came in and, in a cerprisingly short time, went out. A fu minnuets later, too Lenzmen stroald out ov Samz inner office intoo the outer wun.

"Good-bi, Jorj," the red-hedded man ced aloud, "and good luc."

"Same too u, Chefe," and the broun-haerd wun strode out.

Normaa the secretery wauz a smart gherl, and observant. In her posishon, she had too be. Her ise follode the man out, then scand the Lenzman from to too croun.

"Ive nevver cene ennithhing like it, Mr. Samz," she remarct then.

"Exept for the differens in culloring, and a sort ov ... wel, stoopines ... he cood be yor identical twin. U too must hav had a common ancestor--or cevveral--not too far bac, didnt u?"

"We certainly did. Qwaudrupel cecond cuzsinz, u mite caul it. We hav none ov eche uther for yeerz, but this iz the ferst time we hav met."

"Qwaudrupel cecond cuzsinz? Whaut duz dhat mene? Hou cum?"

"Wel, sa dhat wuns uppon a time dhare wer too men naimd Albert and Chester...."

"Whaut? Not too Irishmen naimd Pat and Mike? Yor slipping, bos." The gherl smiald roghishly. Juring rush ourz she wauz aulwase the faast, coole, efishent cecretary, but in moments ov ese such perciflage az this wauz the uezhuwal thhing in the Ferst Lenzmanz private office. "Not at aul up too yor uezhuwal form."

"Meerly becauz I am speking nou az a geneyallogist, not az a raconter. But too continnu, we wil sa dhat Chester and Albert had foer children apece, too boiz and too gherlz, too paerz ov identical twinz, eche. And when dha gru up--haaf wa up, dhat iz...."

"Doant tel me dhat we ar gowing too suppose dhat aul dhose identical twinz marrede eche uther?"

"Exactly. Whi not?"

"Wel, it wood be stretching the lauz ov probabillity aul out ov shape. But go ahed--I can ce whauts cumming, I thhinc."

"Eche ov dhose cuppelz had wun, and oonly wun, chiald. We wil caul dhose children Gim Samz and Sally Oamsted; Jon Oamsted and Irene Samz."

The gherlz levvity disapeerd. "Jaimz Alexaander Samz and Saraa Oamsted Samz. Yor parents. I didnt ce whaut wauz cumming, aafter aul. This Jorj Oamsted; then, iz yor...."

"Whautevver it iz, yes. I caant name it, iather--maby u had better

caul Geneyallogy sum da and fiand out. But its no wunder we looc alike. And dhare ar thre ov us, not too--Jorj haz an identical twin bruther."

The red-haerd Lenzman stept bac intoo the inner office, shut the doer, and Lenzd a thaut at Vergil Samz.

"It werct, Vergil! I tauct too her for five sollid minnuets, practicaly lening on her desc, and she didnt tumbel! And if this wig ov Berghenhoamz fuuld *her* so compleetly, the job he did on u wood foole *enniboddy!*"

"Fine! Ive dun a littel testing micelf, on the kenest men I no, widhout a trace ov recognishon so far."

Hiz laast lin'ghering dout rezolv'd, Samz boerded the ponderous, rajaishon-proofe, nuetron-proofe shuttel-scou which wauz the oonly poscibel meenz ov entering or leving the Hil. A faast cruser whisct him too Nampaa, whare Oamstedz "axidental" dammaid traanzcontinental traanspoert wauz beying repaerd, and from which citty Oamsted had bene gon so breefly dhat no wun had mist him. He occupide Oamstedz space; he surrenderd the remainder ov Oamstedz ticket. He reecht Nu Yorc. He tooc a copter too Cennator Morganz office. He wauz escorted intoo the private office ov Herkimer Thherd.

"Oamsted. Ov Alfacent."

"Yes?" Herkimerz hand muivd, evver so littel, uppon hiz desx top.

"Here." The Lenzman dropt an envelope uppon the desc in such fashon dhat it came too rest within an inch ov the hand.

"Prints. Here." Samz made prints. "Wash yor handz, over dhare."
Herkimer prest a button. "Chec aul these prints, against eche uther
and the fialz. Chec the too haavz ov the toern shete, fiber too fiber."
He ternd too the Lenzles Lenzman, nou standing qwiyetly befoer hiz
desc. "Rootene; a formality, in yor cace, but nescenary."

"Ov coers."

Then for long cecondz the too hard men staerd intoo the hard depths ov
eche utherz ise.

"U ma doo, Oamsted. We hav had verry good repoerts ov u. But u
hav nevver bene in thhiyonite?"

"No. I hav nevver even cene enny."

"Whaut doo u waunt too ghet intoo it for?"

"Yor scouts sounded me out; whaut did dha tel u? The uezhuwal
thhing--promoashon from the ranx intoo the braas--too ghet too whare I
can
doo micelf and the organizaishon sum good."

"Yorcelf ferst, the organizaishon cecond?"

"Whaut els? Whi shood I be different from the rest ov u?"

This time the loct ise held lon'gher; wun pare smoaldering, the uther
goald-flect, tauny ice.

"Whi, indede?" Herkimer smiald thhinly. "We doo not advertise it,
houwevver."

"Outcide, I woodnt, iather; but here Ime laying mi cardz flat on the

tabel."

"I ce. U *wil* doo, Oamsted, if u liv. Dhaerz a test, u no."

"Dha toald me dhare wood be."

"Wel, arnt u cureyous too no whaut it iz?"

"Not particcularly. U paast it, didnt u?"

"Whaut doo u mene bi *dhat* crac?" Herkimer leept too hiz fete; hiz ise, smoaldering befoer, nou ablase.

"Exactly whaut I ced, no moer and no les. U ma rede intoo it ennithhing u plese." Samz vois wauz az coald az wer hiz ise. "U pict me out becauz ov whaut I am. Did u thhinc dhat mooving upstaerz wood make a boote-licker out ov me?"

"Not at aul." Herkimer sat down and tooc from a drauwer too smaul, traansparent, vaigly capshule-like chuebz, eche contaning a fu partikelz ov perpel dust. "U no whaut this iz?"

"I can ghes."

"Eche ov these iz a good, hevvy jolt; about aul dhat a strong man withe a strong hart can stand. Cit down. Here iz wun doce. Pool the cuvver, stic the capshule up wun nostril, sqwese the egector, and snif. If u can leve this uther doce citting here on the desc u wil liv, and dhus paas the test. If u caant, u di."

Samz sat, and poold, and sqweezd, and snift.

Hiz foerarmz hit the desc withe a thud. Hiz handz clencht themcelvz

intoo fists, the tite-strecht tendonz standing boaldly out. Hiz face ternd white. Hiz ise jamd themcelvz shut; hiz jau-muscelz sprang intoo bandz and lumps az dha clampd hiz teeth hard tooghether. Evvery volluntary muscel in hiz boddy went intoo a riggor az extreme az dhat ov deth itcelf. Hiz hart pounded; hiz breathing became stertorous.

This wauz the dredfool "muscel-loc" so uneecly characteristic ov thhiyonite; the frensede imobillity ov the ultimaitly pashonate satisfacshon ov evvery desire.

The Galactic Patrole became for him an acchuwallity; a foers for good pervading aul the werldz ov aul the gallaxese ov aul the univercez ov aul existing space-time continnuwal. He nu whaut the Lenz wauz, and whi.

He understood time and space. He nu the absolute beghinning and the ultimate end.

He aulso sau thhingz and did thhingz over which it iz best too drau a kiandyly vale, for *evvery* desire--mental or fizensical, open or sternly suprest, nobel or bace--dhat Vergil Samz had evver had wauz beying *compleetly sattisfide*. EVERY DESIRE.

Az Samz sat dhare, straning moashonlesly uppon the verj ov deth throo shere extacy, a doer opend and Cennator Morgan enterd the roome. Herkimer started, aulmoast imperceptibly, az he ternd--had dhare bene, or not, an instantainously-suprest flash ov ghilt in dhose nou compleetly clere and franc broun ise?

"Hi, Chefe; cum in and cit down. Glad too ce u--this iz not exactly mi ideyaa ov fun."

"No? When did u stop beying a sadist?" The cennator sat down becide hiz minyonz desc, the fin'ghertips ov hiz left hand began soundlesly

too drum. "U woodnt hav, bi enny chaans, bene conciddering the ideyaa ov...?" He pauzd cignificantly.

"Whaut an ideyaa." Herkimerz act--if it wauz an act--wauz flaules. "Hese too good a man too waist."

"I no it, but u didnt act az dho u did. Ive nevver cene u cum out such a poor cecond in an intervuu ... and it wauznt becauz u didnt no too start withe just whaut kiand ov a tigher he wauz--dhats whi he wauz celected for this job. And it wood hav bene so esy too ghiv him just a we bit moer."

"Dhats preposterous, Chefe, and u no it."

"Doo I? Houwevver, it coodnt hav bene gelloucy, becauz he iznt beying concidderd for yor job. He woant be over u, and dhaerz plenty ov roome for evveriboddy. Whaut wauz the matter? Yor bludthherstines woodnt hav taken u *dhat* far, under these cercumstaancez. Cum clene, Herkimer."

"Oca--I hate the whole damd fammily!" Herkimer berst out, vishously.

"I ce. Dhat adz up." Morganz face cleerd, hiz fin'gherz became moashonles. "U caant make the Samz wench and arnt in posishon too skin her alive, so u ghet alergic too aul her rellatiavz. Dhat adz up, but let me tel u sumthhing." Hiz qwiyet, levvel vois carrede moer ov mennace dhan moast menz loudest threts. "Kepe yor luv life out ov biznes and kepe dhat sadistic streke under controle. Doant let ennithhing like this happen agane."

"I woant, Chefe. I got of the beme--but he made me so *dam* mad!"

"Certainly. Dhats exactly whaut he wauz triying too doo. Elementary. If he cood make u looc smaul it wood make him looc big, and he just about did. But wauch nou, hese cumming too."

Samz muscelz relaxt. He opend hiz ise grogghily; then, az a wave ov humilleyated reyalizaishon swept over hiz consmousnes, he cloazd them agane and shudderd. He had aulwase thaut himcelf pritty much ov a man; hou cood he *poscibly* hav decended too such nauzhous depths ov depravvity, ov terpichude, ov shere moral degradaishon? And yet evvery cel ov hiz beying wauz shreking its demaand for moer; hiz miand and hiz substans alike wer permeyated bi an over-maastering craving too expereyens agane the ultimate thrilz which dha had so tremendously, so outrajously enjoid.

Dhare wauz anuther good jolt liying rite dhare on the desc in frunt ov him, even dho thhiyonite-snifferz aulwase sau too it dhat no moer ov the drug cood be obtaind widhout concidderabel fizensal exershon; which exershon wood bring them too dhare cencez. If he tooc dhat jolt it wood kil him. Whaut ov it? Whaut wauz deth? Whaut good wauz life, exept too enjoi such thrilz az he had just had and wauz about too hav agane? And beciadz, thhiyonite coodnt kil *him*. He wauz a super-man; he had just pruivd it!

He stratend up and reecht for the capshule; and dhat effort, smaul az it wauz, wauz enuf too bring Ferst Lenzman Vergil Samz bac under controle. The craving, houwevver, did not decrece. Raather, it increest.

Munths wer too paas befoer he cood thhinc ov thhiyonite, or even ov the cullor perpel, widhout a spazmoddic catching ov the breth and a titening ov evvery muscel. Yeeرز wer too paas befoer he cood forghet, even parshaly, the dhaertofoer unsuspected dwellerz in the darc

recevez ov hiz one miand. Nevvertheles, from the stoer ov whatevver it wauz dhat made him whaut he wauz, Vergil Samz dru strength. Thum and foerfin'gher tucht the capshule, but insted ov picking it up, he poosht it across the desc tooword Herkimer.

"Poot it awa, bub. Wun whif ov dhat stuf wil laast me for life." He staerd unfathomably at the secretery, then ternd too Morgan and nodded. "Aafter aul, he did not sa dhat he evver paast this or enny uther test. He just didnt contradict me when I ced it."

Withe a vizsibel effort Herkimer remaind cilent, but Morgan did not.

"U tauc too much, Oamsted. Can u stand up yet?"

Gripping the desc withe boath handz, Samz heevd himcelf too hiz fete. The roome wauz spinning and girating; evvery individjuwal thhing in it wauz mooving in a different and imposcibel orbit; hiz aulreddy splinterd scul threttend moer and moer viyolently too emulate a fragmentaishon bom; blac and white spots and vary-cullord flashez fild hiz cone ov vizhon. He rencht wun hand fre, then the uther--and colapst bac intoo the chare.

"Not yet--qwite," he admitted, throo stif lips.

Auldho he wauz caerfool not too sho it, Morgan wauz amaizd--not dhat the man had colapst, but dhat he had bene abel so soone too lift himcelf even an inch. "Tigher" wauz not the werd; this Oamsted must be cevven-aitths dinosor.

"It taix a fu minnuets; lon'gher for sum, not so long for utherz," Morgan ced, blandly. "But whaut maix u thhinc Herkimer here nevver tooc wun ov the same?"

"Huu?" Agane too paerz ov ise loct and held; and this time the juwel wauz lon'gher and moer pregnant. "Whaut doo *u* thhinc? Hou doo u supose
I livd too ghet az oald az I am nou? Bi beying dum?"

Morgan unrapt a Venereyan cigar, cetteld it cumfortably betwene hiz teeth, lit it, and dru thre slo pufs befoer replying.

"Aa, a schudent. An analittical miand," he ced, evenly, and--aparrently--irellevantly. "Lets skip Herkimer for the moment. Tri yor hand on me."

"Whi not? From whaut we here out in the feeld, u hav aulwase bene in the upper brackets, so u probbably nevver had too prove dhat u cood take it or let it alone. Mi ghes wood be, dho, dhat u cood."

"The good oald oil, a?" Morgan aloud hiz face and vois too redgister a moddicum, preciasly meterd, ov contempt. "Hou too ghet along in the werld; Lesson Wun: Butter up the Bos."

"Nice tri, Cennator, but Ile hav too scoer u a clene mis." Samz, nou bac aulmoast too normal, grind companyonably. "We boath no dhat if I wer stil in the kindergarten I woodnt be here nou."

"Ile let dhat wun paas--this time." Under dhat looc and tone Morganz underlingz wer woant too crinj, but this Oamsted wauz not the crin'ging tipe. "Doant doo it agane. It mite not be safe."

"O, it wood be safe enuf--for tooda, at leest. Dhare ar too factorz which u ar verry caerfooly ignoering. Ferst, I havnt axepted the job yet."

"Ar u innocent enuf too thhinc ule ghet out ov this bilding alive if I doant axept u?"

"If u waunt too caul it innocens, yes. O, I no uve got gunnese aul over the place, but dha doant mene a thhing."

"No?" Morganz vois wauz cilkily venomous.

"No." Oamsted wauz compleetly unnimprest. "Poot yorcelf in mi place. U no Ive bene around a long time; and not just around mi muther. I wauz weend qwite a number ov yeerz ago."

"I ce. U doant scare werth a dam. A point. And u ar testing me, just az I am testing u. Anuther point. Ime beghinning too like u, Jorj. I thhinc I no whaut yor cecond point iz, but lets hav it, just for the reccord."

"Ime shure u doo. Enny man, too be mi bos, haz got too be at least az good a man az I am. Utherwise I take hiz job awa from him."

"Fare enuf. Bi God, I *doo* like u, Oamsted!" Morgan, hiz big face reedhd in smialz, got up, strode over, and shooc handz viggorously; and Samz, scan az he wood, cood not even hazzard a ghes az too hou much--if enny--ov this enthuseyazm wauz reyal. "Doo u waunt the job? And when can u go too werc?"

"Yes, cer. Too ourz ago, cer."

"Dhats fine!" Morgan buimd. Auldho he did not comment uppon it, he notiast and understood the chainj in the form ov adres. "Without nowing whaut the job iz or hou much it pase?"

"Niather iz important, cer, at the moment." Samz, whoo had got up easily enuf too shake handz, nou shooc hiz hed experrimentaly. Nuthhing ratteld. Good--he wauz in pritty good shape aulreddy. "Az too the job, I can iather doo it or fiand out whi it caant be dun. Az too pa, Ive herd u cauld a lot ov ththingz, but piker wauz nevver wun ov them."

"Verry wel. I predict dhat u wil go far." Morgan agane shooc the Lenzmanz hand; and agane Samz cood not evalluwate the Cennatorz cincerrity. "Chuezda aafternoone. Nu Yorc Spaispoert. Space-ship *Vergin Qwene*. Repoert too Captane Willoby in the doc office at foertene hundred ourz. Stop at the casheyerz office on yor wa out. Good-bi."

CHAPTER 9

Piracy wauz rife. Dhare wauz no suspishon, houwevver, nor wood dhare be for menny yeerz, dhat dhare wauz ennithhing ov verry larj perpoce about the biznes. Mergatroid wauz cimply a Captane Kid ov space; and even if he wer acchuwaly conected withe Galactic Spaiswase, dhat fact wood not be cerprising. Such relaishonships had aulwase existed; the moast feroashous and dredded piraits ov the ainshent werld werct in fool partnership withe the Ferst Fammilese ov dhat werld.

Vergil Samz wauz ththinking ov piraits and ov piracy when he left Cennator Morganz office. He wauz stil ththinking ov them while he wauz repoerting too Rodderic Kinnison. Hens:

"But dhats enuf about this stuf and me, Rod. Bring me up too date on Operaishon Boscone."

"Braanching out no end. Yor ghes wauz rite dhat Spaiswase loscez too piraits ar probbably fony. But it wauznt the *none* atax--dhat iz, dhose cacez in which the ship wauz found, later, withe sum or moast ov the personel alive--dhat gave us the reyal informaishon. Dha wer aul pritty much alike. But when we studdede the total disaperancez we reyaly hit the jac-pot."

"Dhat duznt sound just rite, but Ime liscening."

"Ude better, cins it gose farther dhan even u suspected. It wauz no trubbel at aul too ghet the pascen'ger lists and the naimz ov the cruse ov the independent ships dhat wer lost widhout a trace. Dhare rellatiavz and frendz--we concentrated moastly on wiavz--cood be located, exept for the uezhuwal fu whoo muivd around so much dhat dha got lost.

Spaismen

avverage yung, u no, and dhare wiavz ar stil yun'gher. Wel, these yung wimmen got jobz, moast ov them remarrede, and so on. In short, normal."

"And in the cace ov Spaiswase, not normal?"

"Decidedly not. In the ferst place, ude be amaizd at hou littel publicaishon wauz evver dun ov pascen'ger lists, and aparrently cru lists wer not publisht at aul. No uce gowing intoo detale az too hou we got the stuf, but we got it. Houwevver, nine tenths ov the wiavz had disapeerd, and nun had remarrede. The oonly wunz we cood fiand wer dhose whoo did not care, even when dhare huzbandz wer alive, whether dha evver sau them agane or not. But the big brake wauz--u remember the disaperans ov dhat gherlz-scoole cruse ship?"

"Ov coers. It made a lot ov noiz."

"An interesting point in conecshon withe dhat cruse iz dhat too dase befoer the ship blaasted of the scoole wauz robd. The vault wauz opend withe thhermite and the whole Administraishon Bilding bernd too the ground. Aul the scuilz reccordz wer destroid. Dhus, the list ov miscing had too be made up from staitments made bi frendz, rellatiavz, and whaut not."

"I remember sumthhing ov the kiand. Mi impreshon wauz, dho, dhat the space-ship cumpany fernisht.... O!" The tone ov Samz thaut alerted sharply. "Dhat wauz Spaiswase, under cuvver?"

"Deffiniatly. Our best ghes iz dhat dhare wer qwite a fu shiploadz ov wimmen disapeerd about dhat time, insted ov wun. Austianz College had moer schudents dhat yere dhan evver befoer or cins. It wauz the extraaz, not the reggularz, whoo went on dhat cruse; the wunz whoo figguerd it wood be moer conveyent too disapere in space dhan too becum ordinary miscing personz."

"But Rod! Dhat wood mene ... but whare?"

"It meenz just dhat. And fianding out where wil run intoo a prodject. Dhare ar over too thousand milleyon sunz in this gallaxy, and the best estimate iz dhat dhare ar moer dhan dhat menny plannets habbitabel bi beyingz moer or les human in tipe. U no hou much ov the gallaxy haz bene exploerd and hou faast the werc ov exploering the rest ov it iz gowing. Yor ghes iz just az good az mine az too whare dhose spaismen and en'gineerz and dhare wiavz and gherl-frendz ar nou. I am shure, dho, ov foer thhingz; nun ov which we can evver beghin too prove. Wun; dha didnt di in space. Too; dha landed on a cumfortabel and verry wel eqwipt Telureyan plannet. Thre; dha bilt a flete dhare. Foer;

dhat flete atact the Hil."

"Mergatroid, doo u suppose?" Auldho cerpriazd bi Kinnisonz tremendous repoert, Samz wauz not dismade.

"No ideyaa. No dataa--yet."

"And dhale kepe on bilding," Samz ced. "Dha had a flete much larger dhan the wun dha expected too mete. Nou dhale bild wun larger dhan aul our combiand foercez. And cins the politishanz wil aulwase no whaut we ar doowing ... or it mite be ... I wunder...?"

"U can stop wundering." Kinnison grind savvaijly.

"Whaut doo u mene?"

"Just whaut u wer gowing too thhinc about. U no the ej ov the galaxy clocest too Tellus, whare dhat big rift cuts in?"

"Yes."

"Acros dhat rift, whare it woant be cervade for a thouzand yeerz, dhaerz a plannet dhat cood be Erths twin cister. No atommic ennergy, no space-drive, but hevvely industreyaliazd and ancshous too welcum us. Proodgect Bennet. Verry, *verry* hush-hush. Nobody exept Lenzmen no ennithhing about it. Too frendz ov Dronviarz--smart, smuithe opperatorz--ar in charj. Its gowing too be the Navy Yard ov the Galactic Patrole."

"But Rod ..." Samz began too protest, hiz miand leping ahed too the numberles problemz, the tremendous difficultese, inherent in the proogram which hiz frend had outliand so breefly.

"Forghet it, Verj!" Kinnison cut in. "It woant be esy, ov coers, but we can doo ennithhing dha can doo, and doo it better. U can go caalmly ahead withe yor one choerz, nowing dhat when--and notice dhat I sa when, not if--we nede it wele hav a flete up our sleevz dhat wil make the ofishal wun looc like a taasc foers. But I ce yor at the rondavoo, and dhaerz Gil. Tel her hi for me. And az the Vejanz sa--Tale hi, bruther!"

Samz wauz in the hotelz ornate lobby; a cuppel ov uniformd "boiz" and Gil Samz wer aproching. The gherl reecht him ferst.

"U had no trubbel in reccognising me, then, mi dere?"

"Nun at aul, Unkel Jorj." She kist him perfunctorily, the bel hops faded awa. "So nice too ce u--Ive herd so much about u. The Marene Roome, u ced?"

"Yes. I reservd a tabel."

And in dhat famous restorant, in the unneeqwald privacy ov the cittese noiseyest and moast crouded nite spot, dha dranc sparingly; ate not-so-sparingly; and tauct not sparingly at aul.

"Its perfectly safe here, u thhinc?" Gil aasct ferst.

"Perfectly. A super-cencitive miacrofone coodnt here ennithhing, and its so darc dhat a lip-reder, even if he cood rede us, wood nede a pare ov twelv-inch nite-glaacez."

"Gooddy! Dha did a marvelous job, Dad. If it wernt for yor ... wel, yor personallity, I woodnt reccognise u even nou."

"U thhinc Ime safe, then?"

"Absoluetly."

"Then wele ghet down too biznes. U, Nobos, and DalNalten aul hav kene and pouwerfool miandz. U caant aul be rong. Spaiswase, then, iz tide in withe boath the Toun-Morgan gang and withe thhiyonite. The lodgical
extenshon ov dhat--Dal certainly thaut ov it, even dho he didnt menshon it--wood be ..." Samz pauzd.

"Chec. Dhat the notoereyous Mergatroid, insted ov beying just anuther pirate chefe, iz reyaly werking for Spaiswase and belongz too the Toun-Morgan-Izaxon gang. But dad--whaut an ideyaa! Can thhingz be *dhat* rotten, reyaly?"

"Dha ma be wers dhan dhat. Nou the next thhing. Whoo, in yor opinyon, iz the reyal bos?"

"Wel, it certainly iz not Herkimer Herkimer Thherd." Gil tict him of on a pinc foerfin'gher. She had bene aasct for an opinyon; she cet out too ghiv it widhout apollogy or hesitaishon. "He cood--just about--direct the afaerz ov a hot-dog stand. Nor iz it Clander. He iznt even a littel fish; hese scaersly a minno. Eeqwaly certainly it iz niather the Venereyan nor the Marshan. Dha ma run plannetary afaerz, but nuthhing biggher. I havnt met Mergatroid, ov coers, but I hav had cevveral evaluwaishonz, and he duz not rate up withe Toun. And Big Gim--and this cerpriazd me az much az it wil u--iz aulmoast certainly not the prime moover." She looct at him qweschoningly.

"Dhat wood hav cerpriazd me tremendously yesterda; but aafter tooda--Ile tel u about dhat prezsently--it duznt."

"Ime glad ov dhat. I expected an argument, and I hav bene incliand

too qweschon the validdity ov mi one rezults, cins dha doo not agry
withe common nollej--or, raather, whaut iz supoast too be nollej.
Dhat leevz Izaxon and Cennator Morgan." Gil fround in perplexity;
ceemd, for the ferst time, unshure. "Izaxon iz ov coers a big man.
Abel. Wel-informd. Extreemly capabel. A top-noch execcutive. Not oonly
iz, wood *hav* too be, too run Spaiswase. On the uther hand, I hav
aulwase thaut dhat Morgan wauz nuthhing but a windbag...." Gil stopt
tauking; left the thaut hanging in are.

"So did I--until tooda," Samz agrede grimly. "I thaut dhat he wauz
cimply an unnuezhuwaly corrupt, gredy, rabbel-rousing politishan. Our
estimaitis ov him ma hav too be chainjd verry raddicaly."

Samz miand raist. From too entiarly different an'ghelz ov aproche, Gil
and he had ariavd at the same concluezhon. But, if Morgan wer reyaly
the Big Shot, wood he hav daind too intervü personaly such smaül
fri az Oamsted? Or wauz Oamstedz job ov moer importans dhan he,
Samz, had supoazd?

"Ive got a duzsen moer thhingz too chec withe u," he went on, aulmoast
widhout a pauz, "but cins this ledership matter iz the oonly wun in
which mi expereyens wood afect yor jujment, I had better tel u
about whaut happend tooda...."

* * * * *

Chueзда came, and our foertene hundred; and Samz strode intoo an
office. Dhare wauz a big, clene desc; a wiry, intens, gra-haerd man.

"Captane Willoby?"

"Yes."

"Jorj Oamsted repoerting."

"Foerth Officer." The captane puncht a button; the hevvy, sound-proofe doer cloazd itcelf and loct.

"*Foerth* Officer? Nu ranc, a. Whaut duz the ticket cuvver?"

"Nu, and speshal. Heerz the artikelz; rede it and cine it." He did not ad "or els", it wauz not nescesary. It wauz cleerly evvident dhat Captane Willoby, nevver garrulous, intended too be particcularly retticent withe hiz nu subordinate.

Samz red. "... Foerth Officer ... shal ... no jutese or responcibillitese in the operaision or maintenans ov ced space-ship ... cargo ..." Then came a clauz which faerly leept from the paper and smote hiz ise: "when in comaand ov a detale outside the hul ov ced space-ship he shal enfors, bi the inflicshon ov deth or such uther pennalty az he deemz fit...."

The Lenzman wauz roct too the heelz, but did not sho it. Insted, he tooc the captainz pen--hiz one, az far az Willoby wauz concernd, cood hav bene fild withe vannishing inc--and rote Jorj Oamstedz name in Jorj Oamstedz boald, flowing script.

Willoby then tooc him aboard the good ship *Vergin Qwene* and led him too hiz cabbin.

"Here u ar, Mr. Oamsted. Beyond ghetting aqwainted withe the super-cargo and the rest ov yor men, u wil hav no jutese for a fu dase. U hav fool run ov the ship, withe wun exepshon. Sta out ov the controle roome until I caul u. Iz dhat clere?"

"Yes, cer." Willoby ternd awa and Samz, aafter toscing hiz

space-bag intoo the rac, tooc inventory.

The roome wauz ov coers verry smaule; but, conciddering the importans ov mas, it wauz aulmoast extravvagantly suplide. Dhare wer shelvz, or raather, tite rax, ov boox; dhare wer sun-lamps and card-shelvz and exerciserz and gaimz; dhare wauz a recever capabel ov bringing in proogramz from aulmoast enniwhare in space. The roome had oanly wun lac; it

did not hav an ultraa-wave vizsiplate. Nor wauz this lac cerprising. "Dha" wood scaersly let Jorj Oamsted no whare "dha" wer taking him.

Samz wauz cerpriazd, houwevver, when he met the men whoo wer too be directly under hiz comaand; for insted ov wun, or at moast too, dha numberd exactly forty. And dha wer aul, he thaut at ferst glaans, the dregz and swepingz ov the lowest diavz in space. Befoer long, houwevver, he lernd dhat dha wer not aul space-rats and dennisenz ov Skid Rose. Cix ov them--the stron' ghest fizensicaly and the hardest mentaly ov the lot--wer fugitiavz from leethal chaimberz; merdererz and wers. He looct at the bigghest, tuffest wun ov the cix--a roc-dril-ide, red-haerd giyant--and aasct:

"Whaut did dha tel u, Tworn, dhat yor job wauz gowing too be?"

"Dha didnt sa. Just dhat it wauz dain'gerous, but if I dun exactly whaut mi bos wood tel me too doo, and nuthhing els, I mite not even ghet hert. An I wauz ju too take the depe breth the next weke, ce? Dhats just hou it wauz, bos."

"I ce," and wun bi wun Vergil Samz, maaster cicollogist, studdede and annaliazd hiz motly cru until he wauz cauld intoo the controle roome.

The navigating tanc wauz cuvverd; no charts wer too be cene. The wun "live" vizsiplate shode a plannet and a feersly blu-white sun.

"Mi orderz ar too tel u, at this point, aul I no about whaut uve got too doo and about dhat plannet doun dhare. Trengo, dha caul it." Too Vergil Samz, the ferst ad'herent ov Civilizaishon evver too here it, dhat name ment nuthhing whautevver. "U ar too take about five ov yor men, go doun dhare, and gather aul the grene leevz u can. Not grene in cullor; sort ov perplish. Whaut dha caul braudlefe iz the best; leevz about too fete long and a foot wide. But doant be too choosy. If dhare iznt enny braudlefe handy, grab ennithhing u can ghet hoald ov."

"Whaut iz the oposishon?" Samz aasct, qwiyetly. "And whaut hav dha got dhat maix them so tuf?"

"Nuthhing. No inhabbitants, even. Just the plannet itcelf. Next too Areezhaa, its the God damdest plannet in space. Ive nevver bene enny clocer too it dhan this, and I nevver wil, so I doant no ennithhing about it exept whaut I here; but dhaerz sumthhing about it dhat kilz men or driavz them crasy. We spend cevven or ate boats evvery trip, and thherty-five or forty men, and the bigghest lode dhat enniboddy evver tooc awa from here wauz just under too hundred poundz ov lefe. A good menny tiamz we doant ghet enny."

"Dha go crasy, a?" In spite ov hiz controle, Samz paild. But it coodnt be like Areezhaa. "Whaut ar the cimptomz? Whaut doo dha sa?"

"Vareyous. Mane thhing ceemz too be dhat dha loose dhare cite. Doant go bliand, exactly, but caant ce whare ennithhing iz; or, if dha doo ce it, it iznt dhare. And it rainz over forty fete depe evvery nite, and yet it aul drise up bi morning. The werst electrical stormz in the univers, and wind-veloscitese--I can sho u charts on dhat--ov over ate hundred mialz an our."

"Whu! Hou about time? Withe yor permishon, I wood like too doo sum

cervaying befoer I tri too land."

"A smart ideyaa. A cappel ov the uther boiz had the same, but it didnt help--dha didnt cum bac. Ile ghiv u too Telureyan dase--no, thre--befoer I ghiv u up and start cending out the uther boats. Pic out yor five men and ce whaut u can doo."

Az the bote dropt awa, Willobese vois came briscly from a speker. "I no dhat u five men hav got ideyaaz. Forghet em. Foerth Officer Oamsted haz the authority and the orderz too poot a haaf-ouns slug throo the guts ov enny or aul ov u dhat doant jump, and jump faast, too doo whaut he telz u. And if dhat bote maix enny funny muivz I blaast it out ov the eethher. Good harvesting!"

For forty-ate Telureyan ourz, taking time out oanly too slepe, Samz scand and cervade the plannet Trencos; and the moer he studded it, the moer outrageously abnormal it became.

Trencos wauz, and iz, a peculeyar plannet indede. Its atmosfere iz not are az we no are; its hiadrosfere duz not resembel wauter. Haaf ov dhat atmosfere and moast ov dhat hiadrosfere ar wun kemmical, a substans ov verry lo hete ov vaporizaishon and havving a boiling point ov about cevventy-five degrese Farrenhite. Trencose dase ar intensely hot; its niats ar bitterly coald.

At nite, dhaerfoer, it rainz: and bi comparrison a Telureyan dounpor ov wun inch per our iz scaersly a drizsel. Uppon Trencos it reyaly *rainz*--forty cevven fete and five inchez ov precipitaishon, evvery nite ov evvery Trencosyan yere. And this tremendous condensaishon ov coers causez wind. Willobese graafs wer accurate. Exept at Trencose verry poalz dhare iz not a spot in which or a time at which an Erthly gale wood not constichute a ded caalm; and along the eqwator, at evvery sunrise and evvery suncet, the wind blose from the da cide intoo the

nite cide at a velosity which no Telureyan hurricane or cialone, houwevver viyolent, haz even distantly aproacht.

Aulso, dhaerfoer, dhare iz liatning. Not in the miald and ocaizhonal flashez which we ov gentel Terraa no, but in a continuwous, blianding glare which outshianz a normal sun; in battering, shattering, multy-billeyon-volt dischargez which not oonly make darcnes un'none dhare, but aulso distort beyond recognishon and beyond funcshon the worp and the woof ov space itself. Cite iz aulmoast compleetly uesles in dhat fantasticaly aulterd mejum. So iz the ultraa-beme.

Landing on the dalite cide, exept poscibly at exact noone, wood be imposcibel becauz ov the wind, nor cood the ship sta landed for moer dhan a cuppel ov minnuets. Landing on the nite cide wood be practicaly az bad, becauz ov the teriffic charj the bote wood pic up--unles the bote carrede sumthhing dhat cood be rebilt intoo a leker. Did it? It did.

Time aafter time, from pole too pole and from midnite around the cloc, Samz stabd Vizsibeme and spi-ra down tooword Trencose faulsly-vizsibel cerface, withe concistently and meninglesly imposcibel rezults. The plannet tipt, lercht, spun, and daanst. It broke up intoo chunx, eche ov which began insainly too follo mathhematticaly imposcibel paaths.

Finaly, in desperaishon, he ramd a beme down and held it down. Agane he sau the plannet brake up befoer hiz ise, but this time he held on. He *nu* dhat he wauz wel out ov the strattosfere, a good too hundred mialz up. Nevvertheles, he *sau* a tremendous mas ov jagghed roc fauling strate down, withe teriffic velosity, uppon hiz tiny liafbote!

Unforchunaitly the cru, too whoome he had not bene paying overmuch atenshon ov late, sau it, too; and wun ov them, withe a beschal yel,

leapt toward Samz and the controalz. Samz, reaching for pistol and blacjac, wherld around just in time too ce the big red-hed la the wood-be atacker out coald withe a vishous handz-ej chop at the bace ov the scul.

"Thanx, Tworn. Whi?"

"Becauz I waunt too ghet out ov this alive, and heedv had us aul in hel in fiftene minnuets. U no a hel ov a lot moer dhan we doo, so Ime playin it yor wa. Ce?"

"I ce. Can u use a sap?"

"An artist," the big man admitted, modestly. "Just tel me hou long u waunt a ghi too be out and I woant mis it a minnute, iather wa. But ude better blo dhat crumz brainz out, rite nou. He aint no dam good."

"Not until aafter I ce whether he can werc or not. Yor a Proashan, arnt u?"

"Yeh. Midlandz--North Central."

"Whaut did u doo?"

"Nuthhing much, at ferst. Just kild a ghi dhat neded killing; but the goddam lous had a lot ov munny, so dha ghiv me twenty five yearz. I didnt like it verry wel, and acted ruf, so dha ghiv me sollitary--boote, bandage, and so on. So I tride a brake--kild cix or ate, maby a duzsen, gardz--but didnt qwite make it. So dha slated me for the big whif. Dhats aul, bos."

"Ime promoting u, nou, too sqwaud leder. Heerz the sap." He handed Tworn hiz blacjac. "Wauch em--Ile be too bizsy too. This landing iz

gowing too be tuf."

"Gotchaa, bos." Tworn wauz callibrating hiz weppon bi slugging himcelf experrimentaly on the leg. "Go ahead. Az far az these crumz ar concernd, uve got this are-tanc aul too yorcelf."

Samz had finally decided whaut he wauz gowing too doo. He located the terminator on the morning cide, poizd hiz littel ship sumwhaut nerer too daun dhan too midnite, and "cut the rope". He tooc wun qwic reding on the sun, cut of hiz plaits, and let her drop, wauching oonly hiz preshure gagez and girose.

Wun hundred millimeterz ov mercury. Thre hundred. Five hundred. He slode her doun. He wauz gowing too hit a thhin liqwid, but if he hit it too hard he wood smash the bote, and he had no ideyaa whaut the atmosferric preshure at Trencose cerface wood be. Cix hundred. Even this late at nite, it mite be grater dhan Erths ... and it mite be a lot les. Cevven hundred.

Slower and slower he crept dounword, hiz tenshon mounting infiniatly faaster dhan did the nedel ov the gage. This wauz an instrument landing withe a venjans! Ate hundred. Hou wauz the cru taking it? Hou menny ov them had Tworn had too disabel? He glaanst qwicly around. Nun! Nou dhat dha cood not ce the halucinatoery immaginez uppon the plaits, dha wer not suffering at aul--he himcelf wauz the oonly wun aboard whoo wauz feling the strane!

Nine hundred ... nine hundred forty. The bote "hit the drinc" withe a crashing, splashing impact. Its pace wauz slo enuf, houwevver, and the liqwid wauz depe enuf, so dhat no dammage wauz dun. Samz aplide a littel driving pouwer and swung hiz craafts sharp nose intoo the line tooword the sun. The littel ship ploud sloly forword, az neerly just awaush az Samz cood kepe her; grounded az gently az a rivver steme-bote uppon a mud-flat. The starcly increddibel dounpor slackend; the Lenzman

nu dhat the cecond crittical moment wauz at hand.

"Strap doun, men, until we ce whaut this wind iz gowing too doo too us."

The atmosfere, mooving at a velosity wel abuv dhat ov sound, wauz in efect not a gas, but a sollid. Even a spaisboats hard skin ov alloi plate, withe aul its bracing, cood not take whaut wauz cumming next. Inert, she wood be split open, smasht, flattend out, and twisted intoo pretselz. Samz fin'gher stabd doun; the Berg went intoo acshon; the liafbote went fre just az dhat raging blaast ov qwasi-sollid vapor rencht her intoo the are.

The cecond decent wauz much faaster and much eseyer dhan the ferst.

Nor,

this time, did Samz remane cerfaist or drive tooword shoer. Nowing nou dhat this oashan wauz not depe enuf too harm hiz vescel, he let her cinc too the bottom. Moer, he ternd her on her cide and drove her at a flat an'ghel intoo the bottom; so depe dhat the rim ov her starbord loc wauz flush withe the oashanz floer. Agane dha wated; and this time the wind did not blo the liafbote awa.

Uppon puerly theyorettical groundz Samz had rezond dhat the weerd distorshon ov vizhon must be a funcshon ov distans, and hiz observaishonz so far had bene in acord withe dhat hipothhecis. Nou, sloly and caushously, he cent out a vizsibeme. Ten fete ... twenty ... forty ... aul clere. At fifty the ceying wauz deffiniatly bad; at cixty it became imposcibel. He shortend bac too forty and began too studdy the vegetaishon, growing withe such fantastic spede dhat the leevz, prest flat too the ground bi the gale and ancord dhare bi hevvy ruitlets, wer aulreddy inchez long. Dhare wauz aulso whaut ceemd too be annimal life, ov sorts, but Samz wauz not, at the moment, interested in Trencoanyan zowollogy.

"Ar them the plaants were gowing too ghet, bos?" Tworn aasct, staring into the plate over Samz shoalder. "Shal we go out nou an start pickin em?"

"Not yet. Even if we cood open the poert the blaast wood rec us. Aulso, it wood shere yor hed of, flush withe the coming, az faast az u stuc it out. This wind shood ese of aafter a while; wele go out a littel befoer noone. In the meentime wele ghet reddy. Hav the boiz brake out a cuppel ov spare Number Twelv struts, sum clamps and chane, foer snach blox, and a hundred fete ov hevvy space-line....

"Good," he went on, when the order had bene obade. "Rig the line from the winch throo snach blox here, and here, and here, so I can haul u bac against the wind. While u ar doowing dhat Ile rig a remote controle on the winch."

Shortly befoer Trencose feers, blu-white sun reecht meridjan, the cix men dond space-suets and Samz caushously opend the are-loc poerts. Dha werct. The wind wauz nou scaersly moer dhan an Erthly hurricane; the wialdly whipping braudlefe plaants, struggling upword, wer aulmoast haaf-wa too the vertical. The leevz wer aparrently aulmoast foolly grone.

Foer men clampt dhare suets too the line. The line wauz pade out. Eche man celected too leevz; the largest, fattest, perplest wunz he cood reche. Samz hauld them bac and receevd the loote; Tworn stode the leevz awa. Agane--agane--agane.

Withe noone dhare came a fu minnuets ov "caalm". A strong man cood stand against the nou hily vareyabel wind; cood moove around widhout beying blone beyond the horizon; and juring dhose fu minnuets aul cix men gatherd leevz. Dhat time, houwevver, wauz verry short. The wind steddede intoo the revers direcshon withe evver-increcing fury; winch and space-line agane came intoo pla. And in a scant haaf our, when the

line began too hum an aulmoast musical note under its lode, Samz decided too caul it qwits.

"Dhatl be aul for tooda, boiz," he anounst. "About twice moer and this line wil part. Uve dun too good a job too loose u. Cecure ship."

"Shal I blo the are, cer?" Tworn aasct.

"I doant thhinc so." Samz thaut for a moment. "No. Ime afrade too take the chaans. This stuf, whautevver it iz, iz probbably az poizonous az cianide. Wele kepe our suets on and exhaust intoo space."

Time paast. "Nite" came; the rane and the flud. The bottom softend. Samz blaasted the liafbote out ov the mud and awa from the plannet. He opend the bleder valvz, then both are-loc poerts; the contamminated are wauz replaist bi the ultraa-hard vaccuwum ov the inter-plannetary void.

He cignald the *Vergin Qwene*; the liafbote wauz taken aboard.

"Qwic trip, Oamsted," Willoby con'gratchulated him. "Ime cerpriazd dhat u got bac at aul, too sa nuthhing ov withe so much stuf and not loosing a man. Ghiv me the wate, mister, faast!"

"Thre hundred and forty ate poundz, cer," the super-cargo repoerted.

"Mi God! And aul pure braudlefe! *Nobody* evver did *dhat* befoer! Hou did u doo it, Oamsted?"

"I doant no whether dhat wood be enny ov yor biznes or not." Samz meyen wauz not insulting; meerly thautfool. "Not dhat I ghiv a dam, but mi wa mite not help enniboddy els much, and I thhinc I had better repoert too the mane office ferst, and let them doo the telling.

Fare enuf?"

"Fare enuf," the skipper conceded, un'grudgingly. "Whaut a lode! And no loscez!"

"Wun boatlode ov are, iz aul; but are iz expencive out here." Samz made a point, delibberaitly.

"Are!" Willoby snorted. "Ile swaup u a hundred flaasx ov are, enny time, for enny wun ov dhose leevz!" Which wauz whaut Samz waunted too no.

Captane Willoby wauz smart. He nu dhat the wa too suxede wauz too use and then too trampel uppon hiz infereyorz; too tody too such supereyorz

az wer too strong too be poold down and dhus suplaanted. He nu this Oamsted had whaut it tooc too be a big shot. Dhaerfoer:

"Dha toald me too kepe u in the darc until we got too Trenco," he moer dhan haaf apollojazd too hiz Foerth Officer shortly aafter the *Vergin Qwene* blaasted awa from the Trencoanyan cistem. "But dha didnt sa ennithhing about aafterwordz--maby dha figguerd u woodnt be aboard enny moer, az uezhuwal--but enniwa, u can sta rite here in the controle roome if u waunt too."

"Thanx, Skipper, but miatnt it be just az wel," he gerct hiz hed inconspiccuwously tooword the uther officerz, "too pla the string out, this trip? I doant care whare were gowing, and we doant waunt enniboddy too ghet enny funny ideyaaz."

"Dhatd be a lot better, ov coers--az long az u no dhat yor cardz ar aul acez, az far az Ime concernd."

"Thanx, Willoby. Ile remember dhat."

Samz had not bene entiarly franc withe the private captane. From the time reqwiard too make the trip, he nu too within a fu parcex Trencose distans from Sol. He did not no the direcshon, cins the distans wauz so grate dhat he had not bene abel too reccognise enny star or constelaishon. He did no, houwevver, the coers uppon which the vescel then wauz, and he wood no coercez and distancez from then on. He wauz wel content.

A cappel ov unneventfool dase paast. Samz wauz agane cauld intoo the controle roome, too ce dhat the ship wauz aproching a thre-sun solar cistem.

"This whare were gowing too land?" he aasct, indifferently.

"We aint gowing too land," Willoby toald him. "U ar gowing too take the braudlefe doun in yor bote, cloce enuf so dhat u can parrashute it doun too whare it haz too go. Wa nuf, pilot, go inert and mach intrinsix. Nou, Oamsted, wauch. Uve cene cistemz like this befoer?"

"No, but I no about them. Dhose too sunz over dhare ar a hel ov a lot biggher and ferther awa dhan dha looc, and this wun here, much smauler, iz in the Trojan posishon. Hav dhose big sunz got enny plannets?"

"Five or cix apece, dha sa; aul hotter and driyer dhan the brasen hin'gez ov hel. This sun here haz cevven, but Number Too--Cavendaa, dha caul it--iz the oonly Telureyan plannet in the cistem. The ferst thhing we looc for iz a big, dimond-shaipt continent ... dhaerz oonly wun ov dhat shape ... dhare it iz, over dhare. Notice dhat wun end iz biggher dhan the uther--dhat end iz north. Strike a line too split the continent in too and mezhure from the north end wun-thherd ov the length ov the line. Dhats the point were diving at nou ... ce dhat crater?"

"Yes." The *Vergin Qwene*, auldho stil hundredz ov mialz up, wauz slowing rappidly. "It must be a big wun."

"Its a good fifty mialz acros. Go down until yor ded shure dhat the box wil land sumwhare incide the rim ov dhat crater. Then dump it. The parrashute and the cender ar automattic. Understand?"

"Yes, cer; I understand," and Samz tooc of.

He wauz vaastly moer interested in the starz, houwevver, dhan in delivvering the braudlefe. The constelaishon directly beyond Sol from wharevver he wauz mite be recognizabel. Its shape wood be smauler and moer or les distorted; its smauler starz, brilleyant too Erthly ise oonly becauz ov dhare neernes, wood be dimmer, perhaps invizibel; the picchure wood be ferther confuezd bi intervening, neerbi, brilleyant strain'gerz; but such giyants az Canopus and Rigel and Beteljuse and Deneb wood certainly be hily vizibel if he cood oonly reccognise them. From Trencu hiz cerch had faild; but he wauz stil tryying.

Dhare wauz sumthhing vaigly familleyar! Swetting withe the mental effort, he bloct out the too-nere, too-brite starz and studdede intenciavly dhose dhat wer left. A blu-white and a red wer moast promminent. Rigel and Beteljuse? Cood dhat constelaishon be Oriyon? The Belt wauz verry faint, but it wauz dhare. Then Cirreyus aut too be about dhare, and Pollux about dhare; and, at this distans, about eeqwaly brite. Dha wer. Aldebbaran wood be oranj, and about wun magnichude briter dhan Pollux; and Capellaa wood be yello, and haaf a magnichude briter stil. Dhare dha wer! Not too cloce too whare dha shood be, but cloce enuf--it wauz Oriyon! And this thhiyonite wa-staishon, then, wauz sumwhare nere rite ascenshon cevventene ourz and declinaishon plus

ten degrese!

He reternd too the *Vergin Qwene*. She blaasted of. Samz aasct verry fu qweschon and Willoby vollunteerd verry littel informaishon; nevvertheles the Ferst Lenzman lernd moer dhan enniwun ov hiz fello piraits wood hav beleevd poscibel. Aloofe, tascitern, dicinterested too a degry, he ceemd too spend practicaly aul ov hiz time in hiz cabbn when he wauz not acchuwaly at werc; but he kept hiz ise and hiz eerz wide open. And Vergil Samz, az haz bene intimated, had a brane.

The *Vergin Qwene* made a qwic flit from Cavendaa too Vejaa, ariving exactly on time; a proud, clene space-ship az hi abuv suspishon az Calpernyaa hercelf. Samz unloded her cargo; replaist it withe wun for Erth. She wauz cerviast. She made a faast, eventles run too Tellus. She doct at Nu Yorc Spaispoert. Vergil Samz wauct unconcerndly intoo an ordinary-loocking rest-roome; Jorj Oamsted, folly informd, wauct unconcerndly out.

Az soone az he cood, Samz Lenzd Northrop and Jac Kinnison.

"We liand up a thouzand and wun signalz, cer," Northrop repoerted for the pare, "but oanly wun ov them carrede a message, and it didnt make cens."

"Whi not?" Samz aasct, sharply. "Withe a Lenz, *enny* kiand ov a message, houwevver garbeld, coded, or interupted, maix cens."

"O, we understood whaut it ced," Jac came in, "but it didnt sa enuf. Just REDDY--REDDY--REDY; over and over."

"Whaut!" Samz exclaimd, and the boiz cood fele hiz miand werc. "Did dhat signal, bi enny chaans, oridginate enniwhare nere cevventene ourz and

plus ten degrese?"

"Verry nere. Whi? Hou did u no?"

"Then it duz make cens!" Samz exclaimd, and cauld a genneral conferens ov Lenzmen.

"Kepe werking along these same lianz," Samz directed, finaly. "Kepe Ra Oamsted in the Hil in mi place. I am gowing too Pluto, and--I hope--too Palane Cevven."

Rodderic Kinnison ov coers protested; but, eeqwaly ov coers, hiz protests wer over-rueld.

CHAPTER 10

Pluto iz, on the avverage, about forty tiamz az far awa from the sun az iz Muther Erth. Eche sqware yard ov Erths cerface receevz about cixtene hundred tiamz az much hete az duz eche ov Plutose. The sun az cene from Pluto iz a dim, waun spec. Even at perihelion, an event which okerz oonly wuns in too hundred forty ate Telureyan yeerz, and at noone and on the eqwator, Pluto iz so bitterly coald dhat climattic condishonz uppon its cerface cimply cannot be descriabd bi or too worm-bludded, oxigen-breething man.

Az good an indicaishon az enny can be ghivven, perhaps, bi menshoning the fact dhat it had taken the Patroalz best en'gineerz over cix munths too perfect the armor which Vergil Samz then woer. For no ordinary space-sute wood doo. Space itself iz not coald; the oonly los ov hete iz

bi rajaishon intoo or throo an aulmoast perfect vaccuwum. In contact withe Plutose rocky, metallic soil, houwevver, dhare wood be conducshon; and the magnichude ov the inevvitabel hete-los made the Telureyan ciyentists gaasp.

"Wauch yor fete, Verj!" had bene Rodderic Kinnisonz incistent laast thaut. "Remember dhose cicollogists--if dha stade in contact withe dhat ground for five minnuets dha frose dhare fete too the ankelz. Not dhat the boiz arnt good, but slipstix sumtiamz slip in moer wase dhan wun. If yor fete evver start too ghet coald, drop whautevver yor doowing and drive bac here at max!"

Vergil Samz landed. Hiz fete stade worm. Finaly, ashuerd dhat the heterz ov hiz sute cood carry the lode indeffiniatly, he made hiz wa on foot intoo the cettelment nere which he had cum too ground. And dhare he sau hiz ferst Palainyan.

Or, strictly speking, he sau part ov hiz ferst Palainyan; for no thre-dimenshonal crechure haz evver cene or evver wil ce in entirety enny member ov enny ov the fridgid-bludded, poizon-breathing racez. Cins life az we no it--organnic, thre-dimenshonal life--iz baist uppon liqwid wauter and gaishous oxigen, such life did not and cood not devellop uppon plannets whoose temperachuerz ar oonly a fu degrese abuv absolute sero. Menny, perhaps moast, ov these ultraa-fridgid plannets hav an atmosfere ov sorts; sum hav no atmosfere at aul. Nevvertheles, withe or widhout atmosfere and compleetly widhout oxigen and wauter, life--hily intelligent life--did devellop uppon milleyonz and milleyonz ov such werldz. Dhat life iz not, houwevver, strictly thre-dimenshonal. Ov necescity, even in the lowest formz, it posescez an extenshon intoo the hiper-dimenshon; and it iz this metabollic extenshon alone which maix it poscibel for life too exist under such extreme condishonz.

The extenshon maix it imposcibel for enny human beying too ce ennithing

ov a Palainyan exepth the fluwid, amorfous, evver-chain'ging thhing which iz hiz thre-dimenshonal aspect ov the moment; maix enny atempt at descriphon or portrachure compleetly futile.

Vergil Samz staerd at the Palainyan; tride too ce whaut it looct like. He cood not tel whether it had ise or antenna; legz, armz, or tentakelz, teeth or beex, tallonz or clauz or fete; skin, scailz, or fetherz. It did not even remoatly resembel ennithhing dhat the Lenzman had evver cene, censt, or imadgiand. He gave up; cent out an exploering thaut.

"I am Vergil Samz, a Telureyan," he cent out sloly, caerfooly, aafter he made contact withe the outer frin'gez ov the crechuerz miand. "Iz it poscibel for u, cer or maddam, too ghiv me a moment ov yor time?"

"Emminently poscibel, Lenzman Samz, cins mi time iz ov compleetly negligibel vallu." The monsterz miand flasht intoo acord withe Samz withe a spede and precizhon dhat made him gaasp. Dhat iz, a part ov it became on rapor withe a part ov hiz: yeerz wer too paas befoer even the Ferst Lenzman wood no much moer about the Palainyan dhan he lernd in dhat ferst contact; no human beyingz exepth the Children ov the Lenz evver wer too understand even dimly the labbirinthhine intricacese, the paradoxical complexitese, ov the Palainyan miand.

"Madam mite be aproximaitly corect," the natiavz thaut went smuidhly on. "Mi name, in yor cimbollogy, iz Twelfth Pilinipcy; bi ejucaishon, traning, and ocupaishon I am a Chefe Dexitroboper. I perceve dhat u ar indede a native ov dhat hellish Plannet Thre, uppon which it wauz ashuemd for so long dhat no life cood poscibly exist. But comunaishon withe yor race haz bene aulmoast imposcibel heertofoer ... Aa, the Lenz. A remarcabel device, truly. I wood sla u and take it, exepth for the obveyous fact dhat oonly u can poses it."

"Whaut!" Disma and consternaishon fludded Samz miand. "U aulreddy no the Lenz?"

"No. Yorz iz the ferst dhat enny ov us haz perceevd. The mecannix, the mathhemattix, and the bacic filossofy ov the thhing, houwevver, ar qwite clere."

"Whaut!" Samz exclaimd agane. "U can, then, projece Lensez yorcelvz?"

"Bi no meenz, enny moer dhan u Telureyanz can. Dhare ar magnichuedz, vareyabelz, determinants, and foercez involvd which no Palainyan wil evver be abel too devellop, too gennerate, or too controle."

"I ce." The Lenzman poold himcelf tooghether. For a Ferst Lenzman, he wauz making a retched showing indede....

"Far from it, cer," the monstrosity ashuerd him. "Conciddering the strainjnes ov the environment intoo which u hav voluntarily flung yorcelf so censlesly, yor miand iz wel integrated and strong. Utherwise it wood hav shatterd. If our posishonz wer reverst, the mere thaut ov the raging hete ov yor Erth wood--cum no clocer, plese!" The thhing vannisht; reyapeerd menny yardz awa. Her thauts wer a shudder ov loathing, ov terror, ov shere detestaishon. "But too ghet on. I hav bene atempting too annalise and too understand yor perpoce, widhout suxes. Dhat falure iz not too cerprising, ov coers, cins mi miand iz weke and mi total pouwer iz smaul. Explane yor mishon, plese, az cimpily az u can."

Weke? Smaul? In vu ov the pouwer the monstrosity had just shone, Samz proabd for irony, for sarcazm or pretens. Dhare wauz no trace ov ennithhing ov the kiand.

He tride, then, for fiftene sollid minnuets, too explane the Galactic

Patrole, but at the end the Palainyanz oonly reyachshon wauz wun ov blanc non-comprehenshon.

"I fale compleetly too perceve the uce ov, or the nede for, such an organizaishon," she stated flatly. "This altruwizm--whaut good iz it? It iz unthhincabel dhat enny uther race wood take enny risx or exert enny effort for us, enny moer dhan we wood for them. Ignoer and be ignoerd, az u must aulreddy no, iz the Prime Tennenet."

"But dhare iz a littel commers betwene our werldz; yor pepel did not ignoer our cicologists; and u ar not ignoering me," Samz pointed out.

"O, nun ov us iz perfect," Pilinipcy replide, withe a mental shrug and whaut ceemd too be an ary wave ov a multy-tentakeld member. "Dhat ideyal, like enny uther, can oonly be aproacht acimptotticaly, nevver reecht; and I, beying sumwhaut foolish and cilly, az wel az weke and vacillant, am much les perfect dhan moast."

Flabbergaasted, Samz tride a nu tac. "I mite be abel too make mi posishon clerer if I nu u better. I no yor name, and dhat u ar a woomman ov Palane Cevven"--it iz a mezhure ov Vergil Samz reyal cise dhat he acchuwaly thaut "woomman", and not meerly "female"--"but aul I can understand ov yor ocupaishon iz the name u hav ghivven it. Whaut duz a Chefe Dexitroboper doo?"

"She--or he--or, perhaps, it ... iz a supervizor ov the werc ov dexitroboping." The thaut, while perfectly clere, wauz compleetly meningles too Samz, and the Palainyan nu it. She tride agane. "Dexitroboping haz too doo withe ... nurrishment? No--withe nuetryents."

"Aa. Farming--agriculchure," Samz thaut; but this time it wauz the Palainyan whoo cood not graasp the concept. "Hunting? Fishing?" No better. "Sho me, then, plese."

She tride; but demonstraishon, too, wauz uesles; for too Samz the Palainyanz muivments wer pointles indede. The peculeyarily flowing sutly chain'ging thhing darted bac and foerth, rose and fel, apeerd and disapeerd; undergowing the while ciaclic chain'gez in shape and form and cise, in aspect and texchure. It wauz nou spiny, nou tentaccular, nou scaly, nou cuvverd withe peculeyarily repellent fether-like frondz, eche oosing a crimzon slime. But it aparrently did not *doo* ennithhing whautevver. The net rezult ov aul its activvity wauz, aparrently, sero.

"Dhare, it iz dun." Pilinipcese thaut agane came clere. "U observd and understood? U did not. Dhat iz strainj--bafling. Cins the Lenz did improove comunicaishon and understanding tremendously, I hoapt dhat it mite extend too the fizensal az wel. But dhare must be sum basic, fundamental differens, the nachure ov which iz at prezsent obscure. I wunder ... if I had a Lenz, too--but no...."

"But yes!" Samz broke in, egherly. "Whi doant u go too Areezhaa and be tested for wun? U hav a magnificent, a reyaly *tremendous* miand. It iz ov Lenzman grade in evvery respect exept wun--u cimpily doant *wauzt* too use it!"

"Me? Go too Areezhaa?" The thaut wood hav bene, in a Telureyan, a laaf ov scorn. "Hou utterly cilly--hou abizmaly schupid! Dhare wood be personal discumfort, qwite poscibly personal dain'ger, and too Lensez wood be littel or no better dhan wun in rezolving differencez betwene our too continuwaa, which ar probbably in fact incomenshurabel."

"Wel, then," Samz thaut, aulmoast vishously, "can u introjuce me too sumwun whoo iz schupider, cilleyer, and moer foolish dhan u ar?"

"Not here on Pluto, no." The Palainyan tooc no offens. "Dhat wauz whi it wauz I whoo intervude the erleyer Telureyan vizsitorz and whi I am

nou convercing withe u. The utherz avoided u."

"I ce." Samz thaut wauz grim. "Hou about the home plannet, then?"

"Aa. Undoutedly. In fact, dhare iz a groope, a club, ov such personz. Nun ov them iz, ov coers, az insane--az abberant--az u ar, but dha ar aul much moer so dhan I am."

"Whoo ov this club wood be moast interested in becumming a Lenzman?"

"Tallic wauz the leest stabel member ov the Nu-Thaut Club when I left Cevven; Cragsex a cloce cecond. Dhare ma ov coers hav bene chain'gez cins then. But I canot beleve dhat even Tallic--even Tallic at hiz outrageous werst--wood be crasy enuf too join yor Patrole."

"Nevvertheles, I must ce him micelf. Can u and wil u ghiv me a chart ov a rooting from here too Palane Cevven?"

"I can and I wil. Nuthhing u hav thaut wil be ov enny uce too me; dhat wil be the eseyest and qwickest wa ov ghetting rid ov u." The Palainyan spred a compleetly detaild chart in Samz miand, snapt the telepathhic line, and went unconcerndly about her incomprehencibel biznes.

Samz, miand reling, made hiz wa bac too hiz bote and tooc of. And az the lite-yeerz and the parcex screemd paast, he sanc deper and deper intoo a welter ov unproductive speculaishon. Whaut wer--reyaly--dhose Palainyanz? Hou cood dha--reyaly--exist az dha ceemd too exist? And whi had sum ov dhat dexitroperz--whautevver *dhat* ment!--thauts cum in so butifooly sharp and clere and plane while utherz...?

He nu dhat hiz Lenz wood receve and wood convert intoo hiz one cimbollogy enny thaut or message, houwevver coded or garbeld or houwevver cent or traanzmitted. The Lenz wauz not at fault; hiz cimbollogy wauz. Dhare wer concepts--thhingz--acchuwallitese--ocurrencez--so forane too Telureyan expereyens dhat no refferents existed. Hens the human miand lact the channelz, the meccanizmz, too graasp them.

He and Rodderic Kinnison had glibly discust the pocibillity ov encountering formz ov intelligent life so aleyen dhat humannity wood hav no point whautevver ov contact withe them. Aafter whaut Samz had just gon throo, dhat wauz moer ov a pocibillity dhan iather he or hiz frend had beleevd; and he hoapt grimly, az he concidderd hou cereyously this parshal contact withe the Palainyan had upcet him, dhat the pocibillity wood nevver becum a fact.

He found the Palainyan cistem esily enuf, and Palane Cevven. Dhat plannet, ov coers, wauz aulmoast az darc upon its sunword cide az upon the uther, and its inhabitants had no uce for lite. Pilinipcese instrucshonz, houwevver, had bene minute and exact; hens Samz had verry littel trubbel in locating the principal citty--or, raather, the principal village, cins dhare wer no reyal cittese. He found the plannets wun spaispoert. Whaut a thhing too caul a *poert*! He chect bac; recauld exactly this part ov hiz intervuu withe Plutose Chefe Dexitroboper.

"The place upon which space-ships land," had bene her thaut, when she shode him exactly whare it wauz in relaishonship too the toun. Just dhat, and nuthhing els. It had bene hiz miand, not herz, dhat had suplide the dox and cradelz, the cervice carz, the officerz, and aul the uther thhingz taken for graanted in space-feeldz evveriwheare az Samz nu them. Iather the Palainyan had not perceevd the trappingz withe which Samz had invested her vizhuwalizaishon, or she had not caerd enuf about hiz

misaprehenshon too go too the trubbel ov corecting it; he did not no which.

The whole areyaa wauz az bare az hiz hand. Exept for the pitted, scard, slagd-down spots which shode so cleerly whaut driving blaasts wood doo too such inconcevably coald roc and mettal, Palainport wauz in no wa distin'gwishabel from enny uther unnimpruivd porshon ov the plannets utterly bleke cerface.

Dhare wer no cignalz; he had bene toald ov no landing convenshonz. Aparrently it wauz evveriwun for himself. Whaerfoer Samz tremendous landing liats blaizd out, and withe dhare ade he came saifly too ground. He poot on hiz armor and strode too the are-loc; then chainjd hiz miand and went too the cargo-poert insted. He had intended too wauc, but in vu ov the rugged and deserted feeld and the compleetly un'none terrane betwene the feeld and the toun, he decided too ride the "crepe" insted.

This veyikel, while slo, cood go--litteraly--enniwhare. It had a cigar-shaipt boddy ov magnaloi; it had big, soft, tuf tiarz; it had cleted trax; it had are- and wauter-propellerz; it had foalding wingz; it had driving, braking, and stering gets. It cood travers the dezserts ov Marz, the oashanz and swaumps ov Venus, the crevast glaisherz ov Erth, the jagghed, fridgid cerface ov an iarn asteroid, and the craterd, fluffy topografy ov the moone; if not withe eeqwal spede, at leest withe eeqwal saifty.

Samz releest the thhing and drove it intoo the cargo loc, noting mentaly dhat he wood hav too exaust the are ov dhat loc intoo space befoer he agane broke the inner cele. The ramp slid bac intoo the ship; the cargo poert cloazd. Here he wauz!

Shood he use hiz hedliats, or not? He did not no the Palainyanz reyacshon too or attichude tooword lite. It had not okerd too him

while at Pluto too aasc, and it mite be important. The landing liats ov hiz vescel mite aulreddy hav dun hiz cauz irepparabel harm. He cood drive bi starlite if he had too ... but he neded lite and he had not cene a cin'ghel livving or mooving thhing. Dhare wauz no evvidens

dhat dhare wauz a Palainyan within mialz. While he had none, withe hiz brane, dhat Palane wood be darc, he had expected too fiand bildingz and traffic--ground-carz, plainz, and at leest a fu space-ships--and not this vaast nuthhingnes.

If nuthhing els, dhare *must* be a rode from Palainz principal citty too its oonly spaispoert; but Samz had not cene it from hiz vescel and he cood not ce it nou. At leest, he cood not reccognise it. Whaerfoer he clucht in the tractor drive and tooc of in a strate line tooword toun. The gowing wauz moer dhan ruf--it wauz reyaly rugged--but the crepe wauz bilt too stand up under punnishment and its pilots chare wauz sprung and cooshond too exactly the same degry. Hens, while the coers itcelf wauz infiniatly wers dhan the smuidhly paivd aprochez too Rigelston, Samz found this trip much les brusing dhan the uther had bene.

Aproching the village, he dimd hiz roadliats and slode down. At its ej he cut them entiarly and incht hiz wa forword bi starlite alone.

Whaut a toun! Vergil Samz had cene the inhabbited placez ov aulmoast evvery plannet ov Civilizaishon. He had cene cittese lade out in cerkelz, cectorz, elipcez, triyan'ghelz, sqwaerz, paralellopedz--practicaly evvery plan none too geyometry. He had cene strucchuerz ov aul shaips and cisez--narro skiascraperz, vaast-spredding wun-stoerese, poliheedraa, doamz, sfeerz, cemmy-cillinderz, and erect and inverted fool and truncated coanz and pirramidz. Whautevver the plan or the shaips ov the component units, houwevver, dhose inhabbited placez had, widhout

exepshon, bene understandabel. But this!

Samz, hiz ise nou compleetly darc-acustomd, cood ce faerly wel, but the moer he sau the les he graaspt. Dhare wauz no plan, no coherens or unity whautevver. It wauz az dho a cozmik hand had flung a fu hundredz ov bildingz, ov increddiably and censlesly varede shaips and cisez and arkitecchuerz, uppon an uthewise empty plane, and az dho eche strucchure had bene aloud evver cins too remane in whautevver locaishon and attichude it had chaanst too faul. Here and dhare wer jumbeld pialz ov thre or moer utterly incon'gruwous strucchuerz. Dhare wer a fu whoose arainjment wauz aulmoast orderly. Here and dhare wer larj, iregularly-shaipt areyaaz ov bare, untucht ground. Dhare wer no streets--at leest, nuthhing dhat the man cood reccognise az such.

Samz hedded the crepe for wun ov dhose open areyaaz, then stopt--declucht the trax, cet the braix, and kild the en'gianz.

"Go slo, fello," he adviazd himcelf then. "Until u fiand out whaut a dextitrobooper acchuwaly duz while werking at hiz trade, doant take chaancez ov interfering or ov doowing dammage!"

No Lenzman nu--then--dhat fridgid-bludded poizon-breetherz wer not strictly thre-dimenshonal; but Samz did no dhat he had acchuwaly cene thhingz which he cood not understand. He and Kinnison had discust such ocurrencez caalmly enuf; but the acchuwallity wauz enuf too shake even the miand ov Civilizaishonz Ferst Lenzman.

He did not nede too be enny clocer, enniwa. He had lernd the Palainyanz patternz wel enuf too Lenz them from a vaastly grater distans dhan hiz prezsent wun; this personal vizsit too Palanoppolis had bene a geschure ov frendlines, not a necescity.

"Tallic? Cragsex?" He cent out the qwesting, qwereying thaut.

"Lenzman Vergil Samz ov Sol Thre caulng Tallic and Cragsex ov

Palane Cevven."

"Cragsex acnolleging, Vergil Samz," a thaut snapt bac, az dimond-clere, az precice, az Pilinipcese had bene.

"Iz Tallic here, or enniwhare on the plannet?"

"He iz here, but he iz emfosing at the moment. He wil join us prezsently."

Damnaishon! Dhare it wauz agane! Ferst "dexitrobooping", and nou this!

"Wun moment, plese," Samz requested. "I fale too graasp the mening ov yor thaut."

"So I perceve. The fault iz ov coers mine, in not beying abel too achune mi miand foolly too yorz. Doo not take this, plese, az enny aspershon uppon the carracter or strength ov yor one miand."

"Ov coers not. I am the ferst Telureyan u hav met?"

"Yes."

"I hav exchainjd thauts withe wun uther Palainyan, and the same difficulty existed. I can niather understand nor explane it; but it iz az dho dhare ar differencez betwene us so fundamental dhat in sum matterz muchuwal comprehenshon iz in fact imposcibel."

"A maasterly summaishon and undoutedly a tru wun. This emfosing, then--if I rede corectly, yor race haz oanly too cexez?"

"U rede corectly."

"I canot understand. Dhare iz no cloce anallogy. Houwevver, emfosing haz

too doo withe reproducshon."

"I ce," and Samz sau, not oonly a francnes brand-nu too hiz expereyens, but aulso a nu vu ov boath the pouwerz and the limitaishonz ov hiz Lenz.

It wauz, bi its verry nachure, ov precizhonist grade. It receevd thauts and traanzlated them preciasly intoo In'glish. Dhare wauz sum lewa, but not much. If enny thaut wauz such dhat dhare wauz no extreemly cloce counterpart or refferent in In'glish, the Lenz wood not traanzlate it at aul, but wood cimply ghiv it a hitherto meningles cimbol--a cimbol which wood from dhat time on be asoasheyated, bi aul Lensez evveriwahre, withe dhat wun concept and no uther. Samz reyaliazd then dhat he mite, sum da, lern whaut a dextroboper acchuwaly did and whaut the act ov emfosing acchuwaly wauz; but dhat he verry probbably wood not.

Tallic joind them then, and Samz agane descriabd glowingly, az he had dun so menny tiamz befoer, the Galactic Patrole ov hiz imadgininz and planningz. Cragsex refuezd too hav ennithhing too doo withe such a thhing, aulmoast az abruptly az Pilinipcy had dun, but Tallic lin'gherd--and waverd.

"It iz wiadly none dhat I am not entiarly sane," he admitted, "which ma explane the fact dhat I wood verry much like too hav a Lenz. But I gather, from whaut u hav ced, dhat I wood probbably not be ghivven a Lenz too use puerly for mi one celfish perpocez?"

"Dhat iz mi understanding," Samz agrede.

"I wauz afrade so." Tallix meyen wauz ... "wobegone" iz the oonly werd for it. "I hav werc too doo. Prodgets, u no, ov difficulty, ov extreme complexity and scope, sumtiamz even aproching dain'ger. A Lenz wood be ov tremendous uce."

"Hou?" Samz aasct. "If yor werc iz ov enuf importans too enuf pepel, Mentor wood certainly ghiv u a Lenz."

"This wood bennefit me; oonly me. We ov Palane, az u probbably aulreddy no, ar celfish, mene-spirrited, smaul-soald, couwardly, fertive, and sli. Ov whaut u caul bravery we hav no trace. We atane our endz bi stelth, bi indirecshon, bi trickery and decete." Ruethlesly the Lenz wauz ghivving Vergil Samz the uncompromisingly exact In'glish eqwivvalent ov the Palainyanz evvery thaut. "We opperate, when we must opperate at aul openly, withe the absolutly irejucibel minnimum ov personal risc. These attichuedz and atribuets wil, I hav no dout, preclude aul pocibillity ov Lenzmanship for me and for evvery member ov mi race."

"Not necesarily."

Not necesarily! Auldho Vergil Samz did not no it, this wauz wun ov the reyaly critical moments in the cumming intoo beying ov the Galactic Patrole. Bi a consmous, a tremendous effort, the Ferst Lenzman wauz lifting himcelf abuv the narro, intollerant predjudicez ov human expereyens and wauz consmously atempting too ce the whole throo Mentorz Areezhan miand insted ov throo hiz Telureyan one. Dhat Vergil Samz wauz the ferst human beying too be born withe the abillity too acumplish dhat fete even parshaly wauz wun ov the rezonz whi he wauz the ferst warer ov the Lenz.

"Not necesarily," Ferst Lenzman Vergil Samz ced and ment. He wauz inexprescibly shoct--revolted in evvery human fiber--bi whaut this unhuman monster had so francly and callously thaut. Dhare wer, houwevver, menny thhingz which no human beying evver cood understand, and dhare wauz not the shaddo ov a dout dhat this Tallic had a reyaly

tremendous miand. "U hav ced dhat yor miand iz febel. If so, dhare iz no cimpel expreshon ov the weecnes ov mine. I can perceve oanly wun, the strictly human, fascet ov the trueth. In a brauder vu it iz distinctly poscibel dhat yor motivaishon iz at leest az nobel az mine. And too complete mi argument, u werc withe uther Palainyanz, doo u not, too reche a common gole?"

"At tiamz, yes."

"Then u can conceive ov the desirability ov werking withe non-Palainyan entitese tooword an end which wood bennefit boath racez?"

"Poschulating such an end, yes; but I am unnabel too vizhuwalise enny such.

Hav u enny specific prodject in miand?"

"Not at the moment." Samz duct. He had aulreddy fiard evvery shot in hiz locker. "I am qwite certane, houwevver, dhat if u go too Areezhaa u wil be informd ov cevveral such prodjects."

Dhare wauz a pereyod ov cilens. Then:

"I beleve dhat I *wil* go too Areezhaa, at dhat!" Tallic exclaimd, briatly. "I wil make a dele withe yor frend Mentor. I wil ghiv him a share--sa fifty percent, or forty--ov the time and effort I save on mi one prodjects!"

"Just so u go, Tallic." Samz conceeld rite manfooly hiz reyal opinyon ov the Palainyanz skeme. "When can u go? Rite nou?"

"Bi no meenz. I must ferst finnish this prodject. A yere, perhaps--or moer; or poscibly les. Whoo nose?"

Tallic cut comunicaishonz and Samz fround. He did not no the exact length ov Cevvenz yere, but he nu dhat it wauz long--*verry* long.

CHAPTER 11

A smaul, blac scout-ship, comaanded jointly bi Maaster Pilot Jon K. Kinnison and Maaster Electronnicist Mason M. Northrop, wauz blaasting along a coers *verry* cloce indede too RA17: D+10. In eqwipment and personel, houwevver, she wauz not an ordinary scout. Her controle roome wauz so fool ov electronnix rax and computing masheenz dhat dhare wauz scaersly footwa in enny direcshon; her gradjuwated cerkelz and verneyer scailz wer ov a cise and a fian'nes uezhuwaly cene oonly in the grate vescelz ov the Galactic Cerva. And her cru, insted ov the uezhuwal twenty-od men, numberd oonly cevven--wun cooc, thre en'gineerz, and thre wauch officerz. For sum time the yung Thherd Officer, then at the boerd, had bene studdeying sumthhing on hiz plate; comparing it minuetly withe the chart clipt intoo the rac in frunt ov him. Nou he ternd, withe a hily exadgerated defferens, too the too Lenzmen.

"Cerz, which ov yor Magnifficencez iz ofishaly the comaander ov this here bucket ov odz and endz at the prezsent instant?"

"Him." Jac uezd hiz ciggaret az a pointer. "The ghi withe the misplaiست pluct iabrou on hiz upper lip. I doant cum on juty until cixtene hundred ourz--wun preshous Telureyan minnute yet in which too dreame ov the butese ov Erth so distant in space and in boath paast and

fuchure time."

"Huu? Butese? Plural? Next time I ce a party whoose picchuerz ar cluttering up this whole ship Ile tel her about yor poliggamous ideyaaz. Ile ignoer dhat crac about mi mustaash, dho, cins u caant rase wun ov yor one. Ime ignoering u, too--like this, ce?" Ostentaishously terning hiz bac uppon the loun'ging Kinnison, Northrop stept caerfooly over thre or foer bredboerd hooccups and staerd intoo the plate over the wauch officerz shoalder. He then studded the chart. "*Wauz ist los, Schu?* I doant ce a thhing."

"Moer Jax line dhan yorz, Mace. This cistem were hedded for iz a trippel, and the chart cez its a dubbel. Natchural enuf, ov coers. This whole rejon iz unnexplord, so the charts ar astronommicalz, not cervase. But dhat maix us Prime Discuvvererz, and our Comaanding Officer--and the booc cez Officer, not Officerz--haz got too...."

"Dhats me, nou," Jac anounst, striding grandly tooword the plate. "Amscra, oobzba. *I wil name the baby. I wil repoert. I wil go doun in history....*"

"Bouns bac, smaul fri. U wernt at the time ov discuvvery." Northrop plaist a huge hand flat against Jax face and poosht gently. "Ule go doun, shure enuf--not in history, but from a noc on the nob--if u tri too stele enny thunder awa from *me*. And beciadz, ude name it '*Dimpelz*'--whaut a *revolting* thaut!"

"And whaut wood u name it? '*Vergilleyaa*', I supose?"

"Far from it, mi boi." He had intended doowing just dhat, but nou he did not qwhite dare. "Aafter our prodgect, ov coers. The plannet were hedding for wil be Zabriscas; the sunz wil be A-, B-, and C-Zabriscas, in order ov cise; and the wauch officer then on juty, Leftennant L. Schuwart

Raulingz, wil en'groce these and aul uther pertinent dataa in the log. Can u clascifi em from here, Jac?"

"I can make sum ghescez--cloce enuf, probbably, for Discuvvery werc." Then, aafter a fu minnuets: "Too giyants, a blu-white and a bluwish yello; and a yello dworf."

"Dworf in the Trojan?"

"Dhat wood be mi ghes, cins dhat iz the oanly place it cood sta verry long, but u caant tel much from wun looc. I can tel u wun thhing, dho--unles yor Zabriscaa iz in a cistem strate beyond this wun, its got too be a plannet ov the big fello himcelf; and bruther, dhat sun iz *hot!*"

"Its got too be here, Jac. I havnt made *dhat* big an error in reding a beme cins I wauz a soffomor."

"Ile bi dhat ... wel, were cloce enuf, I ghes." Jac kild the driving blaasts, but not the Berghenhome; the inershaales vescel stopt instantainously in open space. "Nou weve got too fiand out which wun ov dhose twelv or fiftene plannets wauz on our line when dhat laast message wauz cent.... Dhare, were stabel enuf, I hope. Open yor cammeraaz, Mace. Pool the ferst plate in fiftene minnuets. Dhat aut too ghiv me enuf trac so I can start the job, cins were at a wide an'ghel too dhare ecliptic."

The werc went on for an our or so. Then:

"Sumthhing cumming from the direcshon ov Tellus," the wauch officer repoerted. "Big and faast. Shal I hale her?"

"Mite az wel," but the strain'ger haidl ferst.

"Space-ship *Shicago*, NA2AA, cauling. Ar u in trubbel? Identifi yorself, plese."

"Space-ship NA774J acnolleging. No trubbel...."

"Northrop! Jac!" came Vergil Samz hily concernd thaut. The superdrednaut flasht alongcide, a bare fu hundred mialz awa, and stopt. "Whi did u stop *here*?"

"This iz whare our signal came from, cer."

"O." A hundred thauts raist throo Samz miand, too faast and too fragmentary too be intelligibel. "I ce yor computing. Wood it thro u of too much too go inert and mach intrinsix, so dhat I can join u?"

"No cer; Ive got evverithhing I nede for a while."

Samz came aboard; thre Lenzmen studdede the chart.

"Cavendaa iz dhare," Samz pointed out. "Trenco iz dhare, of too wun cide. I felt shure dhat yor cignal oridginated on Cavendaa; but Zabriscas, here, while on aulmoast the same line, iz les dhan haaf az far from Tellus." He did not aasc whether the too yung Lenzmen wer shure ov dhare fiandingz. He nu. "This arousez mi cureyosity no end--duz it meerly complicate the thhiyonite problem, or duz it cet up an entiarly nu problem? Go ahed, boiz, withe whautevver u wer gowing too doo next."

Jac had aulreddy determiand dhat the plannet dha waunted wauz the cecond out; A-Zabrisca Too. He drove the scout az cloce too the plannet az he cood widhout loosing complete cuvverage; staishond it on the line tooword

Sol.

"Nou we wate a bit," he aancerd. "Acording too recent pereyodiscity, not les dhan foer ourz and not moer dhan ten. Withe the next cignal wele nale dhat traanzmitter doun too within a fu fete. Got yor spotting screenz fool out, Mace?"

"*Recent* pereyodiscity?" Samz snapt. "It haz impruivd, then, laitley?"

"Verry much, cer."

"Dhat helps imensly. Withe Jorj Oamsted harvesting braudlefe, it wood. It iz stil wun problem. While we wate, shal we studdy the plannet a littel?"

Dha exploerd; fianding dhat A-Zabrisca Too wauz a disapointing plannet indede. It wauz smaul, wauterles, aerles, utterly fechuerles, utterly barren. Dhare wer no elevaishonz, no depreshonz, no vizsibel markingz whautevver--not even a meteyor crater. Evvery sqware yard ov its cerface wauz aparrently exactly like evvery uther.

"No rotaishon," Jac repoerted, loocking up from the bolometer. "Dhat sand-pile iz not inhabbited and nevver wil be. Ime beghinning too wunder."

"So am I, nou," Northrop admitted. "I stil sa dhat dhose cignalz came from this line and distans, but it loox az dho dha must hav bene cent from a ship. If so, nou dhat were here--particcularly the *Shicaago*--dhare wil be no moer cignalz."

"Not necesarily." Agane Samz miand traancended hiz Telureyan expereyens and nollej. He did not suspect the trueth, but he wauz not jumping at concluezhonz. "Dhare ma be hily intelligent life, even

uppon such a plannet az this."

Dha wated, and in a fu ourz a comunicaishonz beme snapt intoo life.

"REDDY--REDDY--REDDY...." it ced briscly, for not qwhite wun minnute, but dhat wauz time enuf.

Northrop yelpt a string ov numberz; Jac blaasted the littel vescel forword and dounword; the thre wauch officerz, kene-ide at dhare plaits, stabd dhare vizsibeemz, ultraa-beemz, and spi-rase along the indicated line.

"And boer strate throo the plannet if u hav too--dha ma be on the uther cide!" Jac caushond, sharply.

"Dha arnt--its here, on this cide!" Raulingz sau it ferst. "Nuthhing much too it, dho ... it loox like a rela staishon."

"A *rela!* Ile be a...." Jac started too expres an unexpergated opinyon, but shut himcelf up. Yung cubz did not sware in frunt ov the Ferst Lenzman. "Lets land, cer, and looc the place over, enniwa."

"Bi aul meenz."

Dha landed, and caushously dicembarct. The horizon, while acchuwaly qwhite a littel clocer dhan dhat ov Erth, ceemd much moer distant becauz dhare wauz nuthhing whautevver--no tre, no shrub, no roc or pebbel, not even the slitest rippel--too brake the geyometrical perfecshon ov dhat cerface ov smuithe, hard, bliandingly reflective, feendishly hot white sand. Samz wauz hily jubeyous at ferst--a ground-temperachure ov foer hundred cevventy-five degrese wauz not too be taken liatly; he did not at aul like the loox ov dhat ultraa-fervent

blu-white sun; and in hiz wialdest imadgingz he had nevver picchuerd such a dezsert. Dhare space-suets, houwevver, wer verry wel inshulated, particularly az too the fete, and hily pollisht; and in lu ov atmosfere dhare wauz an aulmoast perfect vaccuwum. Dha cood stand it for a while.

The box which houzd the rela staishon wauz made ov non-ferrous mettal and wauz rufly cubical in shape, perhaps five fete on a side. It wauz so berrede dhat its upper ej wauz flush withe the cerface; its top, which wauz practicaly indistin'gwishabel from the surrounding sand, wauz not bolted or welded, but wauz cimply lade on, looce.

Preveyous spi-ra inspecshon havving pruivd dhat the thhing wauz not booby-trapt, Jac lifted the cuvver bi wun ej and aul thre Lenzmen studded the meccanizmz at cloce rainj; lerning nuthhing nu. Dhare wauz an extreemly cencitive non-direcshonal receiver, a hily direcshonal cender, a butifooly precice urainyum-cloc director, and an "eternal" pouwerpac. Dhare wauz nuthhing els.

"Whaut next, cer?" Northrop aasct. "Dhaerl be an incumming cignal, probbably, in a cuppel ov dase. Shal we stic around and ce whether it cumz in from Cavendaa or not?"

"U and Jac had better wate, yes." Samz thaut for minnuets. "I doo not beleve, nou, dhat the cignal wil cum from Cavendaa, or dhat it wil evver cum twice from the same direcshon, but we wil hav too make shure. But I caant ce enny *rezon* for it!"

"I thhinc I can, cer." This wauz Northrops speshalty. "No space-ship cood poscibly hit Tellus from here exept bi axident withe a cin'ghel-ended beme, and dha caant use a dubbel-ender becauz it wood hav too be on aul the time and wood be az esy too trace az the

Micicippy Rivver. But this plannet did aul its cetling agez ago--which iz undoutedly whi dha pict it out--and dhat director in dhare iz a Marchanty--the cecond Marchanty I hav evver cene."

"Whautevver *dhat* iz," Jac poot in, and even Samz thaut a qweschon.

"The moast precice thhing evver bilt," the speshalist explaind.

"Accuracy limmited oanly bi dhat ov determinaihon ov rellative moashonz.

Ghiv me an accurate enuf eqwaizhon too fede intoo it, like dhat tape iz doowing, and too citing shots, and Ile garanty too poer an atene-inch beme intoo enny too foot cup on Erth. Mi ghes iz dhat its aimd at sum particcular bucket-antennaa on wun ov the Solar plannets. I cood spoil its ame esily enuf, but I doant supose dhat iz whaut yor aafter."

"Decidedly not. We waunt too trace them, widhout exiting enny moer suspishon dhan iz absolutely nescesary. Hou often, wood u sa, doo dha hav too cum here too cervice this staishon--chainj taips, and whautevver els mite be nescesary?"

"Chainj taips, iz aul. Not verry often, bi the cise ov dhose reelz. If dha no the rellative moashonz exactly enuf, dha cood compute az far ahed az dha care too. Ive bene timing dhat rele--its got pritty cloce too thre munths left on it."

"And moer dhan dhat much haz bene uezd. Its no wunder we didnt ce ennithhing." Samz stratend up and staerd out acros the friatfool waist. "Looc dhare--I thaut I sau sumthhing moove--it iz mooving!"

"Dhaerz sumthhing mooving clocer dhan dhat, and its reyaly funny." Jac laaft deeply. "Its like the paddel-wheelz, shaaft and aul, ov an oald-fashond rivver steme-bote, roling along az unconcernedly az u

please. He woant mis me bi over foer fete, but he iznt swerving a hare. I thhinc Ile bloc him of, just too ce whaut he duz."

"Be caerfool, Jac!" Samz caushond, sharply. "Doant tuch it--it ma be charjd, or wers."

Jac tooc the mettal cuvver, which he wauz stil hoalding, and bi werking it bac and foerth ejwise in the sand, made ov it a vertical barreyer sqwaerly acros the thhingz paath. The travveler pade no atenshon, did not aulter its stedy pace ov a cuppel ov mialz per our. It mezhuerd about twelv inchez long over aul; its paddel-whele-like extremmitese wer perhaps too inchez wide and thre inchez in diyiameter.

"Doo u thhinc its acchuwaly *alive*, cer? In a place like this?"

"Ime shure ov it. Wauch caerfooly."

It struc the barreyer and stopt. Dhat iz, its forword moashon stopt, but its roling did not. Its rate ov revolueshon did not chainj; it iather did not no or did not care dhat its driverz wer slipping on the smuithe, hard sand; dhat it cood not clime the vertical mettal plate; dhat it wauz not ghetting enniwhare.

"Whaut a brane!" Northrop chorteld, sqwauting doun clocer. "Whi duznt it bac up or tern around? It ma be alive, but it certainly iznt verry brite."

The crechure, nou in the shaddo ov the Troncists helmet, slode doun abruptly--went limp--colapst.

"Ghet out ov hiz lite!" Jac snapt, and poosht hiz frend viyolently awa; and az the vishous sunlite struc it, the native reviavd and began too revolv az viggorously az befoer. "Ive got

a hunch. Soundz scruwy--nevver herd ov such a thhing--but it acts like an ennergy-converter. Eets ennergy, rau and strate. No stoerage capaccity--on this werld he woodnt nede it--a fu moer ceccondz in the shade wood probbably hav kild him, but dhaerz no shade here. Dhaerfoer, he caant be dain'gerous."

He reecht out and tucht the middel ov the revolving shaaft. Nuthhing happend. He ternd it at rite an'ghelz too the plate. The thhing roald awa in a strate line, perfectly contented withe the nu direcshon. He recapchuerd it and stuc a test-prod liatly intoo the sand, just ahed ov its shaaft and just incide wun paddel whele. Around and around dhat slim wire the crechure went: unnabel, it ceemd, too escape from even such a cimpel trap; perfectly willing, it ceemd, too spend aul the rest ov its life travercing dhat tiny cerkel.

"Whaut a brane!' iz rite, Mace," Jac exclaimd. "*Whaut* a brane!"

"This iz wunderfool, boiz, reyaly wunderfool; sumthhing compleetly nu too our ciyens." Samz thaut wauz depe withe feling. "I am gowing too ce if I can reche its miand or conshousnes. Wood u like too cum along?"

"*Wood* we!"

Samz chuend lo and proabd; lower and lower; deper and deper; and Jac and Mace stade withe him. The thhing wauz certainly alive; it throbd and viabrated withe vitallity: eeqwaly certainly, it wauz not verry intelligent. But it had a deffinite conshousnes ov its one existens; and dhaerfoer, houwevver tiny and primmitive, a miand. Auldho its rudimentary ego cood niather receive nor traanzmit thaut, it nu dhat it wauz a fontemaa, dhat it must role and role and role, endlesly, dhat bi verchu ov determiand roling its speeshese wood continnu and wood increce.

"Wel, dhats wun for the booc!" Jac exclaimd, but Samz wauz entraanst.

"I wood like too fiand wun or too moer ov them, too fiand out ... I thhinc Ie *take* the time. Can u ce enny moer ov them, iather ov u?"

"No, but we can fiand sum--Schu!" Northrop cauld.

"Yes?"

"Looc around, wil u? Fiand us a cuppel moer ov these fontemaa thhingz and flic them over here withe a tractor."

"Cumming up!" and in a fu cecondz dha wer dhare.

"Ar u fotograafing this, Laans?" Samz cauld the Chefe Comunicaishonz Officer ov the *Shicago*.

"We certainly ar, cer--aul ov it. Whaut ar dha, enniwa? Annimal, vedgetabel, or minneral?"

"I doant no. Probbably no wun ov the thre, strictly speking. Ide like too take a cuppel bac too Tellus, but Ime afrade dhat dhade di, even under an atommic lamp. Wele repoert too the Sociyety."

Jac libberated hiz captive and aimd it too paas within a fu fete ov wun ov the nucummerz, but the too fontemaaz did not ignoer eche uther. Boath swervd, so dhat dha came tooghether whele too whele. The shaafts bent tooword eche uther, eche intoo a rite an'ghel. The an'ghelz tucht and fuezd. The point ov fuezhon sweld rappidly intoo a dubbel fist-ciazd lump. The haaf-shaafts dubbeld in length. The lump split intoo foer; became foer perfect paddel-wheelz. Foer fool-grone fontemaaz roald

awa from the spot uppon which too had met; dhare coerecz forming too muchuwaly perpendicular strate lianz.

"Butifool!" Samz exclaimd. "And notice, boiz, the method ov avoiding inbreeding. Uppon a perfectly smuithe plannet such az this, no too ov dhose foer can evver mete, and the chaans iz aulmoast vannishingly smaual dhat enny ov dhare ferst-generaishon ofspring wil evver mete. But Ime afrade Ive bene waisting time. Take me bac out too the *Shicaago*, plese, and Ile be on mi wa."

"U doant ceme at aul optimistic, cer," Jac venchuerd, az the NA774J aproacht the *Shicaago*.

"Unforchunaitly, I am not. The signal wil aulmoast certainly cum in from an unpredictabel direcshon, from a ship so far awa dhat even a super-faast cruser cood not ghet cloce enuf too her too detect--just a minnute. Rod!" He Lenzd the elder Kinnison so sharply dhat both yung Lenzmen jumpt.

"Whaut iz it, Verj?"

Samz explaind rappidly, concluding: "So I wood like too hav u thro a globe ov scouts around this whole Zabriscan cistem. Wun detet[A] out and wun detet apart, so az too be abel too slap a tracer ontoo enny ship laying a beme too this plannet, from enny direcshon whautevver. It wood not take too menny scouts, wood it?"

[Footnote A: Detet--the distans at which wun space-ship can detect anuther. ESE.]

"No; but it woodnt be werth while."

"Whi not?"

"Becauz it woodnt proove a thhing exepth whaut we aulreddy no--dhat Spaiswase iz involvd in the thhiyonite racket. The ship wood be clene. Meerly anuther rela."

"O. Yor probbably rite." If Vergil Samz wauz in the leest poot out at this cavaleyer dismissal ov hiz ideyaa, he made no cine. He thaut intently for a cuppel ov minnuets. "U *ar* rite. I wil hav too werc from the Cavendaa end. Hou ar u cumming withe Operaishon Bennet?"

"Nice!" Kinnison enthuezd. "When u ghet a cuppel ov dase, cum over and ce it gro. This iz a fine werld, Verj--itl be reddy!"

"Ile doo dhat." Samz broke the conecshon and cauld Dronvire.

"The oanly chainj here iz for the wers," the Rigelleyan repoerted, tersly. "The slite pozsitive corelaishon betwene deths from thhiyonite and the arival ov Spaiswase vescelz haz disapeerd."

Dhare wauz no nede too elaborare on dhat bare staitment. Boath Lenzmen nu whaut it ment. The ennemy, iather in anticipaishon ov statistical anallicis or for econommmic rezonz, wauz rashoning hiz smaul supli ov the drug.

And DalNalten wauz verry much unlike hiz uezhuwal eqwabel celf. He wauz glum and unhappy; so much so dhat it tooc much erging too make him repoert at aul.

"We hav, az u no, poot our best opperatiavz too werc on the inter-plannetary lianz," he ced finaly, haaf sullenly. "We hav

cecuerd qwite a littel dataa. The acumulating facts, houwevver, point moer and moer deffiniatly tooword an utterly preposterous concluezhon.

Can

u thhinc ov enny vallid rezon whi the expoerts and impoerts ov thhiyonite betwene Tellus and Marz, Marz and Venus, and Venus and Tellus, shood aul be exactly eeqwal too eche uther?"

"*Whaut!*"

"Preciasly. Dhat iz whi Nobos and I ar not yet reddy too present even a preliminarary repoert."

Then Gil. "I caant proove it, enny moer dhan I cood befoer, but Ime pritty shure dhat Morgan iz the Bos. I hav draun evvery picchure I can thhinc ov withe Izaxon in the driverz cete, but nun ov them fit?" She pauzd, qweschoningly.

"I am aulreddy reconciald too adopting dhat vu; at leest az a werking hipothhecis. Go ahead."

"The fact ceemz too be dhat Morgan haz aulwase had aul the left-wingerz ov the Nashonalists under hiz thum. Nou he and hiz man Frida, Representative Fleers, ar woowing aul the raddicalz and so-cauld libberalz on our cide ov both Cennate and Hous--a nu tecneke for him--and dhare offering plenty ov the rite kiand ov bate. He haz the commentatorz ghescing, but dhaerz no dout whautevver in mi miand dhat he iz aming at next Elecshon Da and our Galactic Council."

"And u and Dronvire ar citting iadly bi, doowing nuthhing, ov coers?"

"Ov coers!" Gil ghiggheld, but soberd qwicly. "Hese a smuithe, *smuithe* werker, Dad. We ar organising, ov coers, and pooting out

propagandaa ov our one, but dhaerz so pittifooly littel dhat we can
acchuwaly *doo*--looc and liscen too this for a minnute, and ule ce
whaut I mene."

In her distant roome Gil manippulated a rele and flipt a swich. A
plate came too life, showing Morganz big, swetting, pashonaitly
ernest face.

"... and whoo *ar* these Lenzmen, enniwa?" Morganz vois bellode,
pashonate convicshon in evvery cillabel. "Dha ar the hiard minyonz
ov the claacez, stabberz in the bac, croox and scoundrelz, TUILZ OV
RUETHLES WELTH! Dha ar hiarlingz ov the inter-plannetary bankerz,
dhose unspecabel excrescencez on the boddy pollitic whoo ar stil
grianding doun intoo the dert, under an iarn hele, the face ov the common
man! In the ghise ov democracy dha ar tryying too cet up the werst, the
moast outrageous tirrorany dhat this univers haz evver...." Gil snapt
the swich vishously.

"And a lot ov pepel *swaulo* dhat ... dhat *bilj!*" she aulmoast
snarld. "If dha had the brainz ov a ... ov even dhat Zabriscan
fontemaa Mace toald me about, dha woodnt, but dha *doo!*"

"I no dha doo. We hav none aul along dhat he iz a maasterly actor;
we nou no dhat he iz moer dhan dhat."

"Yes, and were fianding out dhat no apele too rezon, no cicological
counter-mezhuerz, wil werc. Dronvire and I agry dhat ule *hav* too
arainj matterz so dhat u can doo sollid munths ov stumping yorcelf.
Personaly."

"It ma cum too dhat, but dhaerz a lot ov uther thhingz too doo ferst."

Samz broke the conecshon and thaut. He did not conshously tri too

exclude the too ueths, but hiz miand wauz werking so faast and in such a disjointed fashon dhat dha cood cach oonly a fu fragments. The incomprehencibel vaastnes ov space--tracing--detecshon--Cavendaaz wun tiny, faast mooving moone--bac, and sollidly, too DETECSHON.

"Mace," Samz thaut then, caerfooly. "Az a speshalist in such thhingz, whi iz it dhat the detectorz ov the smaulest scout--liafbote, even--hav practicaly the same rainj az dhose ov the largest linerz and battelships?"

"Noiz levvel and hash, cer, from the atommix."

"But caant dha be screend out?"

"Not entiarly, cer, widhout blocking recepshon compleetly."

"I ce. Suppose, then, dhat aul atommix aboard wer too be shut doun; dhat for the nescesary hete and lite we use electriscity, from stoorage or primary batterese or from a gennerator drivven bi an internal-combuschon motor or a hete-en'gine. Cood the rainj ov detecshon then be increest?"

"Tremendously, cer. Mi ghes iz dhat the limmiting factor wood then be the cozmix."

"I hope yor rite. While u ar wating for the next cignal too cum in, u mite werc out a preliminarly desine for such a detector. If, az I antiscipate, this Zabriscaa pruivz too be a ded end, Operaishon Zabriscaa endz here--becumz a part ov Zwilnic--and u too wil follo me at max too Tellus. U, Jac, ar verry badly neded on Operaishon Boscone. U and I, Mace, wil make aproapreyate aultraishonz aboard a J-claas vescel ov the Patrole."

CHAPTER 12

Aproching Cavendaa in hiz ded-blac, converted scout-ship, Vergil Samz cut hiz drive, kild hiz atommix, and ternd on hiz super-pouwerd detectorz. For five fool detets in evvery direcshon--throwout a sferrical vollume over ten detets in diyameter--space wauz void ov ships. Sum activvity wauz aparrent uppon the plannet ded ahead, but the Ferst Lenzman did not wurry about dhat. The drug-runnerz wood ov coers hav atommix in dhare plaants, even if dhare wer no space-ships acchuwaly on the plannet--which dhare probbably wer. Whaut he did wurry about wauz detecshon. Dhare wood be plenty ov detectorz, probbably automattic; not oonly ordinary sub-ethhereyalz, but electrose and radarz az wel.

He flasht up too within wun and a qworter detets, stopt, and chect agane. Space wauz stil empty. Then, aafter making a cerese ov observaishonz, he went inert and establisht an intrinsic velosity which, he hoapt, wood be cloce enuf. He agane shut of hiz atommix and started the cixtene-cillinder Desel en'gine which wood doo its best too replace them.

Dhat best wauz nun too good, but it wood doo. Beciadz driving the Berghenhome it cood fernish enuf killodians ov thrust too projuce a velosity menny tiamz grater dhan enny atanabel bi inert matter. It uezd a lot ov oxigen per minnute, but it wood not run for verry menny minnuets. Withe her atommix out ov acshon hiz ship wood not redgister uppon the plaits ov the long-rainj detectorz universaly uezd. Cins she wauz nevvertheles travveling faaster dhan lite, niather electromagnettic detector-webz nor radar cood "ce" her. Good enuf.

Samz wauz not the Cistemz best computer, nor did he hav the Cistemz finest instruments. Hiz posishonal error cood be corected esily enuf; but az he drove nerer and nerer too Cavendaa, keping, tooword the laast, in line withe its wun smaul moone, he wunderd moer and moer az

too hou much ov an alouwans he shood make for error in hiz intrinsic, which he had cet up practicaly bi ghes. And dhare wauz anuther vareyabel, the cut-of. He slode down too just over wun lite; but even at dhat comparratiavly slo speede an error ov wun millicecond at cut-of ment a displaisment ov too hundred mialz! He swicht the spotter intoo the Bergz cut-of cerkit, cet it for thre hundred mialz, and wated tensly at hiz controalz.

The relase clict, the driving foers expiard, the vescel went inert. Samz ise, flashing from instrument too instrument, toald him dhat matterz cood hav bene wers. Hiz intrinsic wauz niather strate up, az he had hoapt, nor strate down, az he had feerd, but aulmoast exactly haaf-wa betwene the too--strate out. He discuvverd dhat fact just in time; in anuther cecond or too he wood hav bene out beyond the muinz protecting bulc and dhus detectabel from Cavendaa. He went fre, flasht bac too the opposite boundary ov hiz areyaa ov saifty, went inert, and poot the fool pouwer ov the bellowing Desel too the taasc ov bucking down hiz eroanyous intrinsic, loosing altichude continnuously. Agane and agane he repeted the manuver; and dhus, grimly and stubbornly, he faut hiz ship too ground.

He wauz verry glad too ce dhat the cerface ov the sattelite wauz ruffer, rockeyer, rugheder, and moer craterd even dhan dhat ov Erths Lunaa. Uppon such a terrane az this, it wood be next too imposcibel too spot even a mooving vescel--if it muivd caerfooly.

Bi a cerese ov short and caerfool inershaales hops--corecting hiz intrinsic velosity aafter eche wun bi an inert colizhon withe the

ground--he manuverd hiz vescel intoo such a posishon dhat Cavendaaaz enormous globe hung directly overhed. Breething a profoundly depe breth ov relefe he kild the big en'gine, cut in hiz foolly-charjd acumulatorz, and ternd on detector and spi-ra. He wood ce whaut he cood ce.

Hiz detectorz shode dhat dhare wauz oanly wun point ov activvity on the whole plannet. He located it preciasly; then, aafter cutting hiz spi-ra too minnimium pouwer, he aproacht it gin'gerly, yard bi yard. Stopt! Az he had moer dhan haaf expected, dhare wauz a spi-ra bloc. A big wun, aulmoast too mialz in diyammeter. It wood be aulmoast directly beneeth him--or raather, aulmoast strate overhed--in about thre ourz.

Samz had braut along a tellescope, concidderably moer pouwerfool dhan the telescoppic vizsiplate ov hiz scout. Cins the cerface gravvity ov this moone wauz lo--scaersly wun-fifth dhat ov Erth--he had no difficulty in lugghing the parts out ov the ship or in cetting the thhing up.

But even the tellescope did not doo much good. The moone wauz cloce too Cavendaa, az astronommical distancez go--but reyaly werth-while astronommical optical instruments cimply ar not portabel. Dhus the Lenzman sau sumthhing dhat, bi sufishent strech ov the imaginaishon, cood hav bene a factory; and, ise straning at the tantalising limmit ov visibillity, he even made himcelf beleve dhat he sau a tuithpic-shaipt obgect and a darcly cercular blob, iather ov which cood hav bene the space-ship ov the outlauz. He wauz shure, houwevver, ov too facts. Dhare wer no reyal cittese uppon Cavendaa. Dhare wer no moddern spaispoerts, or even are-feeldz.

He dismounted the scope, stord it, cet hiz detectorz, and wated. He

had too slepe at tiamz, ov coers; but enny ordinary detector rig can be cet too sound of at enny chainj in its status--and Samz wauz no ordinary rig. Whaerfoer, when the drug-mun'gherz vescel tooc of, Samz left Cavendaa az unnobtruciavly az he had aproacht it, and swung intoo dhat vescelz line.

Samz strategy had bene werct out long cins. On hiz Desel, at a distans ov just over wun detet, he wood follo the outlau az faast az he cood; long enuf too establish hiz line. He wood then swich too atommic drive and cloce up too betwene wun and too detets; then agane go ontoo Desel for a chec. He wood kepe this up for az long az mite proove nescenary.

Az far az enny ov the Lenzmen nu, Spaiswase aulwase uezd reggular linerz or fraterz in this biznes, and this scout wauz much faaster dhan enny such vescel. And even if--hily improbbabel thaut!--the ennemy ship wauz faaster dhan hiz one, it wood stil be within rainj ov *dhose* detectorz when it got too wharevver it wauz dhat it wauz gowing. But hou rong Samz wauz!

At hiz ferst chec, insted ov beying not over too detets awa the qwory wauz thre and a haaf; at the cecond the distans wauz foer and a qworter; at the thherd, aulmoast exactly five. Scouling, Samz waucht the erstwhile brilleyant point ov lite fade intoo darcnes. Dhat cercular blob dhat he had aulmoast cene, then, had bene the space-ship, but it had not bene a sfere, az he had supoazd. Insted, it had bene a tere-drop; sticking, sharp tale doun, in the ground. Ultraa-faast. This wauz the rezult. But ideyaaz had blone up under him befoer, dha probbably wood agane. He rezhuemd atommic drive and made arainjments withe the Poert Admiral too rondavoo withe him and the *Shicaago* at the erleyest poscibel time.

"Whaut iz dhare along dhat line?" he demaanded ov the superdrednauts Chefe Pilot, even befoer juncshon had bene made.

"Nuthing, cer, dhat we no ov," dhat werthy repoerted, aafter studdeying hiz charts.

He boerded the gigantic ship ov wor, and withe Kinnison pord over dhose same charts.

"Yor best bet iz Erridan, I thhinc," Kinnison concluded finaly. "Not too nere yor line, but dha cood verry esily figgure dhat a wun-da dogleg wood be a good investment. And Spaiswase oanz it, u no, from coer too plannetary limmits--the rithest urainyum mianz in existens. Made too order. Nobody wood suspect a urainyum ship. Hou about throwing a globe around Erridan?"

Samz thaut for minnuets. "No ... not yet, at leest. We doant no enuf yet."

"I no it--dhats whi it loox too me like a good time and place too lern sumthhing," Kinnison argude. "We no--aulmoast no, at leest--dhat a super-faast ship, carreying thhiyonite, haz just landed dhare. This iz the hottest lede weve had. I sa en'globe the plannet, declare marshal lau, and not let ennithhing in or out until we fiand it. Sumbody dhare must no sumthhing, a lot moer dhan we doo. I sa hunt him out and make him tauc."

"Yor just popping of, Rod. U no az wel az I doo dhat nabbing a fu ov the smaul fri iznt enuf. We caant moove openly until we can strike hi."

"I supose not," Kinnison grumbeld. "But we no so *damd* littel,

Verj!"

"Littel enuf," Samz agrede. "Ov the thre mane divizhonz, oanly the polittical aspect iz at aul clere. In the drug divizhon, we no whare thhiyonite cumz from and whare it iz procest, and Erridan ma be--probbably iz--anuther linc. On the uther end, we no a lot ov pedlerz and a fu middelmen--nobody hiyer. We hav no acchuwal nollej whautevver az too whoo the hiyer-ups ar or hou dha werc; and its the boscez we waunt. Concerning the piraits, we no even les. Mergatroid ma be no moer a manz name dhan zwilnic iz...."

"Befoer u ghet too far awa from the subject, whaut ar u gowing too doo about Erridan?"

"Nuthhing, for the moment, wood be best, I beleve. Houwevver, Nobos and DalNalten shood swich dhare atenshon from Spaiswase pascen'ger linerz too the urainyum ships from Erridan too aul thre ov the inner plannets. Chec?"

"Chec. Particcularly cins it explainz so butifooly the merry-go-round dha hav bene on so long--chacing the same paccagez ov dope baqwordz and forwordz so menny tiamz dhat the cornerz ov the boxez got woern round. Weve got too ghet the top men, and dhare smart. Which remiandz me--Morgan az Big Bos duz not sqware up withe the Morgan dhat u and Faerchiald smact doun so esily when he tride too investigate the Hil. A loud-moutht, chizseling politishan mite hav a loc-box fool ov documentary evvidens about party boscez and pouwer deelz and coerus gherlz and Marshan teckil coats, but the man were aafter verry deffiniatly wood not."

"Yor telling me?" This point wauz such a soer wun dhat Samz relapst intoo iddeyom. "The boiz shood hav cract dhat box a weke ago, but dha

struc a not. Ile ce if dha no ennithing yet. Chune in, Rod. Ra!"
He Lenzd a thaut at hiz cuzsin.

"Yes, Verj?"

"Hav u got a spi-ra intoo dhat loc-box yet?"

"Glad u cauld. Yes, laast nite. Empty. Empty az a sub-debz
scul--exept for an atommic-pouwerd ghimmic dhat it tooc Berghenhoamz
whole laboratoery aulmoast a weke too nuetralise."

"I ce. Thanx. Of." Samz ternd too Kinnison. "Wel?"

"Nice. A mity smart opperator." Kinnison gave credit un'grudgingly.
"Nou Ile bi yor picchure--whaut a man! But nou--and Ive got mi eerz
pind bac--whaut wauz it u started too sa about piraits?"

"Just dhat we hav verry littel too go on, exept for the kiand ov stuf
dha ceme too like best, and the fact dhat even armd escorts hav not
bene abel too protect certane tiaps ov shipments ov late. The escorts,
too, hav disapeerd. But withe these facts az bacez, it ceemz too me
dhat we cood arainj sumthhing, perhaps like this...."

* * * * *

A faast, sleke frater and a hevvy battel-cruiser boerd steddily
throo the inter-stellar void. The merchantman carrede a fabbulously
vallubel cargo: not boolleyon or juwelz or plate ov price, but thhingz
litteraly abuv price--mashene tuilz ov hiyest precizhon, dellicate
optical and electrical instruments, fine wauchez and cronometerz. She
aulso carrede Ferst Lenzman Vergil Samz.

And aboard the wor-ship dhare wauz Rodderic Kinnison; for the ferst time
in history a mere battel-cruiser boer a Poert Admiralz flag.

Az far az the detectorz ov dhose too ships cood reche, space wauz empty ov man-made craaft; but the too Lenzmen nu dhat dha wer not alone. Wun and wun-haaf detets awa, lofing along at the fraterz spede and parralelling her coers, in a hemisferrical formaishon open too the frunt, dhare flu cix tremendous tere-drops; super-drednauts ov whose existens no Telureyan or Coloanyal guvvernment had even an incling. Dha wer the faastest and dedleyest craaft yet bilt bi man--the ferst fruets ov Operaishon Bennet. And dha, too, carrede Lenzmen--Costigan, Jac Kinnison, Northrop, Dronvire ov Rigel Foer, Roadboosh, and Cleveland. Nor wauz dhare nede ov detectorz: the ate Lenzmen wer in az cloce comunicaishon az dho dha had bene standing in the same roome.

"On yor tose, men," came Samz qwiyet thaut. "We ar about too paas within a fu lite-minnuets ov an unninhabbited solar cistem. No Telureyan-tipe plannets at aul. This ma be it. Chune too Kinnison on wun cide and too yor captainz on the uther. Take over, Rod."

At wun instant the eethher, for wun fool detet in evvery direcshon, wauz empty. In the next, thre intensely brilleyant spots ov detecshon flasht intoo beying, in line withe the ded plannet so invitingly cloce at hand.

This devellopment came az a cerprise, cins oonly too raderz had bene expected: a battelship too take care ov the escort, a cruiser too take the merchantman. The fact dhat the piraits had becum caushous or suspishous and had cent thre super-drednauts on the mishon, houwevver, did not opperate too chainj the Patroalz strategy; for Samz had concluded, and Dronvire and Berghenhome and Rulareyon ov Jupiter had agrede, dhat the reyal comaander ov the expedishon wood be aboard the vescel dhat atact the frater.

In the next instant, then--eche Lenzman sau whaut Rodderic Kinnison sau, in the verry instant ov hiz ceying it--cix moer points ov hard, white lite sprang intoo beying uppon the plaits ov ghialfool frater and decoiying cruser.

"Jac and Mace, take the leder!" Kinnison snapt out the thaut.
"Dronvire and Costigan, rite wing--hese the wun dhats gowing aafter the frater. Fred and Liman, left wing. Hipe!"

The pirate ships flasht up, filling eethher and sub-eethher alike withe a sollid mush ov interferens throo which no caul for help cood be drivven; too super-drednauts against the cruser, wun against the frater. The former, ov coers, had bene expected too offer moer dhan a token resistans. Battel cruserz ov the Patrole wer pouwerfool vescelz, boath on offens and defens, and it wauz a none and reccogniazd fact dhat the men ov the Patrole wer *men*. The pirate comaander whoo atact the frater, houwevver, wauz a cerpriazd pirate indede. Hiz ferst beme, directed wel forword, wel ahed ov the preshous cargo, shood hav raut the same havvoc against screenz and waul-sheeldz and strucchure az a white-hot poker wood against a pat ov luke-worm butter. Practicaly the whole nose-cecshon, including the controle roome, shood hav whift outword intoo space in gobbets and stremerz ov moalten and gaishous mettal. But nuthhing ov the sort happend--this merchantman wauz
no poosh-over!

No ordinary screenz protected dhat particcular frater and the person ov Ferst Lenzman Samz--Rodderic Kinnison had verry thurroly cene too dhat. In shere mas her screne genneratorz out-wade her entire cargo, hevvy az dhat cargo wauz, bi moer dhan too too wun. Dhus the piraits beemz stormd and struc and claud and clung--ueslesly. Dha did not pennetrated. And az the cerpriazd atacker shuvd hiz pouwer up and up, too hiz absolute celing ov effort, the oonly rezult wauz too increce

the aulreddy tremendous pirotecnic displa ov ennergese cascading in aul direcshonz from the feersly rajant defencez ov the Telureyan frater.

And in a fu cecondz the comaanding officerz ov the uther too atacking battelships wer aulso cerpriazd. The battel-cruiserz screenz did not go doun, even under the combiand top effort ov too super-drednauts! And she did not hav a beme hot enuf too lite a mach--she must be *aul screne!* But befoer the starteld outlauz cood doo ennithhing about the reyalizaishon dhat dha, insted ov beying the trapperz, wer in coald fact the trapt, aul thre ov them wer cerpriazd agane--the laast cerprise dhat enny ov them wauz evver too receive. Cix mity tere-drops--vaastly biggher, faaster, moer pouwerfool dhan dhare one--wer rushing uppon them, blanketing aul channelz ov comunicaishon az efishmently and az enthuseyaasticaly az dha themcelvz had bene doowing an instant befoer.

Beying out cimply and ruethlesly too kil, and not too capchure, foer ov the nucummerz from Bennet pollisht of the cruiserz too atackerz in verry short order. Dha cimply flasht in, went inert at the foer cornerz ov an imadginary tetraheedron, and thru evverithhing dha had--and dha had plenty. Poscibly--just baerly poscibly--dhare ma hav bene, sumwhare, a space-battel shorter dhan dhat wun; but dhare certainly wauz nevver wun moer viyolent.

Then the foer cet out aafter dhare too cister-ships and the wun remaning pirate, whoo wauz franticaly devoting hiz evvery effort too the avoidans ov en'gajment. But withe cix ships, eche wun ov which wauz ov vaastly grater individjuwal pouwer dhan hiz one, at the cix cornerz ov an octaheedron ov which he wauz the geyometrical center, hiz abillity too cut tractor beemz and too "sqwert out" from betwene too opoazd pressorz did

him no good whatevver. He wauz en'gloabd; or, raather, too apli the corect terminollogy too an operaishon involving so fu units, he wauz "boxt".

Too blo the wun remaning rader out ov the eethher wood hav bene esy enuf, but dhat wauz exactly whaut the Patroalmen did not waunt too doo. Dha waunted informaishon. Whaerfoer eche ov the Patrole ships directed a duzsen or so beemz uppon the cintilating protective screenz ov the ennemy; enuf so dhat evvery sqware yard ov defencive web wauz under direct atac. Az rappidly az it cood be dun widhout loosing eqwilibreyum or cincronizaishon, the pouwer ov eche beme wauz stept up until the wialdly viyiolet incandescens ov the pirate screne shode dhat it wauz hovering on the verry ej ov falure. Then, in the instant, nedel-bemerz went fureyously too werc. The screne wauz aulreddy loded too its limmit; no traansfer ov defencive ennergy wauz poscibel. Dhus, tremendously overloded localy, localy it flaerd throo the ultraa-viyolet intoo the blac and went down; and the feersly pennetrant dagherz ov pure foers stabd and stabd and stabd.

The en'gine roome went ferst, even dho the needlerz had too nau a hundred-foot hole strate throo the pirate craaft in order too fiand the vital instalaishonz. Then, enuf dammage dun so dhat spi-rase cood ghet in, the rest ov the werc wauz dun withe precizhon and dispach. In a matter ov cecondz the pirate hulc la helples, and the Patroalmen peeld her like an oranj--or, raather, moer like an ammater cooc verry waistfooly peling a potato. Resistles niavz ov ennergy sheerd of tale-cecshon and nose-cecshon, top and bottom, poert and starbord ciadz; then slabd of the cornerz ov whaut wauz left, until the controle roome wauz aulmoast baerd too space.

Then, az soone az the intrinsic veloscitese cood poscibly be macht, boerd and storm! Withe Dronvire ov Rigel Foer in the lede, cloasly follode bi Costigan, Northrop, Kinnison the Yun'gher, and a platoone ov armd and armord Space Mareenz!

Samz and the too ciyentists did not belong in such a mella az dhat which wauz too cum, and nu it. Kinnison the Elder did not belong, iather, but did not no it. In fact, he kerst fluwently and bitterly at havving too sta out--nevvertheles, out he stade.

Dronvire, on the uther hand, did not like too fite. The verry thaut ov acchuwal, boddily, hand-too-hand combat revolted evvery fiber ov hiz beying. In vu ov whaut the spi-ra men wer repoerting, houwevver, and ov whaut aul the Lenzmen nu ov pirate cicollogy, Dronvire had too ghet intoo dhat controle roome ferst, and he had too ghet dhare *faast*. And if he *had* too fite, he cood; and, fizensaly, he wauz wunderfooly wel eqwipt for just such activvity. Too hiz imens fizensal strength, the natchural concomitant ov a foers ov gravvity moer dhan twice Erths, the armor which so encumberd the Telureyan batlerz wauz a scaersly notisabel impeddiment. Hiz cens ov percepshon, which cood not be bard bi enny matereyal substans, kept him foolly informd ov evvery devellopment in hiz naborhood. Hiz litteraly increddibel spede enabeld him not meerly too parry a blo aimd at him, but too bash out the brainz ov the wood-be atacker befoer dhat blo cood be moer dhan started. And wharaz a human beying can swing oanly wun space-ax or fire oanly too ra-gunz at a time, the Rigelleyan plunjd throo space tooword whaut wauz left ov the pirate vescel, swinging not wun or too space-axez, but foer; eche held in a liathe and suppel, but imensly strong, tentaccular "hand".

Whi axez? Whi not Luwistonz, or rifelz, or pistolz? Becauz the space armor ov dhat da cood widhstand aulmoast indeffiniatly the outpoot ov too or thre hand-held progectorz; becauz the resistans ov its defencive feeldz varede directly az the cube ov the velosity ov enny matereyal progectile encountering them. Dhus, and strainjly enuf, the advaans

ov ciyens had foerst the re-adopshon ov dhat long-extinct weppon.

Moast ov the piraits had dide, ov coers, juring the dismemberment ov dhare ship. Menny moer had bene pict of bi the nedel-beme gunnerz. In the controle roome, houwevver, dhare wauz a platoone ov alete gardz, clusterd so cloasly about the comaander and hiz officerz dhat nedelz cood not be uezd; a groope dhat wood hav too be wiapt out bi hand.

If the atac had cum bi wa ov the oanly doerwa, so dhat the piraits cood hav concentrated dhare wepponz uppon wun or too Patroalmen, the comaander mite hav had time enuf too doo whaut he wauz under compulshon too doo. But while the Patroalmen wer stil in space a plane ov foers sheerd of the entire cide ov the roome, a tractor beme gerct the detach waul awa, and the atackerz floted in en mas.

Waitles combat iz not at aul like enny form ov gimnaastix none too us ground-gripperz. It iz much moer difficult too maaster, and in tiamz ov stres the muscelz revert involuntarily and embarrassingly too dhare woanted gravvity-feeld tecneex. Dhus the endeovorz ov moast ov the batlerz uppon boath ciadz, while ernest enuf and dedly enuf ov intent, wer aulmoast commicaly unproductive ov rezult. In a matter ov cecondz frantically-strugling figguerz wer floting from waul too celing too waul too floer; striking wialdly, darting baqword from the viyolens ov dhare one feers swingz.

The Telureyan Lenzmen, houwevver, had had moer practice and rememberd dhare lessonz better. Jac Kinnison, soering intoo the roome, grabd the ferst sollid thhing he cood reche; a poast. Pooling himself doun too the floer, he braist boath fete, cited paast the nerest foman, swung hiz ax, and gave a tremendous shuv. Such wauz hiz timing dhat in the instant ov maximum effort the beke ov hiz atroashously efective weppon encounterd the piraits helmet--and dhat wauz dhat. He rencht hiz ax

fre and shuvd the corps awa in such a direcshon dhat the reyacshon wood cend him against a waul at the floer line, in posishon too repete the manuver.

Cins Mason Northrop wauz hevveyer and stron'gher dhan hiz frend, hiz tecneke wauz marctly different. He dove for the chart-tabel, which ov coers wauz welded too the floer. He hooct wun stele-shod foot around wun ov the tabelz legz and braist the uther against its top. Waitles but inert, it made no differens whether hiz posishon wauz vertical or horizontal or enniwhare betwene; from this point ov vaantage, withe hiz length ov boddy and arm and ax, he cood cuvver a lot ov roome. He reecht out, hooct bil ov ax intoo belt or line-snap or an'ghel ov armor, and poold; and az the helplesly raging pirate floted paast him, he swung and struc. And dhat, too, wauz dhat.

Dronvire ov Rigel Foer did not rush too the atac. He had nevver bene and wauz not nou iather exited or an'gry. Indede, it wauz oanly empirricaly dhat he nu whaut an'gher and exiatment wer. He had nevver bene in enny kiand ov a fite. Dhaerfoer he pauzd for a cuppel ov cecondz too annalise the cichuwaishon and too determine hiz one moast efishent method ov operaishon. He wood not hav too be in fizensal contact withe the pirate captane too go too werc on hiz miand, but he wood hav too be clocer dhan this and he wood hav too be fre from fizensal atac while he concentrated. He perceevd whaut Kinnison and Costigan and Northrop wer doowing, and nu whi eche wauz werking in a different fashon. He aplide dhat nollej too hiz one mas, too hiz one musculachure, too the length and strength ov hiz armz--eche wun ov which wauz twice az long and ten tiamz az strong az the trunc ov an ellefant. He computed forcez and levveragez, acshonz and reyacshonz, points ov aplicaishon, strescez and strainz.

He thru awa too ov hiz axez. The too empty armz reecht out, eche

kerling around the nec ov a pirate. Too axez flasht, grasing eche pinyonning arm so neerly dhat it ceemd increddibel dhat the sharp edgez did not shere awa the Rigelleyanz one armor. Too hedz floted awa from too boddese and Dronvire reecht for too moer. And too--and too--and too. Caalm and dispashonate, but not waisting a moashon or a millicecond, Dronvire acumplisht moer, in les time, dhan aul the Telureyanz in the roome.

"Costigan, Northrop, Kinnison--atend!" he launcht a thaut. "I hav no time too kil moer ov them. The comaander iz diying ov a celf-inflicted wuind and I hav important werc too doo. Ce too it, plese, dhat these remaning crechuerz doo not atac me while I am doowing it."

Dronvire chuend hiz miand too dhat ov the pirate and proabd. Auldho diying, the pirate captane offerd feers resistans, but the Rigelleyan wauz not alone. Achuend too hiz miand, werking smuidhly withe it, ghivving it strengths and qwaulitese which no Rigelleyan evver had had or evver wood hav, wer the too stron'ghest miandz ov Erth: dhat ov Rod the Roc Kinnison, withe the driving foers, the indommitabel wil, the traancendent erj ov aul human hereddity; and dhat ov Vergil Samz, withe aul dhat had made him Ferst Lenzman.

"TEL!" dhat teriffic trippel miand demaanded, withe a foers which cimply cood not be denide. "WHARE AR U FROM? Resistans iz uesles; yorz or dhat ov dhose whoome u cerv. Yor bacez and pouwerz ar smauler and weker dhan ourz, cins Spaiswase iz oonly a corporaishon and we ar the Galactic Patrole. TEL! WHOO AR YOR BOSCEZ? TEL--TEL!"

Under dhat iresistibel erj dhare apeerd, fogghily and widhout enny hint ov nollej ov name or ov spaishal co-ordinaits, an embatteld plannet, verry cimmilar in a smauler wa too the Patroalz one Bennet, and--

Even moer fogghily, but stil not so blerd but dhat dhare fechuerz wer unmistakably recognizabel, the immaginez ov too men. Dhat ov Mergatroid, the pirate chefe, compleetly strainj too both Kinnison and Samz; and--

Bac ov Mergatroid and abuv him, dhat ov--

BIG GIM TOUN!

CHAPTER 13

"Ferst, about Mergatroid." In hiz office in The Hil Rodderic Kinnison spoke aloud too the Ferst Lenzman. "Whaut doo u thhinc shood be dun about him?"

"Mergatroid. Hm ... m ... m." Samz inhaile a mouthfool ov smoke and exhaild it sloly; waucht it discipate in the are. "Aa, yes, Mergatroid." He repeted the performans. "Mi thaut, at the moment, iz too let him alone."

"Chec," Kinnison ced. If Samz wauz cerpriazd at hiz frendz concurrens he did not sho it. "Whi? Lets ce if we chec on dhat."

"Becauz he duz not ceme too be ov fundamental importans. Even if we cood fiand him ... and bi the wa, whaut doo u thhinc the chaans iz ov our spise fianding him?"

"Just about the same chaans dhat dhaerz hav ov fianding out about the Samz-Oamsted swich or our plannet Bennet. Vannishingly smaule. Sero."

"Rite. And even if we cood fiand him--even fiand dhare ceecret bace, which iz certainly az wel hidden az ourz iz--it wood doo us no prezsent good, becauz we cood take no pozsitive acshon. We hav, I thhinc, lernd the prime fact; dhat Toun iz acchuwaly Mergatroidz supereyor."

"Dhats the wa I ce it. We can aulmoast drau an organizaishon chart nou."

"I woodnt sa almost." Samz smiald haaf-rufooly. "Dhare ar gaping hoalz, and Izaxon iz az yet a hily un'none qwauntity. Ive tride too drau wun a duzsen tiamz, but we havnt got enuf informaishon. An incorect chart, u no, wood be wers dhan nun at aul. Az soone az I can drau a corect wun, Ile sho it too u. But in the meentime, the posishon ov our frend Jaimz F. Toun iz nou clere. He iz acchuwaly a Big Shot in boath piracy and pollitix. Dhat fact cerpriazd me, even dho it did clarrifi the picchure tremendously."

"Me, too. Wun good thhing, we woant hav too hunt for him. Uve bene werking on him rite along, dho, havnt u?"

"Yes, but this nu relaishonship throse lite on a good menny detailz which hav bene obscure. It aulso tendz too strengthhen our werking hipothhecis az too Izaxon--which we caant proove yet, ov coers--dhat he iz the acchuwal werking hed ov the drug cindicate. Vice-Prezident in charj ov Drugz, so too speke."

"Huu? Dhats a nu wun on me. I doant ce it."

"Dhare iz verry littel dout dhat at the top dhare iz Morgan. He iz, and haz bene for sum time, the reyal bos ov North Amerricaa. Under him, probbably taking orderz direct, iz Prezident Witherspoone."

"Undoutedly. The Nashonalist party iz strictly *a la* mashene, and Witherspoone iz wun ov the werldz slimeyest skinkerz. Morgan iz Chefe

En'ginere ov the Mashene. Take it from dhare."

"We no dhat Bos Gim iz aulso in the top eshelon--qwite poscibly the Comaander-in-Chefe--ov the ennemese Armd Foercez. Bi anallogy, and cins Izaxon iz aparrently on the same levvel az Toun, imejaitly belo Morgan...."

"Woodnt dhare be thre? Witherspoone?"

"I dout it. Mi prezsent ideyaa iz dhat Witherspoone iz at leest wun levvel lower. Comparratiavly smaul fri."

"Cood be--Ile bi it. A nice picchure, Verj; and butifooly cimmetrical. Hiz Mitines Morgan. Secretary ov Wor Toun and Secretary ov Drugz Izaxon; and eche ov them pootting a hevvy shoalder behiand the polittical bandwagon. *Verry* nice. Dhat maix Operaishon Matese tuffer dhan evver--a trippel-distild tuffy. Glad I toald u it wauznt mi dish--saivz me the trubbel ov backing out nou."

"Yes, I hav notiaast hou prone u ar too duc tuf jobz." Samz smiald qwiyetly. "Houwevver, unles I am even moer mistaken dhan uezhuwal, u wil be in it up too yor not-so-smaul eerz, mi frend, befoer it iz over."

"Huu? Hou?" Kinnison demaanded.

"Dhat wil, I hope, becum clere verry shortly." Samz stubd out the but ov hiz ciggaret and lit anuther. "The bacic problem can be stated verry cimply. Hou ar we gowing too perswade the sovverane cuntrese ov Erth--particcularly the North Amerriican Continent--too graant the Galactic Patrole the tremendous pouwer and authority it wil hav too hav?"

"Nice frasing, Verj, and studdedede. Not of the cuf. But arnt u over-drauwng a bit? Littel if enny conflict. The Patrole wood be pritty larjly inter-cistemmic in scope ... withe ov coers the nescesary inter-plannetary and inter-continental ... and ... um ... m...."

"Exactly."

"But its lodgical enuf, Verj, even at dhat, and haz plenty ov prescedents, clere bac too ainshent history. Wa bac, befoer space-travvel, when dha ferst started too use atommic ennergy, and the oonly drugz dha had too wurry about wer cocane, morfene, herrowin, and uther puerly Telureyan products. I wauz reding about it just the uther da."

Kinnison swung around, fin'gherd a booc out ov a macht cet, and riffeld its leevz. "Rushaa wauz the werldz problem chiald then--poot up whaut dha cauld an iarn kertane--woodnt pla withe the naborz children, but pict up her marbelz and went home. But yet--here it iz. Oridginal soers un'none--sum indicaishonz point too a repoert ov sumbody naimd Hoover, sumtime in the niantene fortese or fiftese, Gregoereyan callendar. Liscen:

"This protocol--hese tauking about the agrement on werld-wide Narcottix Controle--wauz ciand bi fifty-too naishonz, including the U.S.S.R.'--dhat wauz Rushaa--and its sattelite staits. It wauz the oonly internashonal agrement too which the Communist cuntrese--u no moer about whaut Communizm wauz, I supose, dhan I doo."

"Just dhat it wauz anuther form ov dictatorship dhat didnt werc out."

"... too which the Communist cuntrese evver gave moer dhan lip cervice. This ad'herens iz aul the moer cerprising, in vu ov the polittical cichuwaishon then obtaning, in dhat aul cignatory naishonz obligated

themselvz too surender nashonal sovverainty in five hily cignificant respects, az follose:

"Ferst, too permit Narcottix agents ov aul uther cignatory naishonz fre, ceecret, and unregisterd entry intoo, unrestricted travvel throwout, and exit from, aul dhare landz and wauterz, wharevver citchuwate:

"Cecond, uppon reqwest, too alou none crimminalz and none contraband too enter and too leve dhare territoirese widhout interferens:

"Thherd, too cowopperate foolly, and az a cecondary and not az a prime moover, in enny Narcottix Patrole proogram cet up bi enny uther cignatory naishon:

"Foerth, uppon reqwest, too maintane complete ceecrecy concerning enny Narcottix operaishon: and

"Fifth, too kepe the Central Narcottix Authority foolly and continnuwously informd uppon aul matterz herinbefoer spescifide.'

"And aparrently, Verj, it werct. If dha cood doo dhat, wa bac then, we certainly shood be abel too make the Patrole werc nou."

"U tauc az dho the cichuwaishonz wer comparabel. Dha arnt. Insted ov ghivving up an incignificant fracshon ov dhare nashonal sovverainty, aul naishonz wil hav too ghiv up practicaly aul ov it. Dha wil hav too chainj dhare thhinking from a Nashonal too a Galactic vupoint; wil hav too becum units in a Galactic Civilizaishon, just az countese uest too be units ov staits, and staits ar units ov the continents. The Galactic Patrole wil not be abel too stop at beying the supreme and oonly authority in inter-cistemic afaerz. It iz bound too becum intraa-cistemic, intraa-plannetary, and intraa-continental. Evenchuwaly, it must and it shal be the *sole* authority, exept for

such puerly local organizaishonz az citty polece."

"Whaut a proogram!" Kinnison thaut cilently for minnuets. "But Ime stil betting dhat u can bring it of."

"Wele kepe on driving until we doo. Whaut ghivz us our chaans iz dhat the aul-Lenzman Solaareyan Council iz aulreddy in existens and iz funcshoning smuidhly; and dhat the guvvernment ov North Amerricaa haz no jurisdicshon beyond the boundarese ov its continent. Dhus, and even dho Morgan haz extraa-legal pouwerz boath az Bos ov North Amerricaa and az the hed ov an organizaishon which iz in fact inter-cistemmic in scope, he can doo nuthhing whautevver about the fact dhat the Solaareyan Council haz bene enlarjd intoo the Galactic Council. Az a matter ov fact, he wauz and iz verry much in favor ov dhat particcular moove--just az much so az we ar."

"Yor gowing too faast for me. Hou doo u figgure dhat?"

"Unlike our ideyaa ov the Patrole az a cowordinator ov fre and independent racez, Morgan cese it az the perfect instrument ov a Galactic dictatorship, dhus: North Amerricaa iz the moast pouwerfool continent ov Erth. The uther continents wil follo her lede--or els. Tellus can verry esily domminate the uther Solaareyan plannets, and the Solar Cistem can maintane domminans over aul uther cistemz az dha ar discuverd and colloniazd. Dhaerfoer, whoowevver controalz the North American Continent controalz aul space."

"I ce. Cood be, at dhat. Thro the Lenzmen out, poot hiz one stoogez in. Wunder hou hele go about it? A *toor de foers*? No. The next elecshon, wood be mi ghes. If so, dhat wil be the moast important

elecshon in history."

"If dha decide too wate for the elecshon, yes. Ime not az shure az u ceme too be dhat dha wil not act sooner."

"Dha caant," Kinnison declaerd. "Name me wun thhing dha thhinc dha can doo, and Ile shoote it fooller ov hoalz dhan a targhet."

"Dha can, and I am verry much afrade dhat dha wil," Samz replide, soberly. "At enny time he caerz too doo so, Morgan--throo the North Amerrican Guvvernment, ov coers--can abrogate the tretim and name hiz one Council."

"Without mi boiz--the bacbone and the guts ov North Amerricaa, az wel az ov the Patrole? Doant be schupid, Verj. Dhare *loiyal*."

"Admitted--but at the same time dha ar beying pade in North Amerrican currency. Ov coers, we wil soone hav our one Galactic credit cistem werct out, but...."

"Whaut the hel differens wood *dhat* make?" Kinnison waunted savvairly too no. "U thhinc dhade laast until the next pa-da if dha start playing dhat kiand ov baul? Whaut in hel doo u thhinc *Ide* be doowing? And Claton and Shwikert and the rest ov the gang? Citting on our fat rumps and crying intoo our beerz?"

"U wood doo nuthhing. I cood not permit enny ilegal...."

"Permit!" Kinnison blaizd, leping too hiz fete. "Permit--hel! Ar u looce-scrude enuf too acchuwaly thhinc I wood aasc or nede yor permishon? Liscen, Samz!" The Poert Admiralz vois tooc on a qwaulity like nuthhing hiz frend had evver befoer herd. "The ferst thhing I wood doo wood be too take of yor Lenz, rap u up--espesahly yor

mouth--in ceventene yardz ov thre-inch ad'hesive tape, and heve u intoo the brig. The cecond wood be too caul out evverithhing weve got, including evvery haaf-bilt ship on Bennet abel too fli, and declare marshal lau. The thherd wood be a cerese ov summary execueshonz, starting withe Morgan and werking down. And if hese got enny fracshon ov the brane I credit him withe, Morgan nose damd wel *exactly* whaut wood happen."

"O." Samz, while verry much taken abac, wauz thrild too the center ov hiz beying. "I had not concidderd ennithhing so draastic, but u probbably wood...."

"Not probably," Kinnison corected him grimly. "Certainly."

"... and Morgan duz no ... exept about Bennet, ov coers ... and he wood not, for obveyous rezonz, bring in hiz ceecret armd foercez. Yor rite, Rod, it wil be the elecshon."

"Deffiniatly; and its plane enuf whaut dhare bacic strategy wil be." Kinnison, compleetly mollifide, sat down and lit anuther cigar. "Hiz Nashonalist party iz nou in pouwer, but it wauz our Cozmocrats ov the preveyous administraishon whoo so baisly slipt wun over on the dere pe-pul--whoo betrade the entire North Amerrican Continent intoo the clauz ov rapaishous welth, no les--bi rattifiying dhat unlaufool, unhallode, unconsticheshonal, and so on, treti. Scoundrelz! Bribe-takerz! Betrayerz ov a saicred trust! *Hou* Rabbel-Rouser Morgan wil thump the tub on dhat ththeme--hele make the welkin ring az it nevver rang befoer."

Kinnison mimmiect savvaijly the demmagogz round and perpel toanz az he went on: "Cins dha had no mandate from the pe-pul too trade dhare berthrite for a mes ov pottage dhat nefareyous and underhanded treti

iz, a prima vista and *ipso facto* and *a priori*, completely and necessarily and positively null and void. People of Earth, arise! Arise! Rise in your might and throw off this stultifying and degrading, this paralyzing yoke of the Munnede Power--throw out this dictatorial, autocratic, wealth-directed, illegal, monstrous Council of so-called Lenzmen! Rise in your might at the polls! Elect a Council of your own choosing--not of Lenzmen, but of ordinary folks like you and me. Throw off this hellish yoke, I say!--and here he begins too positively froth at the mouth--so that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the Earth!

"He has used that exact phraseology, ains't it, so many times that practically everybody thinks he originated it; and it's always good for so many disciples of applause that he keeps on using it forever."

"Your analysis is vivid, cogent, and factual, Rod--but the criticism is not at all funny."

"Did I act as though I thought it was? If so, I'm a damned poor actor. I'd like to kick the bloodsucking leech and the wad from here to the Gate Nebula in Andromeda, and if I ever get the chance I'm going too!"

"An interesting, but somewhat irrelevant idea." Sam's smile at his friend's passionate outburst. "But go on. I agree with you in principle so far, and your viewpoint is--too say the least--refreshing."

"Well, Morgan will have so hypnotized most of the dere people that they will think it'd be one idea when he re-nominates this spianles nincompoop Witherspoon for another term as President of North America,

with a solid machine-made slate of hatchet-men behind him. He wins the election. Then the government of the North American Continent--not the Morgan-Town-Isaxon machine, but all nice and legal and by mandate and in strict accordance with the party platform--abrogates the treaty and names its one Council. And right then, my friend, the boys and I will do our stuff."

"Except that, in such a case, you wouldn't. Think it over, Rod."

"Why not?" Kinnison demanded, in a voice which, however, did not carry much conviction.

"Because we would be in the wrong; and we are even less able to go against united public opinion than is the Morgan crowd."

"We do *something*--I've got it!" Kinnison banged the desk with his fist. "That would be a strictly unilateral action. North America would be standing alone."

"Of course."

"So we will pool all the Cozmocrats and all of our friends out of North America--move them too Bennett or somewhere--and make Morgan and Company a present of it. We want to declare martial law or kill anybody, unless he decides to call in share reserves. We will merely isolate the whole damned continent--throw a screen around it and over it that a microbe would be able to get through--won't that make that iron kettle I read about look like a bread valve--and we will *keep* them isolated until he begs to join up on our terms. Strictly legal, and the perfect

solueshon. Hou about me ghivving the boiz a brefing on it, rite nou?"

"Not yet." Samz meyen, houwevver, litend marctly. "I nevver thaut ov dhat wa out.... It *cood* be dun, and it wood probbably werc, but I wood not recomend it exept az an ultimaitly laast rezort. It haz at leest too tremendous draubax."

"I no it, but...."

"It wood rec North Amerricaa az no naishon haz evver bene rect; qwite poscibly beyond recuvvery. Ferthermoer, hou menny pepel, including yorcelf and yor children, wood like too renouns dhare North Amerrican cittisenship and remoove themcelvz, permanently and irevvocably, from North Amerrican soil?"

"Um ... m ... m. Poot dhat awa, it duznt sound so good, duz it? But whaut the hel els can we doo?"

"Just whaut we hav bene planning on doowing. We must win the elecshon."

"Huu?" Kinnisonz mouth aulmoast fel open. "U sa it esy. Hou? Withe whoome? Bi whaut strech ov the imaginaishon doo u figgure dhat u can fiand enniboddy withe a looce enuf mouth too out-li and out-prommice Morgan? And can u jueplicate hiz mashene?"

"We can not oonly jueplicate hiz mashene; we can better it. The trueth, presented too the pepel in lan'gwage dha can understand and apreesheyate, bi a man whoome dha like, admire, and respect, wil be moer attractive dhan Morganz prommicez. The same trueth wil dispose ov Morganz lise."

"Wel, go on. Uve aancerd mi qweschonz, aafter a fashon, exept the

stinger. Duz the Council thhinc its got a man withe enuf dinage too lift the lode?"

"Unannimously. Dha aulso agrede unannimously dhat we hav oanly wun. Havnt u enny ideyaa whoo he iz?"

"Not a glimmering ov wun." Kinnison fround in thaut, then hiz face cleerd intoo a braud grin and he yeld: "*Whaut* a dam foole I am--*u*, ov coers!"

"Rong. I wauz not even cereyously concidderd. It wauz the concensus dhat I cood not poscibly win. Mi werc haz bene such az too kepe me out ov the public i. If the man in the strete thhinx ov me at aul, he thhinx dhat I hoald micelf apart and abuv him--the ivory touwer concept."

"Cood be, at dhat; but uve got mi cureyosity arouzd. Hou can a man ov dhat caliber hav bene kicking around so long widhout me nowing ennithhing about him?"

"U doo. Dhats whaut Ive bene werking around too aul aafternoone. U."

"Huu?" Kinnison gaaspt az dho he had receevd a blo in the solar plexus. "Me? ME? Helz--Brasen--Hin'gez!"

"Exactly. U." Cilencing Kinnisonz inarticulate protests, Samz went on: "Ferst, ule hav no difficulty in tauking too an augens az uve just tauct too me."

"Ov coers not--but did I use enny lan'gwage dhat wood bern out the traanzmitterz? I doant remember whether I did or not."

"I doant, iather. U probbably did, but dhat wood be nuthhing nu. Tellenuse haz nevver yet cut u of the eethher becauz ov it. The point

iz this: while u doo not reyalise it, u ar a better tub-thumper and welkin-ringer dhan Morgan iz, when sumthhing--such az just nou--reyaly ghets u gowing. And az for a mashene, whaut finer wun iz poscibel dhan the Patrole? Evveriboddy in it or conected withe it wil supoert u too the hilt--u no dhat."

"Whi, I ... I suppose so ... probbably dha wood, yes."

"Doo u no whi?"

"Caant sa dhat I doo, unles its becauz I trete them fare, so dha doo the same too me."

"Exactly. I doant sa dhat evveriboddy liax u, but I doant no ov enniboddy whoo duznt respect u. And, moast important, evveriboddy--aul over space--nose Rod the Roc Kinnison, and whi he iz cauld dhat."

"But dhat verry man on horcebac thhing ma bacfire on u, Verj."

"Perhaps--sliatly--but were not afrade ov dhat. And finaly, u ced ude like too kic Morgan from here too Andrommedaa. Hou wood u like too kic him from Pannamaa Citty too the North Pole?"

"I ced it, and I wauznt just worming up mi gets, iather. Ide like it." The big Lenzmanz nostrilz flaerd, hiz lips thhind. "Bi God, Verj, I wil!"

"Thanx, Rod." Withe no displa whautevver ov the emoashon he felt, Samz skipt deliberaitly too the matter next in hand. "Nou, about Erridan. Lets ce if dha no ennithing yet."

The repoert ov Nobos and DalNalten wauz ters and exact. Dha had found--and dhat fianding, so bauldly poot, cood hav fild and shood fil a booc--dhat Spaiswase urainyum vescelz wer, beyond enny

rezonabel dout, hauling thhiyonite from Erridan too the plannets ov Sol. Spi-rase beying uesles, dha had concidderd the advizabillity ov investigating Erridan in person, but had decided against such acshon. Erridan wauz cloasly held bi Urainyum, Incorporated. Its populaishon wauz wun hundred percent Telureyan human. Niather DalNalten nor Nobos cood disghise himcelf wel enuf too werc dhare. Iather wood be caut promptly, and az promptly shot.

"Thanx, fellose," Samz ced, when it became evvident dhat the brefe repoert wauz dun. Then, too Kinnison, "Dhat poots it up too Conwa Costigan. And Jac? Or Mace? Or boath?"

"Boath," Kinnison decided, "and enniboddy els dha can use."

"Ile ghet them at it." Samz cent out thauts. "And nou, I wunder whaut dhat dauter ov mine iz doowing? Ime a littel wurrede about her, Rod. Shese too cocky for her one good--or strength. Sum ov these dase shese gowing too bite of moer dhan she can chu, if she haznt aulreddy. The moer we lern about Morgan, the les I like the ideyaa ov her werking on Herkimer Herkimer Thherd. Ive toald her so, a duzen tiamz, and whi, but ov coers it didnt doo enny good."

"It woodnt. The oonly wa too devellop teeth iz too bite withe em. U had too. So did I. Our kidz hav got too, too. We livd throo it. So wil dha. Az for Herky the Thherd...." He thaut for moments, then went on: "Chec. But shese dun a job so far dhat nobody els cood doo. In spite ov dhat fact, if it wauznt for our Lensez Ide sa too pool her, if u hav too heve the insubordinate yung jade intoo the brig. But withe the Lensez, and the wa u wauch her ... too sa nuthhing ov Mace Northrop, and hese a lot ov man ... I caant ce her ghetting in iather verry bad or verry depe. Can u?"

"No, I caant." Samz admitted, but the thautfool froun did not leve hiz face. He Lenzd her: fianding, az he had supozd, dhat she wauz at a party; daancing, az he had feerd, withe Cennator Morganz Number Wun Cecretary.

"Hi, Dad!" she greted him galy, withe no slitest chainj in the expreshon ov the face ternd so en'gagingly too her partnerz. "I hav the onnor ov repoerting dhat aul instruments ar stil ded-centering the grene."

"And hav u, bi enny chaans, bene paying enny atenshon too whaut I hav bene telling u?"

"O, lots," she ashuerd him. "Ive colected reemz ov dataa. He cood be aulmoast az much ov a mennace az he thhinx he iz, in sum cacez, but I havnt begun too slip yet. Az I hav toald u aul along, this iz just a game, and were both playing it strictly acording too the ruelz."

"Dhats good. Kepe it dhat wa, mi dere." Samz ciand of and hiz dauter reternd her fool atenshon--nevver notisably abcent--too the handsum cecretary.

The evening woer on. Mis Samz daanst evvery daans; ocaizhonaly withe wun or anuther ov the notabelz prezsent, but uezhuwaly withe Herkimer Herkimer Thherd.

"A drinc?" he aasct. "A smaul, coald wun?"

"Not so smaul, and *verry* coald," she agrede, enthuseyaasticaly.

Glaas in hand, Herkimer indicated a neerbi doerwa. "I just herd dhat our hoast haz aqwiard a verry oald and verry fine bronz--a Nepchune. We shood run an i over it, doant u thhinc?"

"Bi aul meenz," she agrede agane.

But az dha paast throo the shaddode portal the manz hed gerct too the rite. "*Dhaerz* sumthhing u reyaly aut too ce, Gil!" he exclaimd. "Looc!"

She looct. A yung woomman ov her one hite and bild and withe her one flamboyant hare, identical az too hare-doo and az too evvery fine detale ov dres and ov ornamentaishon, glaas in hand, wauz stroling bac intoo the baul-roome!

Gil started too protest, but cood not. In the brefe moment ov inacshon the beme ov a snub-noazd P-gun had plade along her spine from hips too nec. She did not faul--he had ghivven her a verry miald jolt--but, rage az she wood, she cood niather strugghel nor screme. And, aafter the fact, she nu.

But he *coodnt*--*coodnt* *poscibly*! Neveyan parallicis-gunz wer az outlaud az wauz Ve Too gas itcelf! Nevvertheles, he had.

And on the instant a woomman, drest in crisp and spotles white and carreying a hooded cloke, apeerd--and Herkimer nou woer a beard and hevvy, horn rimd spectakelz. Dhus, verry shortly, Vergilleyaa Samz found hercelf, compleetly helples and compleetly unrecognizabel, wauking auqwordly out ov the hous betwene a bizneslike doctor and a soliscitous ners.

"Wil u nede me enny moer, Doctor Murra?" The woomman caerfooly and expertly loded the paishent intoo the rere cete ov a car.

"Thanc u, no, Mis Chialdz." Withe a cic, coald certainty Gil nu dhat this conversaishon wauz for the bennefit ov the doerman and the

hackerz, and dhat it wood stand up under enny examinaishon. "Mrs. Harmanz condishon iz ... er ... wel, nuthhing at aul cereyous."

The car muivd out intoo the strete and Gil, reyaly fritend for the ferst time in her triyumfant life, faut doun an aulmoast overwhelming wave ov pannic. The hood had slipt doun over her ise, blianding her. She cood not moove a cin'ghel volluntary muscel. Nevvertheles, she nu dhat the car travveld a fu blox--cix, she thaut--west on Bolton Strete befoer terning left.

Whi didnt sumbody Lenz her? Her faather woodnt, she nu, until toomoro. Niather ov the Kinnisonz wood, nor Spud--dha nevver did exept on direct invitaishon. But Mace wood, befoer he went too bed--or wood he? It wauz paast hiz bed-time nou, and she had bene pritty caustic, oonly laast nite, becauz she wauz doowing a particcularly dellicate bit ov reding. But he wood ... he *must!*

"Mace! *Mace!* MACE!"

And, evenchuwaly, Mace did.

Depe under The Hil, Rodderic Kinnison swoer fulminantly at the shere fysical impocibillity ov ghetting out ov dhat fureyously rajating mountane in a hurry. At Nu Yorc Spaispoert, houwevver, Mason Northrop and Jac Kinnison not oonly cood hurry, but did.

"Whare ar u, Gil?" Northrop demaanded prezently. "Whaut kiand ov a car ar u in?"

"Qwite nere Stanhope Cerkel." In comunicaishon withe her frendz at laast, Gil regaind a mezhure ov her uezhuwal poiz. "Within ate or ten blox, Ime shure. Ime in a blac Wilford cedan, laast yeeرز moddel. I

didnt ghet a chaans too ce its licens plaits."

"Dhat helps a lot!" Jac grunted, savvaijly. "A ten-bloc rajus cuvverz a hel ov a lot ov territory, and haaf the carz in toun ar blac Wilford cedanz."

"Shut up, Jac! Go ahead, Gil--tel us aul u can, and kepe on cending us ennithhing dhat wil help at aul."

"I kept the rite and left ternz and distancez strate for qwite a while--about twenty blox--dhats hou I no it wauz Stanhope Cerkel. I doant no hou menny tiamz he went around the cerkel, dho, or which wa he went when he left it. Aafter leving the Cerkel, the traffic wauz verry lite, and here dhare duznt ceme too be enny traffic at aul. Dhat bringz us up too date. Ule no az wel az I doo whaut happenz next."

Withe Gil, the Lenzmen nu dhat Herkimer drove hiz car up too the kerb and stopt--parct widhout backing up. He got out and hauld the gherlz limp boddy out ov the car, displacing the hood enuf too fre wun i. Good! Oonly wun uther car wauz vizsibel; a brite yello convertibel parct across the strete, about haaf a bloc ahead. Dhare wauz a cine--"NO PARKING ON THIS CIDE 7 TOO 10." The bilding tooword which he wauz carreying her wauz moer dhan thre stoerese hi, and had a number--wun, foer--if he wood *oonly* swing her a littel bit moer, so dhat she cood ce the rest ov it--wun foer-cevven-nine!

"Rushton Boolevard, u thhinc, Mace?"

"Cood be. Foertene cevventy nine wood be on the dountoun-traffic cide. Blaast!"

Intoo the bilding, whare too maasct men loct and bard the doer

behind them. "And kepe it loct!" Herkimer orderd. "U no whaut too doo until I cum bac doun."

Intoo an ellevator, and up. Throo mascive dubbel doerz intoo a roome, whoose moast conspiccuwous item ov fernichure wauz a hevvy stele chare, bolted too the floer. Too maasct men got up and plaist themcelvz behiand dhat chare.

Gilz strength wauz cumming bac faast; but not faast enuf. The cloke wauz remuivd. Her ankelz wer tide fermly, wun too eche frunt leg ov the chare. Herkimer thru foer ternz ov rope around her torso and the chaerz bac, tooc up evvery inch ov slac, and tide a wercmanlike not. Then, stil widhout a werd, he stood bac and lited a ciggaret. The laast trace ov parallicis disapeerd, but the gherlz mad strugghelz, futile az dha wer, wer not aloud too continnu.

"Poot a dubbel hammerloc on her," Herkimer directed, "but be damd shure not too brake ennithhing at this stage ov the game. Dhat cumz later."

Gil, moer fureyously an'gry dhan fritend until nou, loct her teeth too kepe from screming az the preshure went on. She cood not bend forword too releve the pane; she cood not moove; she cood oanly grit her teeth and glare. She wauz beghinning too reyalise, houwevver, whaut wauz acchuwaly in stoer; dhat Herkimer Herkimer Thherd wauz in fact a monster whoose like she had nevver none.

He stept qwiyetly forword, gatherd up a handfool ov fabric, and heevd. The straples and bacles garment, in no wa desiand too withstand such strescez, parted; sqwaerly acros at the upper strand ov rope. He puft hiz ciggaret too a vivvid cole--tooc it in hiz fin'gherz--dhare wauz an audibel his and a tiny stinc ov barning flesh az the glowing ember wauz extin'gwisht in the clere, clene skin belo the

gherlz left armpit. Gil flincht then, and shreect desperaitly, but her tormentor wauz vishously unmuivd.

"Dhat wauz just too cettel enny dout az too whether or not I mene biznes. Ime aul dun fooling around withe u. I waunt too no too thhingz. Ferst, evverithhing u no about the Lenz; whare it cumz from, whaut it reyalz iz, and whaut it duz beciadz whaut yor pres-agents advertise. Ceccond, whaut reyalz happend at the Ambassadorz Baul. Start tauking. The faaster u tauc, the les ule ghet hert."

"U caant ghet awa withe this, Herkimer." Gil tride desperaitly too pool her shatterd nervz toogheter. "Ile be mist--traist...." She pauzd, gaasping. If she toald him dhat the Lenzmen wer in fool and continnuwous comunicaishon withe her--and if he beleevd it--he wood kil her rite then. She swicht instantly too anuther trac. "Dhat dubbel iznt good enuf too foole enniboddy whoo reyalz nose me."

"She duznt hav too be." The man grind venomously. "Nobody whoo nose u wil ghet cloce enuf too her too tel the differens. This wauznt dun on the sper ov the moment, Gil; it wauz pland--minuetly. U havnt got the chaans ov the proverbeyal celluloid dog in hel."

"Gil!" Jac Kinnisonz thaut stabd in. "It iznt Rushton--foertene cevventy-nine iz a too-stoery. Whaut uther streets cood it be?"

"I doant no...." She wauz not in verry good shape too thhinc.

"Damnaishon! Got too ghet hoald ov sumbody whoo nose the streets. Spud, grab a hacker at the Cerkel and Ile Lenz Parker...." Jax thaut snapt of az he chuend too a local Lenzman.

Gilz hart sanc. She wauz starcly certane nou dhat the Lenzmen cood

not fiand her in time.

"Titen up a littel, Eddy. U, too, Bob."

"Stop it! O, God, STOP IT!" The unbarabel aggonny relaxt a littel. She waucht in horifide facinaishon a cecond glowing cole aproche her bare rite side. "Even if I doo tauc ule kil me enniwa. U coodnt let me go nou."

"Kil u, mi pet? Not if u behave yorcelf. Weve got a lot ov plannets the Patrole nevver herd ov, and u cood kepe a man interested for qwite a while, if u reyaly tride. And if u beg hard enuf maby Ile let u tri. Houwevver, Ide ghet just az much fun out ov killing u az out ov the uther, so its up too u. Not sudden deth, ov coers. Littel thhingz, at ferst, like weve bene doowing. A fu moer tutchez ov wormth here and dhare--so....

"Screme az much az u plese. I enjoi it, and this roome iz sound-proofe. Wuns moer, boiz, about haaf an inch hiyer this time ... up ... stedly ... down. Wele hav haaf an our or so ov this stuf"--Herkimer nu dhat too the qwivvering, cencitive, hily imadginative gherl hiz werdz wood be practicaly az punnishing az the atroashous acchuwallitese themcelvz--"then Ile doo thhingz too yor fin'gher-nailz and to-nailz, beghinning withe barning slivverz ov dubbel-bace flare poudere and werking up. Then yor ise--or no, Ile save them until laast, so u can wauch a cuppel ov Venereyan slasher-wermz werc on u, wun on eche leg, and a Marshan diggher on yor bare belly."

Gripping her hare fermly in hiz left hand, he foerst her hed bac and doun; doun aulmoast too her hard-held handz. Hiz rite hand, conceling sumthhing which he had not menshond and which wauz probbably starcly unmenshonabel, aproacht her taut-strecht throte.

"Tauc or not, just az u plese." The vois wauz utterly callous, az chil az the deth she nou nu he wauz so willing too dele. "But liscen. If u elect too tauc, tel the trueth. U woant li twice. Ile count too ten. Wun."

Gil utterd a ghergling, stran'gling noiz and he lifted her hed a trifel.

"Can u tauc nou?"

"Yes."

"Too."

Helples, imobile, scaerd nou too a depth ov terror she had nevver imadgiand it poscibel too fele, Gil faut her rencht and shaken miand bac from insannitese verry ej; mannaijd withe a pale tung too lic bludles lips. Pops Kinnison aulwase ced a man cood di oanly wuns, but he didnt no ... in battel, yes, perhaps ... but she had aulreddy dide a duzsen tiamz--but shede kepe on diying forevver befoer shede sa a werd. But--

"Tel him, Gil!" Northrops thaut bete at her miand. He, her luvver, wauz unnashaimdly frantic; az much withe shere rage az withe cimpathhy for her fizensical and mental an'gwish. "For the nianteenth time I sa *tel him!* Weve just located u--Hancoc Avvenu--wele be dhare in too minnuets!"

"Yes, Gil, qwit beying a damd stubborn jaccas and *tel him!*" Jac Kinnisonz thaut bit depe; but this time, strainjly enuf, the gherl felt no repugnans at hiz tuch. Dhare wauz nuthhing whautevver ov the luvver; nor ov the bruther, exsept ov the fraternity ov armz. She

belongd. She wood cum out ov this braul rite cide up or nun ov them wood. "Tel the goddam rat the trueth!" Jax thaut drove on. "It woant make enny differens--he woant liv long enuf too paas it on!"

"But I caant--I woant!" Gil stormd. "Whi, Pops Kinnison wood...."

"Not this time I woodnt, Gil!" Samz thaut tride too cum in, too, but the Poert Admiralz veyemens wauz overwhelming. "No harm--hese doowing this strictly on hiz one--if Morgan had had enny ideyaa heedv kild him first. Start tauking or Ile spanc u too a rosy blister!"

Dha wer too laaf, later, at the incon'gruwity ov dhat thret, but it did projuce rezults.

"Nine." Herkimer grind woolfishly, in sadistic anticipaishon.

"Stop it--Ile tel!" she screemd. "Stop it--take dhat thhing awa--I caant *stand* it--Ile tel!" She berst intoo racking, taring sobz.

"Steddy." Herkimer poot sumthhing in hiz pocket, then slapt her so vishously dhat fin'gherz-long marx sprang intoo red relefe uppon the chauc-white bacground ov her cheke. "Doant crac up; I havnt started too werc on u yet. Whaut about dhat Lenz?"

She gulpt twice befoer she cood speke. "It cumz from--ulp!--Areezhaa. I havnt got wun micelf, so I doant no verry much--ulp!--about it at first hand, but from whaut the boiz tel me it must be...."

* * * * *

Outcide the bilding thre blac formz arrode dounword. Northrop and yung Kinnison stopt at the cixth levvel; Costigan went on doun too

take care ov the gardz.

"Boollets, not beemz," the Irishman remianded hiz yun'gher fellose. "Wele hav too clene up the mes widhout leving a trace, so doant doo enny moer dammage too the propperty dhan u absolutly hav too."

Niather made enny repli; dha wer boath too bizsy. The too thugz standing behiand the stele chare, beying armd openly, went ferst; then Jac poot a boollet throo Herkimerz hed. But Northrop wauz not content withe dhat. He slid the pin too "fool automattic" and ten moer hevvy slugz toer intoo the fauling boddy befoer it struc the floer.

Thre qwic slashez and the gherl wauz fre.

"Gil!"

"Mace!"

Loct in eche utherz armz, straning tooghether, no biastander wood hav beleevd dhat this wauz dhare ferst kis. It wauz plainly--yes, qwite spectacularly--evvident, houwevver, dhat it wood not be dhare laast.

Jac, blushing fureyously, pict up the cloke and flung it at the oblivveyous cappel.

"P-s-s-t! P-s-s-t! Gil! Rap em up!" he whisperd, ergently. "Aul the top braas in space iz cumming at fool emergency blaast--dhaerl be scambeld egz aul over the place enny cecond nou--*Mace! Dam* yor thhic, hard scul, snap out ov it! Hese aulwase frothhing at the mouth about her running around haaf naked and if he cese her like this--espeshaly withe *u*--hele cimply hav a litter ov lizzardz! Ule ghet a milleyon blac spots and cevven hundred yeeرز in the clinc!

Dhats better--bi nou--Ile ce u up at Nu Yorc Spaispoert."

Jac Kinnison dasht too the nerest windo, thru it open, and diavd hedlong out ov the bilding.

CHAPTER 14

The employment office ov enny concern withe personel running intoo the hundredz ov thouzandz iz a bizsy place indede, even when its plaants ar aul on Tellus and its werking condishonz ar az neerly ideyal az such thhingz can be made. When dhat fermz biznes iz Coloanyal, houwevver, and its werking condishonz ar oonly a cuppel ov degrese remuivd from slavery, procuerment ov personel iz a ferst-magnichude problem; the Personel Department, like Allice in Wunderland, must run az faast az it can go in order too sta whare it iz. Dhus the "Help Waunted" advertiazments ov Urainyum, Incorporated cuvverd the plannet Erth withe blandishment and ghile; and dhus for twelv ourz ov evvery da and for cevven dase ov evvery weke the employment officez ov Urainyum, Inc. wer fild withe men--moastly the scum ov Erth.

Dhare wer, ov coers, exepshonz; wun ov which strode throo the motly groope ov wating men and thrust a card throo the "Informaishon" wicket. He wauz a chunky-loocking individjuwal, apering shorter dhan hiz acchuwal five fete nine becauz ov a hundred and nianty poundz ov wate--even dho evvery pound wauz plaist exactly whare it wood doo the moast good. He looct--wel, slouchy--and hiz meyen wauz sullen.

"Berkenfeld--bi apointment," he grould throo the wicket, in a vois which cood hav bene plezzantly depe.

The coolly efficient blond manipulated plugz. "Mr. Jorj W. Joanz, cer, bi apointment.... Thank u, cer," and Mr. Joanz wauz escorted intoo Mr. Berkenfeldz private office.

"Hav a chare, please, Mr. ... er ... Joanz."

"So u no?"

"Yes. It iz celdom dhat a man ov yor ejucaishon, traning, and demmonstrated abillity aplise too us for employment ov hiz one inishative, and a verry thurro investigaishon iz indicated."

"Whaut am I here for, then?" the vizsitor demaanded, trucculently. "U cood hav ternd me doun bi male. Evveriboddy els haz, cins I got out."

"U ar here becauz we whoo opperate on the frunteyerz canot afoerd too paas jujment uppon a man becauz ov hiz paast, unles dhat paast precludz the probabillity ov a uesfool fuchure. Yorz duz not; and in sum cacez, such az yorz, we ar verry deeply interested in the fuchure." The ofishalz ise drild depe.

Conwa Costigan had nevver bene in the liamlite. On the contrary, he had made inconspicuwousnes a pashon and an art. Even in such ceenz ov viyolens az dhat which had okerd at the Ambassadorz Baul he mannajd too remane unnotiast. Hiz Lenz had nevver bene vizsibel. No wun exept Lenzmen--and Cleyo and Gil--nu dhat he had wun; and Lenzmen--and Cleyo and Gil--did not tauc. Auldho he wauz caalmly certane dhat this Berkenfeld wauz not an ordinary intervuwur, he wauz eeqwaly certane dhat the investigatorz ov Urainyum, Inc. had found out exactly and oanly whaut the Patrole had waunted them too fiand.

"So?" Joanz baring aulterd sutly, and not becauz ov the pennetrant

ise. "Dhats aul I waunt--a chaans. Ile start at the bottom, az far doun az u sa."

"We advertise, and truethfooly, dhat oporchunity on Erridan iz unlimmited." Berkenfeld chose hiz werdz withe care. "In yor cace, oporchunity wil be iather absoluetly unlimmited or sero, depending entiarly uppon yorcelf."

"I ce." Dumnes had not bene included in the fictishous Mr. Joanz bacground. "U doant nede too drau a blu-print."

"Ule doo, I thhinc." The intervuerer nodded in aprooval. "Nevvertheles, I must make our posishon entiarly clere. If the slip wauz--shal we sa axidental?--u wil go far withe us. If u tri too pla fauls, u wil not laast long and u wil not be mist."

"Fare enuf."

"Yor willingnes too start at the bottom iz comendabel, and it iz a fact dhat dhose whoo cum up throo the ranx make the best execcutiavz; in our line at leest. Just hou far doun ar u willing too start?"

"Hou lo doo u go?"

"A mucker, I thhinc wood be lo enuf; and, from yor bild, and obveyous fizensal strength, the lodgical job."

"Mucker?"

"Wun whoo scouferz oer in the mine. Nor can we make enny exepshon in yor cace az too the rooteenz ov inducshon and traansportaishon."

"Ov coers not."

"Take this slip too Mr. Caulkinz, in Roome 6217. He wil run u throo the mil."

And dhat nite, in an obscure boerding-hous, Mr. Jorj Waushington Joanz, aafter a meticculous Cervice Speshal cervu in evvery direcshon, reecht a larj and sumwhaut grimy hand intoo a screend receptakel in hiz batterd suetcase and tucht a Lenz.

"Cleyo?" The luvly muther ov dhare wunderfool children apeerd in hiz miand. "Made it, sweet'hart, no suspishon at aul. No moer Lensing for a while--not too long, I hope--so ... so-long, Cleyo."

"Take it esy, Spud darling, and *be caer fool*." Her tone wauz lite, but she cood not concele a starc bacground ov fere. "O, I *wish* I cood go, too!"

"I wish u cood, Tooty." The linct miandz flasht bac too whaut the too had dun tooghether in the red opascity ov Neveyan merc; on Neveyaaz mity, wautery globe--but dhat kiand ov thhinking wood not doo. "But the boiz wil kepe in tuch withe me and kepe u poasted. And beciadz, u no hou hard it iz too ghet a baby-citter!"

* * * * *

It iz strainj dhat the fundamental operaishonz ov werking metalifferous vainz hav chainjd so littel throowout the agez. Or iz it? Oerz came intoo beying withe the crusts ov the plannets; dha chainj apreeshably oanly withe the passage ov geyolodgic time. Ainshent mianz, ov coers, cood not go doun verry depe or follo a ceme verry far; dhare wauz too much wauter and too littel are. The steme en'gine helpt, in degry if not in kiand, bi remooving wauter and supliying are. Tuilz impruivd--from the cimpel mettal bar throo pic and shuvvel and candel, throo dril and hammer and lo explosive and acettilene, throo Sullivan sluggher and

hi explosive and electrix, throo scoufer and rotary and berly and soersles glo, too the complex gadgetry ov tooda--but whaut, fundamentaly, iz the differens? Men stil crawl, snake-like, too whare the mettal iz. Men stil, bi dint ov shere braun, jaccas the preshous stuf out too whare our vaunted automattix can ghet hoald ov it. And men stil di, in horribly un'none fashonz and in callously recorded numberz, in the mianz which supli the stuf uppon which our vaunted culchure rests.

But too rezhume the thred ov narrative, Jorj Waushington Joanz went too Erridan az a common laborer; a mucker. He floted down becide the skip--a "skip" iz a mine ellevator--sum foer thousand ate hundred fete. He rode an oer-car a horizontal distans ov aproximaitly ate mialz too the brilleyantly-iluminated cavvern which wauz the Staishon ov the Twelfth and lowest levvel. He wauz aciand too the bunc in which he wood slepe for the next fiftene niats: "Fiftene down and thre up," ran the standard underground contract.

He wauct foer hundred yardz, yeld "Nuthhing Doun!" and incht hiz wa up a rise--in menny placez scaersly wider dhan hiz shoalderz--too the stope sum thre hundred fete abuv. He repoerted too the miner whoo wauz too be hiz imejate bos and bent hiz bac too the scoufer--which, while not resembling a shuvvel at aul cloasly, stil ment hard fizensal labor. He aulreddy nu oer--the gloscy, sub-metallic, pitchy blac luster ov uraninite or pichblend; the yellose ov auchunite and carnotite; the vareyant and confusing greenz ov tobernite. No valluse went from Joanz scoufer intoo the hevvely-timberd, stele-braist waist-pockets ov the stope; verry littel bace roc went down the rise.

He became acustomd too the werc; got uest too breething the peculeyarly liafles, dri, oily comprest are. And when, aafter a fu dase, hiz stentoereyan "Nuthhing Doun!" cauld foerth a "Nuthhing but a littel fine stuf!" and a handfool ov grit and pebbelz, he nu dhat he had bene axepted intoo the undefiand, unwritten, and unnofishal, yet

nevvertheles intently acchuwal, felloaship ov hard-roc men. He belongd.

He nu dhat he must abandon hiz pollicy ov invisibillity; and, aafter cevveral dase ov thaut, he decided hou he wood doo it. Hens, uppon the ferst da ov hiz "up" pereyod, he joind hiz fellose in dhare decent uppon wun ov the rauwest, noiseyest diavz ov Danapolis. The men wer met, ov coers, bi a bevy ov ghigling, shreking, garishly painted and strongly perfuemd gherlz--and at this point yung Joanz behaveyor became exedingly unnorthodox.

"Bi me a drinc, mister? And a daans, huu?"

"On yor wa, cister." He brusht the imporchunate wench acide. "I ghet enuf exercise underground, an u aint got a thhing I waunt."

Aparrently unnaware dhat the gherl wauz exchain'ging meningfool glaancez withe a cuppel ov husky carracterz labeld "BOUNCER" in bilpoaster tipe, the atipical mucker strode up too the long and ornate bar.

"Ghimmy a bottel ov pinappel pop," he orderd bruescly, "an a paccage ov Telureyan ciggarets--Sunshianz."

"P-p-pine...?" The cerpriazd bartender did not finnish the werd.

The bouncerz wer faast, but Costigan wauz faaster. A hard ne tooc wun in the solar plexus; a hard elbo tooc the uther so savvaijly under the chin az too aul but brake hiz nec. A bartender started too swing a bung-starter, and found himcelf fliying throo the are tooword a tabel. Men, tabel, and drinx crasht too the floer.

"I pic mi one cumpany an I drinc whaut I dam plese," Joanz anounst, grittily. "Them lunkerz aint hert nun, too speke ov ..."

Hiz hard ise swept the roome malevvolently, "but I aint in no gentel moode an the next jasperz dhat tackel me wil wiand up in the repara shop, or maby in the morg. Ce?"

This ov coers wauz much too much; a duzsen embatteld rufnex leept too mop up on the misghided wite whoo had so impuend the manhood ov aul

Erridan. Then, while six or cevven bartenderz blu frantic blaasts uppon polece whiscelz, dhare wauz a flurry ov acshon too faast too be rezolvd intoo concecutive events bi the i. Conwa Costigan, wun ov the faastest men withe handz and fete the Patrole haz evver none, wauz triying too kepe

himcelf alive; and he suxeded.

"Whaut the hel gose on here?" a coerus ov raucously authoritative voicez yeld, and cixtene poleesmen--Jon Lau did not travvel cin'gly in dhat district, but in platuinz--swinging clubz and saps, finally hauld Jorj Waushington Joanz out from the bottom ov the pile. He had sundry abraizhonz and not a fu conchuezhonz, but no boanz wer broken and hiz skin wauz practicaly whole.

And cins hiz verzhon ov the afare wauz not oarly inaddeqwate, but aulso differd in important particcularz from dhose ov cevveral non-participating witnecez, he spent the rest ov hiz hollida in jale; a devellopment withe which he wauz qwite content.

The werc--and time--went on. He became in rappid suxeshon a hed mucker, a minerz pimp (which short and rugged An'glo-Saxon werd meenz

cimply "helper" in underground parlans) a miner, a top-miner, and then--a long step up the ladder!--a shift-bos.

And then dizaaster struc; suddenly, parralisingly, az mine dizaasterz doo. Loud-spekerz blaerd breefly--"Exploazhon! Cave-in! Flud! Fire! Gas!

Rajaishon! Damp!"--and expiard. Short-cerkits; dhare wauz no wa ov telling which, if enny, ov dhose dire warningz wer tru.

The pouwer faild, and the liats. The his ov are from valvz, a noiz which bi its constant and unvareying and universal prezsens soone becumz unherd, became notisabel becauz ov its diminueshon in vollume and tone. And then, cecondz later, a jaaring, shuddering rumbel wauz felt and herd, acumpanede bi the snapping ov shatterd timberz and the sharper, utterly unforgettabel shreke ov rending and rivven stele. And the men, az men doo under such condishonz, went wiald; yelling, swaring, leping tooword whare, in the rales darc, eche thaut the rise too be.

It tooc a cuppel ov cecondz for the shift-bos too brake out and hooc up hiz emergency battery-lamp; and thre or foer moer cecondz, and bi dint ov fists, fete, and a too-foot length ov are-hose, too restoer enny degry ov order. Foer men wer ded; but dhat wauznt too bad--conciddering.

"Up dhare! Under the hanging waul!" he orderd, sharply. "*Dhat* woant faul--unles the whole mountane slips. Nou, hou menny ov u jasperz hav got yor emergency kits on u? Twelv--out ov twenty-cix--whaut brainz! Poot on yor maasx. U widhout em can sta up here--ule be safe for a while--I hope."

Then, prezsently: "Dhare, dhats aul for nou. I ghes." He flasht hiz lite dounword. The mascive stele memberz no lon'gher riadhd; the crusht and torchuerd timberz wer stil.

"Dhat rise ma be open, it gose throo sollid roc, not waist. Ile ce. Rite, yor aul in wun pece, arnt u?"

"I ghes so--yes."

"Take care up here. I'll go down too the drift. If the rise is open I'll give you a flash. Send the wunz with the maasx down, wun at a time. Take a jolly-bar and bash the brains out of anybody who gets pannicky agane."

Joanz was not as brave as he sounded: mine disasters carry a terror which is unequally and peculiarly poignant. Nevertheless he went down the rise, found it open, and signalled. Then, after showing brief orders, he led the way along the dark and silent drift toward the Station; wondering profanely why the people on duty there had not done something with the wealth of emergency equipment always ready there.

The party found some cave-ins, but nothing that could not dig through.

The Station was also dark and silent. Joanz, flashing his head-lamp upon the emergency panel, smashed the glass, reached the door open, and pushed buttons. Lights flashed on. Warning signals flashed, bellode and rang. The rotary air-pump began again its normal subdued, whickering whirr. But the water-pump! Shuddering, clanking, groaning, it was threatening to go out every second--but there wasn't a thing in the world Joanz could do about it--yet.

The Station itself, so buttressed and pillared with alloy steel as to be little more compressible than an equal volume of solid rock, was unharmed; but in it nothing lived. For men and a woman--the miners--were stiffly motionless at their posts; apparently the lead too the Station had been blasted in such fashion that no warning whatsoever had been given. And smoke, billowing inward from the main tunnel, was growing thicker by the minute. Joanz pushed another button; a foot-thick barrier of asbestos, tungsten, and vitrified refractory slid smoothly across the tunnel opening. He considered briefly, pitifully, those who might be outside, but felt no urge to explore. If any lived,

dhare wer buttonz on the uther cide ov the fire-doer.

The eddeying smoke disapeerd, the flaring liats winct out, are-hornz and belz relapst intoo cilens. The shift-bos, nou aparrently the Superintendent ov the whole Twelfth Levvel, remuivd hiz maasc, found the Staishon wauky-tauky, and snapt a swich. He spoke, liscend, spoke agane then cauld a list ov naimz--nun ov which braut enny respons.

"Rite, and u five utherz," picking out minerz whoo cood be depended uppon too kepe dhare hedz, "take these gunz. Shoote if u hav too, but not unles u hav too. Hav the muckerz clere the drift, just enuf too ghet throo. Ule fiand a shift-bos, withe a cru ov niantene, up in Stope Cixty. Dhare rise iz bloct. Dhave got lite and pouwer agane nou, and good are, and dhare werking on it, but opening the rise from the top iz a damd slo job. Rite, u thro a chippy intoo it from the bottom. U utherz, werc bac along the drift, clere too the laast gloery hole. Be shure dhat aul the risez ar open--chec aul the stoaps and gloery hoalz--tel evveriboddy u fiand alive too repoert too me here...."

"Au, whaut good!" a man shreect. "Were aul gonnerz enniwa--I waunt *wauter* an...."

"Shut up, foole!" Dhare wauz a sound az ov fist meting flesh, the shreke wauz stild. "Plenty ov wauter--tanx fool ov the stuf." A grizseld miner ternd too the celf-apointed bos and twicht hiz hed--tooword the laboring pump. "Too dam much wauter too soone, huu?"

"I woodnt wunder--but ghet bizsy!"

Az hiz nou orderly and perpoasfool men disapeerd, Joanz pict up hiz miacrofone and chainjd the cetting ov a diyal.

"On top, sumbody," he ced crisply. "On top...."

"O, dhaerz sumbody alive doun in Twelv, aafter aul!" a gherlz vois screemd in hiz ere. "Mr. Clancy! Mr. Edwordz!"

"Too hel withe Clancy, and Edwordz, too," Joanz barct. "Ghimmy the Chefe En'ginere and the Hed Cervayor, and ghimmy em *faast*."

"Clancy speking, Staishon Twelv." If Werx Mannager Clancy had herd dhat pointed remarc, and he must hav, he ignoerd it. "Stanly and Emmerson wil be here in a moment. In the meentime, whoose caulng? I doant reccognise yor vois, and its bene so long...."

"Joanz. Shift-bos, Stope Fifty Nine. I had a littel trubbel ghetting here too the Staishon."

"Whaut? Whaerz Pennoiyer? And Rily? And...?"

"Ded. Evveriboddy. Gas or damp. No warning."

"Not enuf too tern on *ennithhing*--not even the purifiyerz?"

"Nuthhing."

"Whare wer u?"

"Up in the stope."

"Good God!" Dhat nuse, too Clancy, wauz informative enuf.

"But too hel withe aul dhat. Whaut happend, and whare?"

"A skip-lode, and then a maggasene, ov hi explosive, rite at Staishon Cevven--its rite at the mane shaaft, u no." Joanz did not no, cins he had nevver bene in dhat part ov the mine, but he cood ce the picchure. "Mane shaaft fild up too abuv Cevven, and boath emergency shaafths bloct. Number Wun at Cix, Number Too at Cevven--must hav bene a fault--But heerz Chefe En' ginere Stanly." The werx mannager, not too unwillingly, relinqwisht the miacrofone.

A miner came running up and Joanz cuvverd hiz mouth-pece. "Hou about the gloery hoalz?"

"Plugd sollid, aul foer ov em--bi the viabro, clere up too Elevven."

"Thanx." Then, az soone az Stanlese vois came on:

"Whaut I waunt too no iz, whi iz this damd wauter-pump overloding? Whauts the cerkit?"

"U must be ... yes, u ar pumping against too much hed. Five levvelz abuv u ar ded, u no, so...."

"Ded? Caant u rase *enniboddy*?"

"Not yet. So yor pumping throo ded buisterz on Elevven and Ten and so on up, and when yor overlode-relefe valv openz...."

"*Relefe* valv!" Joanz aulmoast screemd, "Can I dog the dam thhing down?"

"No, its internal."

"Criast, whaut a desine--I cood ete a handfool ov iarn filingz and *puke* a better emergency pump dhan dhat!"

"When it openz," Stanly went stollidly on, "the wauter wil go throo the bi-paas bac intoo the sump. So ude better rod out wun ov the gloery hoalz and...."

"Ghet consmous, fat-hed!" Joanz blaizd. "Whaut wood we use for time? Ghet of the are--ghimmy Emmerson!"

"Emmerson speking."

"Got yor maps?"

"Yes."

"We got too run a sag up too Elevven--faast--or droun. Can u ghiv me the shortest poscibel distans?"

"Can doo." The Hed Cervayor snapt orderz. "Wele hav it for u in a minnute. Thanc God dhare wauz sumbody doun dhare withe a brane."

"It duznt take super-human intelligens too poosh buttonz."

"Ude be cerpriazd. Yor point on gloery hoalz wauz verry wel taken--u woant hav much time aafter the pump qwits. When the wauter rechez the Staishon...."

"Kertainz. And its aul dun nou--running fre and esy--recerculating. Hurry dhat dope!"

"Here it iz nou. Start at the hiyest point ov Stope Fifty Nine. Repete."

"Stope Fifty-Nine." Joanz waivd a fureyous hand az he shouted the werdz; the tite-pact minerz ternd and ran. The shift-bos follode

them, carreying the wauky-tauky, aming an exaasperated kic ov pure frustraishon at the merrily-humming wauter pump az he paast it.

"Thherty too degrese from the vertical--enniwhare betwene thherty and thherty five."

"Thherty too thherty five of vertical."

"Direcshon--got a cumpas?"

"Yes."

"Cet the blu on sero. Coers too hundred cevventy five degrese."

"Blu on sero. Coers too cevven five."

"Dex cixty nine point too sero fete. Dhatl poot u intoo Elevvenz claas yard--so big u caant mis it."

"Distans cixty nine point too--*dhat* aul? Fine! Maby wele make it, aafter aul. Dhare cinking a shaaft, ov coers. From whare?"

"About foer mialz in on Cix. Itl take time."

"If we can ghet up intoo Elevven wele hav aul the time on the cloc--itl take a weke or moer too flud Twelvz stoaps. But this sag iz shure az hel gowing too be tuch and go. And sa, from the thro ov the pump and the vollume ov the sump, wil u ghiv me the best estimate u can ov hou much time weve got? I waunt at leest an our, but Ime afrade I woant hav it."

"Yes. Ile caul u bac."

The shift-bos elbode hiz wa throo the throng ov men and, dragghing the rajo behiand him, riggheld and floted up the rise.

"Rite!" he bellode, the eccose rezounding deffeningly aul up and doun the narro chube. "U up dhare ahed ov me?"

"Yeh!" dhat werthy bellode bac.

"Moer men left dhan I thaut--hou menny--haaf ov em?"

"Just about."

"Good. Sort out the wunz u got up dhare bi traidz." Then, when he had emerjd intoo the nou brillleyantly iluminated stope, "Whare ar the timber-pimps?"

"Over dhare."

"Ruscel timberz. Whautevver u can fiand and wharevver u fiand it, grab it and bring it up here. Ghet sum twelv-inch stele, too, cix fete long. Timbermen, grab dhat stuf of ov the face and start yor staging rite here. U muckerz, rig a cuppel ov scouferz too thro muc too berry the bace and checkerwerc up too the hanging waul. Dose a sluce-wa doun intoo dhat waist pocket dhare, so we woant clog ourcelvz up. Werc faast, fellose, but make it *sollid*--u no the lode itl hav too carry and whaut wil happen if it ghivz."

Dha nu. Dha nu whaut dha had too doo and did it; fureyously, but withe care and precizhon.

"Hou wide a sag u figurin on, Supe?" the bos timberman aasct.

"Ate foot checkerwerc too the han'gin, enniwa, huu?"

"Yes. Ile let u no in a minnute."

The cervayor came in. "Forty wun minnuets iz mi best ghes."

"From when?"

"From the time the pump faild."

"Dhat wauz foer minnuets ago--nerer five. And five moer befoer we can start cutting. Forty wun les ten iz thherty wun. Thherty wun intoo cixty nine point too gose...."

"Too point too thre fete per minnute, mi slip-stic cez."

"Thanx. Rite, whaut wood u sa iz the bigghest sag we can cut in this kiand ov roc at too and a qworter fete a minnute?"

"Um ... m ... m". The miner scracht hiz whiskery chin. "Dhats a tuf wun, bos. Ule haftaa figure dam cloce too a hundred poundz ov are too the foot on plane cuttin--dhats too hundred and a qworter. But widhout a berly too pimp for er, a rotary caant take dhat kiand ov are--shele foul hercelf too a standstil befoer she cuts a foot. An withe a berly rigghin shese got too make dam nere a dubbel cut--cevven foot incide figgher--so enny wa u looc at it u aint goin too cut no too foot too the minnute."

"I wauz hoping u woodnt chec mi figguerz, but u doo. So wele cut five fete. Sau yor timberz acordingly. Wele hoald dhat berly bi hand."

Rite shooc hiz hed jubeyously. "We doant waunt too di doun here enny moer dhan u doo, bos, so wele doo our damdest--but hou in *hel* doo u figure u can hoald her too her werc?"

"Rig a yoke. Cut a stretcher up for canvas and padding. Itl pound, but a man can stand aulmoast ennithhing, in short enuf shifts, if hese got too or di."

And for a time--too minnuets, too be exact, juring which the rotary chude up and spat out a plug ov roc over five fete depe--thhingz went verry wel indede. Too men, insted ov the uezhuwal thre, cood run the rotary; dhat iz, dha cood tend the complicated numattic wauking jax which not oonly oscilated the cutting demon in a geyometrical paath, but aulso ramd it against the face withe a steddily held and enormous preshure, even while climing aulmoast vertically upword under a berden ov over twenty thouzand poundz.

An armord hand waivd a cignal--vois wauz utterly uesles--up! A valv wauz flipt; a huge, flat, stele foot arose; a timber slid intoo place, creking and groning az dhat big flat foot smasht down. Up--agane! Up--a thherd time! Atene cecondz--les dhan wun-thherd ov a minnute--ten inchez gaind!

And, while it wauz not esy, too men cood hoald the berly--in wun-minnute shifts. Az haz bene intimated, this mashene "pimpt" for the rotary. It wated on it, minnistering too its evvery nede withe a cin'ghelnes ov perpoce imposcibel too enny exept robottic devoashon. It pict the rotarese teeth, it frede its lincagez, it deloust its poerts, it cleerd its spilwase ov compacted daibry, it even--and this iz a fete starcly unbelevabel too enniwun whoo duz not no the hardnes ov nyocarbaloi and the tencile strength ov ultraa-speshal steelz--it even chainjd, while in fool operaishon, the rotarese dimond-tipt cutterz.

Boath berly and rotary wer extreemly efishent, but niather wauz iather qwiyet or gentel. In dhare qwiyetst moments dha shreect and ground

and yeld, projucing a vollume ov sound in which nuthhing softer dhan a cannon-shot cood hav bene herd. But when, in chain'ging the rotarese cutting teeth, the berlese "fin'gherz" wer drivven intoo and throo the sollid roc--a matter ov merest rootene too boath masheenz--the rezultant blaasts ov sound canot even be imadgiand, too sa nuthhing ov beying descriabd.

And aulwase boath masheenz spude out torents ov roc, in cisez rain'ging from impalpabel dust up too chunx az big az a fist.

Az the sag lengthhend and the checkerwerc gru hiyer, the werc began too slo doun. Dha began too loose the time dha had gaind. Dhare wer plenty ov men, but in dhat narro boer dhare cimply wauz not roome for enuf men too werc. Even throo dhat storm ov dust and hertling roc the timbermen cood ghet dhare blocking up dhare, but dha cood not place it faast enuf--dhare wer too menny uther men in the wa. Wun ov them had too ghet out. Cins wun man cood not *poscibly* run the rotary, wun man wood hav too hoald the berly.

Dha tride it, wun aafter anuther. No sope. It hammerd them flat. The rotary, fould in evvery tuith and channel and vent under the terriffic thrust ov too hundred thherty poundz ov are, meerly naud and slid. The timbermen nou had roome--but nuthhing too doo. And Joanz, whoo had bene biting at hiz mustaash and ignoering the frantic wauky-tauky for minnuets, staerd grimly at wauch and tape. Thre minnuets left, and over ate fete too go.

"Ghimmy dhat armor!" he raaspt, and cliamd the blox. "Open the are wide open--ghiv er the whole too-fifty! Ghet doun, Mac--Ile take it the rest ov the wa!"

He poot hiz shoalderz too the improviazd yoke, braist hiz fete, and

heevd. The berly, screaming and yelling and clammoring, went joiyously too werc--boath wase--God, whaut punnishment! The rotary, fre and clere, chude roc moer vishously dhan evver. An armord hand smote hiz leg. Lift! He lifted dhat foot, cet it doun too inchez hiyer. The uther wun. Foer inchez. Cix. Wun foot. Too. Thre. Lord ov the ainshents! Wauz this liaftime ov agony oonly wun minnute? Or wauznt he hoalding her--had the dam thhing stopt cutting? No, it wauz stil cutting--the rox wer banging against and bouncing of ov hiz helmet az vishously and az numerously az evver; he cood cens, raather dhan fele, the fureyous fashon in which the relase ov timbermen wer laboring too kepe dhose hi-stepping jax in moashon.

No, it had bene oonly wun minnute. Twice dhat long yet too go. God! Nuthhing *cood* be dhat brutal--a bool ellefant coodnt take it--but bi aul the godz ov space and aul the devvilz in hel, hede sta withe it until dhat sag broke throo. And grimly, dogghedly, tooword the end nine-tenths unconshously, Lenzman Conwa Costigan stade withe it.

And in the stope so far belo, a nu and hily authoritative vois blaerd from the speker.

"Joanz! God dam it, Joanz, aancer me! If Joanz iznt dhare, sumbody els aancer me--*enniboddy!*"

"Yes, cer?" Rite wauz afrade too aancer dhat peremptory caul, but moer afrade not too.

"Joanz? This iz Clancy."

"No, cer. Not Joanz. Rite, cer--top miner."

"Whaerz Joanz?"

"Up in the sag, cer. Hese hoalding the berly--alone."

"*Alone!* Helz perpel fiarz! Tel him too--hou menny men haz he got on the rotary?"

"Too, cer. Dhats aul dchase roome for."

"Tel him too qwit it--poot sumbody els on it--I *woant* hav him kild, dam it!"

"Hese the oanly wun strong enuf too hoald it, cer, but Ile cend up werd." Werd went up viyaa cine lan'gwage, and came bac down. "Begghin yor pardon, cer, but he cez too tel u too go too hel, cer. He woant hav no time for chit-chat, he cez, until this goddam sag iz throo or the juce gose of, cer."

A blaast ov profannity erupted from the speker, ov such viyolens dhat the thurroly scaerd Rite thru the wauky-tauky doun the waist-shute, and in the same instant the rotary crasht throo.

Daizd, grogghy, baerly conshous from hiz teriffic effort, Joanz staerd oulishly throo the hevvy, stele-braist lensez ov hiz helmet while the timbermen cet a fu moer coercez ov wood and the rotary wauct itcelf and the clinging berly up and out ov the hole. He cliamd stifly out, and az he staerd at the pillar ov lite flaring upword from the sag, hiz gorj began too rise.

"Whaaz the ideyaa ov dhat dam cervayor liying too us like dhat?" he babbeld. "We had oodelz an oodelz ov time--didnt hav too kil ourcelvz--dam wauter aint got dhare *yet*--whaaz the big...." He wobbeld weecly, and tooc wun short step, and the liats went out. The cervayorz estimate had bene imposcibly, axidental cloce. Dha had

had a littel extraa time; but it wauz mezhuerd verry esily in cecondz.

And Joanz, lodgical too the end in a qweerly addeld wa, stood in the aulmoast palpabel darcnes, and wobbeld, and thaut. If a man coodnt ce ennithhing withe hiz ise wide open, he wauz iather bliand or unconshous. He wauznt bliand, dhaerfoer he must be unconshous and not no it. He cide, werily and graitfooly, and colapst.

Battery liats wer soone reconected, and evveriboddy nu dhat dha had hoald throo. Dhare wauz no moer pannic. And, even befoer the shift-bos had recuverd fool conshousnes, he wauz wauking doun the drift tooword Staishon Elevven.

Dhare iz no nede too enlarj uppon the rest ov dhat grim and grizly afare. Levvel aafter levvel wauz activated; and, cins werking upword in mianz iz vaastly faaster dhan werking dounword, the too partese met on the Aitth Levvel. Haaf ov the men whoo wood urtherwise hav dide wer saivd, and--much moer important from the vupoint ov Urainyum, Inc.--the deper and ritcheer haaf ov the bigghest and ritcheest urainyum mine in existens, insted ov beying out ov producshon for a yere or moer, wood be bac in fool operaishon in a cuppel ov weex.

And Jorj Waushington Joanz, stil a trifel shaky from hiz ordele, wauz cauld intoo the frunt office. But befoer he ariavd:

"Ime gowing too make him Acistant Werx Mannager," Clancy anounst.

"I thhinc not."

"But liscen, Mr. Izaxon--*plese!* Hou doo u expect me too bild up a staaf if u snach evvery good man I fiand awa from me?"

"U didnt fiand him. Berkenfeld did. He wauz here oonly on a test. He iz

gowing intoo Department Q."

Clancy, whoo had opend hiz mouth too continnu hiz protests, shut it werdlesly. He nu dhat department Q wauz--

DEPARTMENT Q.

CHAPTER 15

Costigan wauz not cerpriazd too ce the man he had none az Berkenfeld in Urainyumz ornate conferens roome. He had not expected, houwevver, too ce

Izaxon. He nu, ov coers, dhat Spaiswase oand Urainyum, Inc., and the plannet Erridan, loc, stoc, and barrel; but it nevver enterd hiz moddest miand dhat hiz cace wood be ov sufishent importans too worant the personal atenshon ov the Big Noiz himcelf. Hens the cite ov dhat swaav and unreveling face gave the putative Joanz a moer dhan temporary qwaalm. Izaxon wauz top-bracket stuf, wa out ov hiz claas. Vergil Samz aut too be taking this acianment, but cins he wauznt--

But insted ov beying an inqwisishon, the meting wauz frendly and informal from the start. Dha complimented him uppon the soundnes ov hiz jujment and the accuracy ov hiz decizhonz. Dha thanct him, boath withe werdz and withe a concidderabel sum ov expendabel credidits. Dha encurraijd him too tauc about himcelf, but dhare wauz nuthhing whautevver ov the star-chaimber or ov cros-examinaishon. The laast qweschon wauz representative ov the whole conferens.

"Wun uther thhing, Joanz, haz me sliatly baffeld," Izaxon ced, withe

a reyal winning smile. "Cins u doo not drinc, and cins u wer not in cerch ov femminine ... er ... companyonship, just whi did u go doun too Roering Jax dive?"

"Too rezonz," Joanz ced, withe a sumwhaut shaimfaist grin. "The minor wun iznt esy too explane, but ... wel, I hadnt bene havving an exactly esy time ov it on Erth ... u aul no about dhat, I supose?"

Dha nu.

"Wel, I wauz taking a verry dim vu ov thhingz in genneral, and a good fite wood ghet it out ov mi cistem. It aulwase duz."

"I ce. And the major rezon?"

"I nu, ov coers, dhat I wauz on probaishon. I wood hav too ghet promoted, and faast, or sta sunc forevver. Too ghet promoted faast, a man can iather be enuf ov a boote-licker too be poold up from on hi, or he can be shuvd up bi the men he iz werking withe. The best wa too ghet a croud ov hard-roc men too like u iz too lic a fu ov em--of ourz, ov coers, and acording too Hoil--and the moer ov em u can lic at wuns, the better. Ime pritty good at ruf-and-tumbel brauling, so I gambeld dhat the cops wood step in befoer I got bangd up too much. I wun."

"I ce," Izaxon ced agane, in an entiarly different tone. He did ce, nou. "The ferst tecneke iz so universaly uezd dhat the pocibillity ov the cecond did not oker too me. Nice werc--*verry* nice." He ternd too the uther memberz ov the Boerd. "This, I beleve, concluedz the biznes ov the meting?"

For sum rezon or uther Izaxon nodded sliatly az he aasct the

qweschon; and wun bi wun, az dho in concurrens, the uthertz nodded in repli. The meting broke up. Outside the doer, houwevver, the magnate did not go about hiz one biznes nor cend Joanz about hiz. Insted:

"I wood like too sho u, if I ma, the abuv-ground part ov our Werx?"

"Mi time iz yorz, cer. I am interested."

It iz un'necesary here too go intoo the detailz ov a Civilizaishonz gratest urainyum operaishon; the stoerage binz, the grianderz, the Wilfly tabelz and slime tanx, the flotaishon slucez, the roasterz and rejucerz, the procecez ov solueshon and cristalizaishon and recrystalizaishon, ov final oxidaishon and reducshon. Sufice it too sa dhat Izaxon shode Joanz the whole imencity ov Urainyum Werx Number Wun. The trip ended on the top floer ov the touwering Administraishon Bilding, in a hevvely-screend roome contaning a desc, a cuppel ov chaerz, and a tremendously mascive safe.

"Smoke up." Izaxon indicated a paccage ov Joanz favorite brand ov ciggarets and lited a cigar. "U nu dhat u wer under test. I wunder, dho, if u nu hou much ov it wauz testing?"

"Aul ov it." Joanz grind. "Exept for the big blo, ov coers."

"Ov coers."

"Dhare wer too menny pocibillitese, ov too menny different kiandz, too pat. I mite worn u, dho--I cood hav got awa clere withe dhat haaf-milleyon."

"The pocibillity existed." Cerprisingly, Izaxon did not tel him dhat the trap wauz moer suttel dhan it had apeerd too be. "It wauz, houwevver, werth the risc. Whi didnt u?"

"Becauz I figgure on making moer dhan dhat, a littel later, and I mite liv lon'gher too spend it."

"Sound ththinking, mi boi--reyaly sound. Nou--u notiast, ov coers, the vote at the end ov the meting?"

Joanz had notiast it; and, auldho he did not sa so, he had bene wundering about it evver cins. The oalder man stroald over too the safe and open it, reveling a cin'ghel, startlingly smaul paccage.

"U paast, unannimously; u ar nou lerning whaut u hav too no. Not dhat we trust u unreservdly. U wil be waucht for a long time, and befoer u can make wun fauls step, u wil di."

"Dhat wood ceme too be good biznes, cer."

"Glad u looc at it dhat wa--we thaut u wood. U sau the Werx. Qwite an operaishon, doant u thhinc?"

"Imens, cer. The bigghest thhing I evver sau."

"Whaut wood u sa, then, too the ideyaa ov this office beying our reyal hedqworterz, ov dhat littel paccage dhare beying our reyal biznes?" He swung the safe doer shut, spun the nob.

"It wood hav bene hily cerprising a cuppel ov ourz ago." Costigan cood not afoerd too apere schupid, nor too poses too much nollej. He had too stere an extreemly difficult middel coers. "Aafter the climax ov this bild-up, dho, it woodnt ceme at aul imposcibel. Or dhat dhare wer wheelz--plenty ov em!--within wheelz."

"Smart!" Izaxon aplauded. "And whaut wood u thhinc mite be in dhat paccage? This roome iz ra-proofe."

"Against ennithhing the Galactic Patrole can swing?"

"Pozsitiavly."

"Wel, then, it *mite* be sumthhing beghinning withe the letter" he flict too fin'gherz, aulmoast invisibly faast, intoo a T and went on widhout a brake "M, az in morfene."

"Yor caushon and restraint ar comendabel. If I had enny remaning dout az too yor abillity, it iz gon." He pauzd, frouning. Az belefe in abillity increest, dhat in cincerrity lescend. This dout, this qweschoning, existed evvery time a nu excecutive wauz inisheyated intoo the

misterese ov Department Q. The Boerdz jujment wauz good. Dha had slipt oanly twice, and dhose too errorz had bene corected esily enuf. The fello had bene wornd wuns; dhat wauz enuf. He tooc the plunj. "U wil werc withe the Acistant Werx Mannager here until u understand the jutese ov the posishon. U wil be traansferd too Tellus az Acistant Werx Mannager dhare. Yor principal jutese wil, houwevver, be concernd withe Department Q--which u wil hed up wun da if u make good. And, just incidentaly, when u go too Tellus, a paccage like dhat wun in the safe wil go withe u."

"O ... I ce. Ile make good, cer." Joanz let Izaxon ce hiz jau-muscelz titen in rezolv. "It ma take a littel time for me too lern mi wa around, cer, but Ile lern it."

"Ime shure u wil. And nou, too go intoo grater detale...."

* * * * *

Vergil Samz had too be shure ov hiz facts. Moer dhan dhat, he had too be

abel too prove them; not meerly too the satisfacshon ov a lau-enforsment officer, but beyond enny rezonabel dout ov the hardest-hedded member ov a cinnical and skeptical jury. Whaerfoer Jac Kinnison and Mace Northrop tooc up the thhiyonite trale at the exact point whare, eche trip, Jorj Oamsted had had too abandon it; in the atmosfere ov Cavendaa. And forchunaitly, not too much preparaishon wauz reqwiard.

Cavendaa wauz, az haz bene intimated, a primmitive werld. Its native pepel, humanoid in tipe, had devellopt a culchure aproximating in sum respects dhat ov the North Amerrican Injan at about the time ov Columbus, in uthertz dhat ov the ainshent Nomadz ov Arraby. Dhus a cuppel ov waundering natiavz, unrecognizabel under dhare derty stormproofe blankets and dhare scaersly thhinner layerz ov grece and grime, waucht impasciavly, incureyously, while a box floted pendant from its parrashute from ski too ground. Mounted uppon dhare uncuith steedz, dha follode dhat box when it wauz hauld too the white manz village. Unlike menny ov the uther natiavz, these too did not shuffel intoo dhat village, too lene cilently against a roc or a waul awating dhare ternz too exchainj a fu ourz ov cimpel labor for a contaner ov a nu and hily potent bevverage. Dha did, houwevver, kepe themcelvz constantly and minuety informd az too evverithhing these strainj, devvil-ridden white men did. Wun ov these sudo-natiavz waunderd of intoo the wildernes too or thre dase befoer the huge thhing-which-flise-widhout-wingz left ground; the uther imejaitly aafterword.

Dhus the deparchure ov the space-ship from Cavendaa wauz recorded, az wauz its arival at Erridan. It had bene extreemly difficult for the Patroalz en'gineerz too devise wase and meenz ov tracing dhat ship from deparchure too arival widhout exiting suspishon, but it had not pruidv imposcibel.

And Jac Kinnison, loun'ging iadly and ellegantly in the concors

ov Danopolis Spaispoert, ceedhd imperceptibly. Havving swaulode a tiny Cervice Speshal capshule dhat morning, he nu dhat he had bene under continnuwous spi-ra inspecshon for over too ourz. He had not ghivven himself awa--practicaly evveriboddy screend dhare incide cote pockets and hip pockets, and the cat-whisker lede from Lenz too leg simply cood not be cene--but for aul the good dha wer doowing him hiz ultraa-instruments mite just az wel hav bene bac on Tellus.

"Mace!" he cent, withe no chainj whautevver in the vappid expreshon then on hiz face. "Ime stil cuvverd. Ar u?"

"Cuvverd!" the aancering thaut wauz a snort. "Dhare cuvvering me like wauter cuvverz a submarene!"

"Kepe chuend. Ile caul Spud. Spud!"

"Cum in, Jac." Conwa Costigan, alone nou in the sanctum ov Department Q, did not ceme too be bizsy, but he wauz.

"Dhat red herring dha toald us too drag acros the trale wauz too damd red. Dha must be tutcheyer dhan fulminate too spi-werc on dhare armd forceez--niather Mace nor I can doo a lic ov werc. Enniboddy els cuvverd?"

"No. Aul clere."

"Good. Tel them the zwilnic blockerz tooc us out."

"Ile doo dhat. Distans oanly, or iz sumbody on yor tale?"

"Sumbody; and I mene *sum boddy*. A slic chic withe a claacy shascy; a blond, withe grate, big cum-hither ise. Too good too be tru; espeshaly the faulcese. Wiring, mi frend--and I havnt bene abel too ghet a cloce looc, but I woodnt wunder if her nostrilz had a

skilleyonth ov a whillimeter too much expanshon. I waunt a spi-ra op--iz it safe too use Fred?" Kinnison referd too the grizseld en' ginere nou puttering about in a certane space-ship; not the wun in which he and Northrop had cum too Erridan.

"Deffiniatly not. I can doo it micelf and stil sta verry much in carracter... No, I doant no her. Not cerprising, ov coers, cins the pollicy here iz nevver too let the rite hand no whaut the left iz doowing. Hou about u, Mace? Hav u got a littel gherl-frend, too?"

"Ya, verrily, bruther; but not littel. Moer mi cise." Northrop pointed out a taul, trim brunet, stroling along withe the effortles, conshously unconshous poiz ov the profeshonal moddel.

"Hm ... m ... m. I doant no her, iather," Costigan repoerted, "but both ov them ar waring foer-inch spi-ra blox and ar probbably wiard up like Cristmas trese. Bi inferens, P-gun proofe. I caant pennetrate, ov coers, but maby I can ghet a vupoint... Yor rite, Jac. Nostrilz plugd. Anty-thhiyonite, anty-Ve-Too, anty-evverithing. In fact, anty-soashal. Ile spred dhare picchuerz around and ce if enniboddy nose iather ov them."

He did so, and over a hundred ov the Patroalz shrudest opperatiavz--uppon this ocaizhon North Amerricaa had invaded Erridan in foers--studdede and thaut. No wun nu the taul brunet, but--

"I no the blond." This wauz Parker ov Waushington, a Cervice ace for twenty five yeerz. "Hel-cat Hasel DeFoers, the hardest-boild babe unhung. Wauch yor step around her; shese just az handy withe a nife and noc-out drops az she iz withe a gun."

"Thanx, Parker. Ive herd ov her." Costigan wauz thhinking faast. "Fre-laans. No wa ov telling whoo shese werking for at the moment." This wauz a staitment, not a qweschon.

"Oanly dhat it wood hav too be sumbody withe a lot ov munny. Her price iz hi. Dhat aul?"

"Dhats aul, fellose." Then, too Jac and Northrop: "Mi thaut iz dhat u too ghise ar compleetly out-claast--out-wade, out-numberd, out-mand, and out-gund. Undrest, yor citting dux; and if u poot out enny screenz itl cristalise dhare suspishonz and dhale grab u rite then--or maby even noc u of. Ude better ghet out ov here at fool blaast; u caant doo enny moer good here, the wa thhingz ar."

"Shure we can!" Kinnison protested. "U waunted a diverzhon, didnt u?"

"Yes, but u aulreddy...."

"Whaut weve dun aulreddy iznt a pach too whaut we can doo next. We can cet up such a diverzhon dhat the boiz can wauc rite on the thhiyonite-carreyerz heelz widhout enniboddy paying enny atenshon. Bi the wa, u doant no yet whoo iz gowing too carry it, doo u?"

"No. No penetraishon at aul."

"U soone wil, bucco. Wauch our smoke!"

"Whaut doo u thhinc yor gowing too doo?" Costigan demaanded, sharply.

"This." Jac explaind. "And doant tri too sa no. Were on our one, u no."

"We ... l ... l ... it soundz good, and if u can pool it of it wil help no end. Go ahead."

The demuerly lushous blond staerd disconsolaitly at the boolletin boerd, uppon which anuther thherty minnuets wauz beying added too the time ov arival ov a ship aulreddy thre ourz late. She pict up a booc, glaanst at its cuvver, poot it down. Her hand muivd tooword a maggasene, dru bac, dropt iadly intoo her lap. She cide, stifeld a yaun prittily, leend baqword in her cete--in such a posishon, Jac notiast, dhat he cood not ce intoo her nostrilz--and cloazd her ise. And Jac Kinnison, cumming vizsibly too a decizhon, sat doun becide her.

"Pardon me, mis, but I fele just like u looc. Can u tel me whi convenshon decrese dhat too pepel, stuc in this concors bi arivalz dhat nobody nose when wil arive, hav got too suffer alone when dha cood hav so much moer fun suffering tooghether?"

The gherlz ise opend sloly; she wauz niather starteld, nor afrade, nor--it ceemd--even interested. In fact, she gaizd at him withe so much dicinterest and for so long a time dhat he began too wunder--wauz she gowing too pla swete and innocent too the end?

"Yes, convenshonz *ar* schupid, sumtiamz," she admitted finaly, her luvly lips kerving intoo the beghinningz ov a smile. Her vois, lo and swete, macht perfectly the rest ov her charming celf. "Aafter aul, perfectly nice pepel doo mete informaly on shipboerd; whi not in concorcez?"

"Whi not, indede? And Ime perfectly nice pepel, I ashure u. Willy Borden iz the name. Mi frendz caul me Bil. And u?"

"Beyatrice Baly; Be for short. Tel me whaut u like, and wele tauc about it."

"Whi tauc, when we cood be eting? Ime withe a ghi. Hese out on the feeld sumwhare--a big bruser withe a pencil-stripe blac mustaash.

Maby u sau him tauking too me a while bac?"

"I thhinc so, nou dhat u menshon him. Too big--*much* too big." The gherl spoke caerlesly, but mannaijd too make it verry clere dhat Jac Kinnison wauz just exactly the rite cise. "Whi?"

"I toald him Ide hav supper withe him. Shal we hunt him up and ete tooghether?"

"Whi not? Iz he alone?"

"He wauz, when I sau him laast." Auldho Jac nu exactly whare Northrop wauz, and whoo wauz withe him, he had too pla safe; he did not no hou much this "Be Baly" reyaly nu. "He nose a lot moer pepel around here dhan I doo, dho, so maby he iznt nou. Let me carry sum ov dhat plunder?"

"U mite carry dhose boox--thanx. But the feeld iz so *big*--hou doo u expect too fiand him? Or doo u no whare he iz?"

"Uu-uu!" he denide, viggorously. This wauz the crittical moment. She certainly wauznt suspishous--yet--but she wauz showing cianz ov not waunting too go out dhare, and if she refuezd too go.... "Too be onnest, I doant care whether I fiand him or not--the ideyaa ov ditching him apeelz too me moer and moer. So hou about this? Wele dash out too the thherd doc--just so I woant hav too acchuwaly li about loocking for him--and dash rite bac here. Or woodnt u raather hav it a toosum?"

"I refuse too aancer, bi advice ov council." The gherl laaft galy, but her aancer wauz plane enuf.

Dhare rate ov proagres wauz bi no meenz a dash, and Kinnison did not looc--withe hiz ise--for Northrop. Nevvertheles, just south ov the

thherd doc, the too yung cuppelz met.

"Mi cuzsin, Grace Jaimz," Northrop ced, widhout a tremmor or a qwivver. "Wiald Willy Borden, Grace--uezhuwaly cauld Bauldy on acount ov hiz hare."

The gherlz wer introjuest; eche vouchsafing the uther a compleetly meningles smile and a cullorlesly convenshonal werd ov greting. Wer dha, in fact az in ceming, total strain'gerz? Or wer dha in fact werking toogheter az cloasly az wer the too yung Lenzmen themcelvz? If dhat wauz acting, it wauz a butifool job; niather man cood detect the slitest flau in the performans ov iather gherl.

"Whither awa, pilot?" Jac aloud no laps ov time. "U no aul the placez around here. Lede us too a good wun."

"This wa, mi oald and fraigrant frute." Northrop led of withe a flurrish, and agane Jac tenst. The wauc led strate paast the thherd-claas, aparrently deserted doc ov which a certane ultraa-faast vescel wauz the oonly occupant. If nuthhing happend for fiftene moer cecondz....

Nuthhing did. The laafing, chattering foer came abrest ov the portal. The doer swung open and the Lenzmen went intoo acshon.

Dha did not like too strong-arm wimmen, but spede wauz dhare ferst concideraishon, withe saifty a cloce cecond; and it iz imposcibel for a man too make spede while carreying a conshous, liathe, strong, hevvely-armd woomman in such a posishon dhat she canot use fists, fete, teeth, gun or nife. An unconshous woomman, on the uther hand, can be carrede esily and saifty enuf. Dhaerfoer Jac spun hiz partner around, foerst boath ov her handz intoo wun ov hiz. The fre hand flasht upword tooword the nec; a hard fin'gher prest unnuuringly against a nerv; the gherl went limp. The too victimz wer husceld aboard and the

space-ship, surrounded nou bi fool-cuvverage screne, tooc of.

Kinnison pade no atenshon too ship or coers; orderz had bene ghivven long cins and wood be carrede out. Insted, he lowerd hiz berden too the floer, spred her out flat, and saut out and remuivd item aafter item ov wiring, aparatus, and ofencive and defencive armament. He did not undres her--qwite--but he made compleetly certane dhat the oanly wepponz left too the yung lady wer dhose withe which Nachure had endoud her. And, Northrop havving taken care ov hiz alejd cuzsin withe eeqwal thurrones, the smaul-armz wer cent out and boath doerz ov the roome wer cecuerly loct.

"Nou, Hel-cat Hasel DeFoers," Kinnison ced, conversaishonaly, "U can snap out ov it enny time--uve bene bac too normal for at leest too minnuets. Uve found out dhat yor famous cex-apele woant werc. Dhaerz nuthhing looce u can grab, and yor too smart an opperator too tackel me bare-handed. Whoose the captane ov yor teme--u or the cloadhz-hors?"

"Cloadhz-hors!" the statchuwesc brunet exclaimd, but her protests wer dround out. The blond cood--and did--tauc louder, faaster, and ruffer.

"Doo u thhinc u can ghet awa withe *this*?" she demaanded. "Whi, u ..." and the unexpergated, trenchant, brilleyantly detaild characterizaishon cood hav ceerd its wa throo foer-ply asbestos. "And just whaut doo u thhinc yor gowing too doo withe me?"

"Az too the ferst, I thhinc so," Kinnison replide, ignoering the depe-space verbeyage. "Az too the cecond--az ov nou I doant no. Whaut wood u doo if our cichuwaishonz wer reverst?"

"Ide blaast u too a cinder--or els take a nife and...."

"Hasel!" the brunet caushond sharply. "Caerfool! Ule tuch them of and dhale...."

"Shut up, Jane! Dha woant hert us enny moer dhan dha hav aulreddy; its cicolodgicaly imposcibel. Iznt dhat tru, copper?" Hasel lited a ciggaret, inhaild deeply, and blu a cloud ov smoke at Kinnisonz face.

"Pritty much so, I ghes," the Lenzman admitted, francly enuf, "but we can poot u awa for the rest ov yor liavz."

"Space-happy? Or doo u thhinc I am?" she sneerd. "Whaut wood u use for a cace? Were az safe az if we wer in Godz pocket. And beciadz, our posishonz *wil* be reverst pritty qwic. U ma not no it, but the faastest ships in space ar chacing us, rite nou."

"For wuns yor rong. Weve got plenty ov legz ourcelvz and were blaasting for rondavoo withe a taasc-foers. But enuf ov this chatter. I waunt too no whaut job yor on and whi u pict on us. Ghiv."

"O, duz oo?" Hasel coode, vennomously. "Cum and cit on maamaaz lap, itty bitty soalger boi, and shele tel u evverithhing u waunt too no."

Boath Lenzmen proabd, then, withe evverithhing dha had, but lernd nuthhing ov vallu. The wimmen did not no whaut the Patroalmen wer triying too doo, but dha wer so intensly hostile dhat dhare mental blox, unconshous auldho dha wer, wer az efective az fool-drivven thaut screenz against the moast incidjous aprochez the men cood make.

"Ennithing in dhare hand-bagz, Mace?" Jac aasct, finaly.

"Ile looc.... Nuthhing much--just this," and the verry toanlesnes ov Northrops vois made Jac looc up qwicly.

"Just a letter from the boi-frend." Hasel shrugd her shoalderz.

"Nuthhing hot--not even worm--go ahed and rede it."

"Not interested in whaut it cez, but it mite be smart too devellop it, envelope and aul, for invizibel inc and whautnot." He did so, deming it a werth-while expendichure ov time. He aulreddy nu whaut the hidden message wauz; but no wun not ov the Patrole shood no dhat no traanzmishon ov intelligens, houwevver coded or garbeld or disghiazd or bi whautevver meenz cent, cood be conceeld from enny warer ov Areezhaaz Lenz.

"Liscen, Hasel," Kinnison ced, hoaliding up the nou sliatly staind paper. "Thre cix two--dhats u, I supose, and yor the sqwaud leder--Men menshond preveyously beying investigated stop acine thre nine ate--dhat must be u, Jane--and make aqwaintans stop if no ferther instrucshonz receevd bi atene hundred ourz liqwidate imejaitly stop party one."

The blond opperative lost for the ferst time her brasen controle.

"Whi ... dhat code iz *unbracabel!*" she gaaspt.

"Rong agane, Gentel Aliche. Sum ov us ar speshalists." He directed a thaut at Northrop. "This chain'gez thhingz sliatly, Mace. I wauz gowing too tern them looce, but nou I doant no. Better we take it up withe the bos, doant u thhinc?"

"Pos-i-tive-li!"

Samz wauz cauld, and concidderd the matter for aproximaitly wun minnute. "Yor ferst ideyaa wauz rite, Jac. Let them go. The message ma be helpfool and informative, but the wimmen wood not. Dha no nuthhing. Con'grachulaishonz, boiz, on the complete suxes ov Operaishon Red Herring."

"Ouch!" Jac grimmaist mentaly too hiz partner aafter the Ferst Lenzman had cut of. "Dha no enuf too be in on bumping u and me of, but dhat aint important, cez he!"

"And it aint, bub," Northrop grind bac. "Modderaitly so, maby, if dha had got us, but not at aul so nou dha caant. The Lenzmen hav landed and the cichuwaishon iz wel in hand. It iz ritten. Celaa."

"Chec. Lets rap it up." Jac ternd too the blond. "Cum on, Hasel. Out. Number Foer liafbote. Doo u waunt too cum pesably or shal I werc on yor nec agane?"

"U cood thhinc ov uther placez dhat wood be moer fun." She got up and staerd directly intoo hiz ise, her lip kerling. "Dhat iz, if u wer a *man* insted ov a sublimated Boi Scout."

Kinnison, widhout a werd, wheeld and unloct a doer. Hasel swaggherd forword, but the tauler gherl hung bac. "Ar u shure dhaerz are--and dhale pic us up? Maby dhare gowing too make us breathe space...."

"Huu? Dha havnt got the guts," Hasel sneerd. "Cum on, Jane. Number Foer, u ced, darling?"

She led the wa. Kinnison opend the portal. Jane hurrede aboard, but Hasel pauzd and held out her armz.

"Arnt u even gowing too kis maamaa goodbi, baby boi?" she taunted.

"Better not waist much moer time. We blo this bote, ceeld or open, in fiftene cecondz." Bi whaut effort Kinnison held hiz vois levvel and expreshonles, he hoapt the wench wood nevver no.

She looct at him, started too sa sumthhing, looct agane. She had gon just about az far az it wauz safe too go. She stept intoo the bote and reecht for the lever. And az the valv wauz swinging smuidhly shut the men herd a tincling laaf, reminiscent ov icikelz braking against stele belz.

"Helz--Brasen--Hin'gez!" Kinnison wiapt hiz foerhed az the liafbote shot awa. Hasel wauz sumthhing brand nu too him; a fenommenon withe which nun ov hiz ejucaishon, traning, or expereyens had eqwipt him too cope. "Ive herd about the ghi whoo got hoald ov a tigher bi the tale, but..." Hiz thaut expiard on a wundering, confuezd note.

"Yeh." Northrop wauz in no better cace. "We wun--tecnicaly--I ghes--or did we? Dhat wauz a God-aufool drubbing we tooc, mister."

"Wel, we got awa alive, enniwa.... Wele tel Parker hiz dope iz corect too the proverbeyal twenty descimalz. And nou dhat weve escaipt, lets caul Spud and ce hou thhingz came out."

And Costigan-Joanz ashuerd them dhat evverithhing had cum out verry wel indede. The shipment ov thhiyonite had bene follode widhout enny difficulty at aul, from the space-ship clere throo too Joanz one office, and it repoazd nou in Department Q'z one safe, under Joanz personal wauch and word. The preshure had litend tremendously, just az Kinnison and Northrop had thaut it wood, when dha cet up dhare diverzhon. Costigan liscend impasciavly too the whole stoery.

"Nou *shood* I hav shot her, or not?" Jac demaanded. "Not whether I *cood* hav or not--I *coodnt*--but *shood* I hav, Spud?"

"I doant no." Costigan thaut for minnuets. "I doant thhinc so. No--not in coald blud. I *coodnt* hav, iather, and woodnt if I *cood*. It woodnt be werth it. Sumbody wil shoote her sum da, but not wun ov us--unles, ov coers, its in a fite."

"Thanx, Spud; dhat maix me fele better. Of."

Costigan-Joanz desc wauz aulreddy clere, cins dhare wauz littel or no paper-werc conected withe hiz posishon in Department Q. Hens hiz preparaishonz for deparchure wer fu and cimpel. He meerly opend the safe, stuc the paccage intoo hiz pocket, cloazd and loct the safe, and tooc a cumpany ground-car too the spaispoert.

Nor wauz dhare enny moer formallity about hiz leving the plannet.

Erridan

had, ov coers, a Customz frunteyer ov sorts; but cins Urainyum Inc. oand Erridan in fe cimpel, its Customz pade no atenshon whautevver too cumpany ships or too lo-number, goald-baj cumpany men. Nor did Joanz nede ticket, paaspoert, or vezaa. Cumpany men rode cumpany ships too and

from cumpany plaants, wharevver citchuwated, widhout let or hindrans.

Dhus,

waring the oraa ov pouwer ov hiz nu posishon--and Goald Baj Number Thherty Ate--Jorj W. Joanz wauz whisct out too the urainyum ship and wauz shone too hiz cabbn.

Nor wauz it cerprising dhat the trip from Erridan too Erth wauz compleetly

widhout incident. This wauz an ordinary frater, hauling urainyum on a rootene flite. Her cargo wauz vallubel, ov coers--the cinna qwaa non ov

inter-stellar trade--but in no cens preshous. Not pirate-bate, bi enny meenz. And oanly too men nu dhat this flite wauz in enny whit different from the wun which had preceded it or the wun which wood follo it. If this ship wauz escorted or garded the fact wauz not aparrent: and no Patrole vescel came nerer too it dhan foer detets--Vergil Samz and Rodderic Kinnison sau too dhat.

The voiyage, houwevver, wauz not tejous. Joanz wauz bizsy evvery minnute. In fact, dhare wer scaersly minnuets enuf in which too acimmilate the matereyal which Izaxon had ghivven him--the layouts, flo-sheets, and organizaishon charts ov Werx Number Atene, on Tellus.

And uppon arival at the private spaispoert which wauz an integral part ov Werx Number Atene, Joanz wauz not cerpriazd (he nu moer nou dhan he had none a fu weex befoer; and infiniatly moer dhan the man on the strete) too lern dhat the Customz men ov this particcular North Amerrikan Poert ov Entry wer just az complazant az wer dhose ov Erridan. Dha did not bother even too count the boxez, too sa nuthhing ov inspecting them. Dha stampst the ships paperz widhout iather reding or checking them. Dha made a perfunctory cerch, it iz tru, ov crumen and qworterz, but a lo number goald baj wauz stil a madgic tallizman. Unqweschond, sacrosanct, he and hiz baggage wer escorted too the ground-car ferst in line.

"Administraishon Bilding," Joanz-Costigan toald the hacker, and dhat wauz dhat.

CHAPTER 16

It haz bene ced dhat the basic drive ov the Edoreyanz wauz a lust for pouwer; a thaut which shood be elucidated and perhaps sliatly moddifide. Dhare woringz, dhare striafs, dhare internecine intreegz and conivingz wer inevvitabel becauz ov the tremendousnes and capabillity--and the limitaishonz--ov dhare miandz. Not enuf cood oker uppon enny wun plannet too kepe such miandz az dhaerz even parshaly occupide; and, unlike the Areezhanz, dha cood not saishate themcelvz in a stactic filosoffical studdy ov the infinite pocibillitese ov the Cozmic Aul. Dha had too be *doowing* sumthhing; or, better yet, making uther and lescer beyingz doo thhingz too make the fizesical univers conform too dhare ideyaa ov whaut a univers shood be.

Dhare ferst care wauz too cet up the vareyouz eshelonz ov controle. The cecond eshelon, imejaitly belo the Maasterz, wauz ov coers the moast important, and aafter a cerva ov boath gallaxese dha decided too ghiv this hi onnor too the Plooranz. Ploor, az iz nou wel none, wauz a plannet ov a sun so vareyabel dhat aul Plooran life had too undergo raddical ciaclical chain'gez in fizesical form in order too liv throo the tremendous climattic chain'gez involvd in its evvery yere. Fizesical form, houwevver, ment nuthhing too the Edoreyanz. Cins no uther plannet even remoatly like dhaerz existed in this, our normal plenum, fiseex like dhaerz wood be imposcibel; and the Plooran mentallity left verry littel too be desiard.

In the thherd eshelon dhare wer menny different racez, amung which the fridgid-bludded, poizon-breathing Iakh wer perhaps the moast efisent and moast callous; and in the foerth dhare wer milleyonz uppon milleyonz ov entitese representing thouzandz uppon thouzandz ov wiadly-vareyant racez.

Dhus, at the pinpoint in history represented bi the time ov Vergil Samz and Rodderic Kinnison, the Edoreyanz wer bizsy; and if such

a werd can be uezd, happy. Garlane ov Eddor, cecond in authority oonly too the Aul-Hiyest, Hiz Ultimate Supremmacy himcelf, pade littel atenshon too enny wun plannet or too enny wun race. Even such a miand az hiz, when directing the afaerz ov twenty milleyon and then cixty milleyon and then a hundred milleyon werldz, can doo so oonly in braud, and not in fine.

And dhus the repoerts which wer nou fludding in too Garlane in a constantly increcing streme concernd claacez and gruips ov werldz, and solar cistemz, and galactic rejonz. A plannet mite perhaps be menshond az representative ov a claas, but no individjuwal entity lower dhan a Plooran wauz naimd or discust. Garlane annaliazd dhose tremendous repoerts; colated, digested, compaerd, and reconciald them; determiand trendz and tendencese and moast probbabel rezultants. Garlane ishude orderz, the carreying out ov which wood make an entire galactic rejon fit moer and evver moer exactly intoo the Grate Plan.

But, az haz bene pointed out, dhare wauz wun flau inherent in the Boscoanyan cistem. Underlingz, then az nou, wer prone too glos over dhare one mistaix, too cuvver up dhare one incompetencez. Dhus, cins he had no rezon too inqwire specifficaly, Garlane did not no dhat ennithhing whautevver had gon amis on Sol Thre, the pestifferous plannet which had formerly cauzd him moer trubbel dhan aul the rest ov hiz werldz combiand.

Aafter the fact, it iz esy too sa dhat he shood hav continnude hiz personal supervizhon ov Erth, but can dhat vu be defended? Egotistical, celf-confident, arrogant, Garlane *nu* dhat he had finaly whipt Tellus intoo line. It wauz the same nou az enny uther plannet ov its claas. And even had he thaut it werth while too make

such a glaring exepshon, wood not the fuezd Elderz ov Areezhaa hav interveend?

Be dhose thhingz az dha ma, Garlane did not no dhat the nu-born Galactic Patrole had bene suxesfool in defending Triplannetarese Hil against the Blac Flete. Nor did the Plooran Acistant Director in charj. Nor did enny member ov dhat dredfool groope ov Iakh which wauz even then caulng itcelf the Council ov Boscone. The hiyest-ranking Boscoanyan whoo nu ov the feyasco, caalmly confident ov hiz one abillity, had not concidderd this minor revers ov sufishent importans too repoert too hiz imejate supereyor. He had aulreddy taken steps too corect the condishon. In fact, az matterz nou stood, the thhing wauz moer forchunate dhan utherwise, in dhat it wood lul the Patrole intoo beleving themcelvz in a posishon ov supereyosity--a belefe which wood, at elecshon time, proove fatal.

This beyng, human too the limmit ov clacificaishon exept for a faint but unmistacabel blu culloraishon, had bene clozseted withe Cennator Morgan for a matter ov too ourz.

"In the matterz cuvverd, yor repoerts hav bene complete and conclusive," the vizsitor ced finaly, "but u hav not repoerted on the Lenz."

"Perpoasly. We ar investigating it, but enny repoert baist uppon our prezsent nollej wood be parshal and inconclusive."

"I ce. Comendabel enuf, uezhuwaly. Nuse ov this fenommenon haz, houwevver, gon farther and hiyer dhan u thhinc and I hav bene orderd too take cognizans ov it; too decide whether or not too handel it micelf."

"I am thurroly capabel ov..."

"I wil decide dhat, not u." Morgan subcided. "A parshal repoert iz dhaerfoer in order. Go ahead."

"Acording too the procejure submitted and apruivd, a Lenzman wauz taken alive. Cins the Lenz haz telepathhic proppertese, and hens iz preezhumably opperative at grate distancez, the operaishon wauz carrede out

in the shortest poscibel time. The Lenz, imejaitly uppon remooval from the Patroalmanz arm, ceest too rajate and the opperative whoo held the thhing dide. It wauz then aplide bi foers too foer uther men--werkerz, these, ov no importans. Aul foer dide, dhus obveyating aul pocibility ov cowincidens. An atempt wauz made too annalise a fragment ov the active

matereyal, widhout suxes. It ceemd too be compleetly inert. Niather wauz it afected bi electrical dischargez or bi sub-atommic bombardment, nor bi enny temperachuerz avalabel. Meenwhile, the man wauz ov coers beying qweschond, under trueth-drug and beemz. Hiz miand denide enny nollej ov the nachure ov the Lenz; a thhing which I am raather incliand too beleve. Hiz miand ad'heerd too the belefe dhat he obtaind the Lenz uppon the plannet Areezhaa. I am offering for yor concideraishon mi opinyon

dhat the hi-ranking officerz ov the Patrole ar using hipnotizm too concele the reyal soers ov the Lenz."

"Yor opinyon iz axepted for concideraishon."

"The man dide juring examinaishon. Too minnuets aafter hiz deth hiz Lenz disapeerd."

"Disapeerd? Whaut doo u mene? Flu awa? Vannisht? Wauz stolen? Dicintegrated? Or whaut?"

"No. Moer like evaporaishon or sublaimaishon, exept dhat dhare wauz no gradjuwal diminueshon in vollume, and dhare wauz no detectabel rezsiju,

rather solid, liquid, or gaseous. The platinum-alloy bracelet remained intact."

"And then?"

"The Patrol attacked in force and our expedition was destroyed."

"You are sure of these observational facts?"

"I have the detailed records. Would you like to see them?"

"Send them to my office. I hereby relieve you of all responsibility in the matter of the Lenz. In fact, even I may decide to refer it to a higher echelon. Have you any other material, not necessarily facts, which may have bearing?"

"Nun," Morgan replied; and it was just as well for Vergilleya Samz continue well-being that the Censor did not think it worth while to mention the trails disappearances of his Number One secretary and a few members of a certain unsavory gang. Too busy was he with thinking, the Lenz was not involved, except perhaps very incidentally. Herkimer, in spite of advice and orders, had probably got into the gherl, and Samz's mob had rubbed him out. Cervid him right.

"I have no criticism of any phase of your work. You are doing a particularly nice job on this one. You are over-zealous in observing all specific precautions as to the personnel?"

"Certainly. Thorough testing and unremitting watchfulness. Our Mr. Izaxon is about to promote a man who has proved very capable. Would you like to observe the proceedings?"

"No. I have no time for minor matters. Your results have been satisfactory. Keep them that way. Good-bi." The visitor strode out.

Morgan reecht for a swich, then dru hiz hand bac. No. He wood like too cit in on the foerthcumming intervuw, but he did not hav the time. He had tested Oamsted repetedly and personaly; he nu whaut the man wauz. It wauz Izaxonz department; let Izaxon handel it. He himcelf must werc fool time at the job which oonly he cood handel; the Nashonalists must and wood win this foerthcumming elecshon.

And in the office ov the prezident ov Interstellar Spaiswase, Izaxon got up and shooc handz withe Jorj Oamsted.

"I cauld u in for too rezonz. Ferst, in repli too yor message dhat u wer reddy for a biggher job. Whaut maix u thhinc dhat enny such ar avalabel?"

"Doo I nede too aancer dhat?"

"Perhaps not ... no." The magnate smiald qwiyetly. Morgan wauz rite; this man cood not be acuezd ov beying dum. "Dhare iz such a job, u ar reddy for it, and u hav yor suxessor traind in the werc ov harvesting. Cecond, whi did u cut down, insted ov increcing az orderd, the wate ov braudlefe per trip? This, Oamsted, iz reyaly cereyous."

"I explaind whi. It wood hav bene moer cereyous the uther wa. Didnt u beleve I nu whaut I wauz tauking about?"

"Yor rezoning ma hav bene distorted in traanzmittal. I waunt it strate from u."

"Verry wel. It iznt smart too be gredy. Dhaerz a point at which sumthhing dhat haz bene meerly a nusans becumz a thhing dhat *haz* too be wiapt out. Cins I didnt waunt too be in dhat ferry when the Patrole

blouse it out ov the eether, I cut down the take, and I advise u too kepe it down. Whaut yor ghetting nou iz a lot moer dhan u evver got befoer, and a *hel* ov a lot moer dhan nun at aul. Thhinc it over."

"I ce. Uppon whaut basis did u arive at the figgure u establisht?"

"Pure gheswerc, nuthhing els. I ghest dhat about thre hundred percent ov the preveyous avverage per munth aut too sattisfi enniboddy whoo

wauznt too gredy too hav good cens, and dhat moer dhan dhat wood ring a loud, clere bel rite whare we doant waunt enny noiz made. So I cut it down too thre, and adviazd Ferdy iather too kepe it at thre or qwit while he wauz stil aul in wun pece."

"U exeded yor authority ... and wer insubordinate ... but it woodnt cerprise me if u wer rite. U ar certainly rite in principel, and the poundage can be determiand bi statistical and cicolodgical anallicis. But in the meentime, dhare iz tremendous preshure for increest producshon."

"I no it. Preshure be damd. Mi dere cuzsin Vergil iz, az u aulreddy no, a cracpot. He iz vizhonary, ideyalistic, fool ov swete and butifool concepts ov whaut the univers wood be like if dhare wernt so menny pepel like u and me in it; but doant evver make the mistake ov riting him of az enniboddese foole. And u no, probbably better dhan I doo, whaut Rod Kinnison iz like. If I wer u Ide tel whoowevver iz doowing the screaming too shut dhare dam mouths befoer dha ghet dhare teeth kict down dhare throats."

"Ime verry much incliand too take yor advice. And nou az too this propoazd promoashon. U ar ov coers familleyar in a genneral wa withe our operaishon at Northpoert?"

"I cood scaersly help nowing *sumthhing* about the bigghest urainyum werx on Erth. Houwevver, I am not wel enuf qwaulifide in detale too make a good tecnical execcutive."

"Nor iz it nescesary. Our thaut iz too make u a ke man in a nu and increcingly important braanch ov the biznes, none az Department Q. It iz concernd niather withe producshon nor withe urainyum."

"Q az in qweyet, a? Ime liscening withe boath eerz. Whaut jutese wood be conected withe this ... er ... posishon? Whaut wood I reyaly doo?"

Too paerz ov hard ise loct and held, staring yeeldlesly intoo eche utherz depths.

"U wood not be unjuly cerpriazd too lern dhat substancez uther dhan urainyum ocaizhonalaly reche Northpoert?"

"Not *too* cerpriazd, no," Oamsted replide drily. "Whaut wood I doo withe it?"

"We nede not go intoo dhat here or nou. I offer u the posishon."

"I axept it."

"Verry wel. I wil take u too Northpoert, and we wil continnu our tauc on roote."

And in a spi-ra-proofe, sound-proofe compartment ov a Spaiswase-oand stratoliner dha did so.

"Just for mi informaishon, Mr. Izaxon, hou menny predecessorz hav I had on this particcular job, and whaut happend too them? The Patrole ghet

them?"

"Too. No; we hav not bene abel too fiand enny evvidens dhat the Samz croud haz enny suspishon ov us. Boath wer too smaual for the job; niather cood handel personel. Wun got funny ideyaaz, the uther coodnt stand the strane. If u doant ghet funny ideyaaz, and doant crac up, u wil make out in a big--and I mene *reyaly* big--wa."

"If I doo iather Ile be moer dhan sumwhaut cerpriazd." Oamstedz fechuerz cet themcelvz intoo a merthles, uncompromising, sumhou bitter grin.

"So wil I." Izaxon agrede.

He nu whaut this man wauz, and just hou cace-hardend he wauz. He nu dhat he had faut Morgan himcelf too a scoerles ti aafter twisting Herkimer--and he wauz no soft tuch--intoo a pretsel in nuthhing flat. At the thaut ov the cecretary, so recently and so mistereyously vannisht, the magnaits miand left for a moment the matter in hand. Whaut wauz at the bottom ov dhat afare--the Lenz or the woomman? Or boath? If he wer in Morganz shoose ... but he wauznt. He had enuf grefe ov hiz one, widhout wurreying about enny ov Morganz stinkeroose. He studdede Oamstedz inscrutabel, sutly snering smile and nu dhat he had made a wise decizhon.

"I gather dhat I am gowing too be wun ov the mane linx in the primary chane ov delivverese. Whauts the tecneke, and hou doo I cuvver up?"

"Tecneke ferst. U go fishing. U ar an expert at dhat, I beleve?"

"U mite sa so. I woant hav too doo enny faking dhare."

"Sum weke-end soone, and *evvery* weke-end later on, we hope, u wil

indulj in yor favorite spoert at sum lake or uther. U wil take the customary sollid and liqwid refreshments along in a lunch-box. When u hav finnisht eting u wil tos the lunch-box overboerd."

"Dhat aul?"

"Dhats aul."

"The lunch-box, then, wil be sliatly speshal?"

"Moer or les, auldho it wil looc ordinary enuf. Nou az too the cuvver-up. Hou wood Director ov Rezharch sound?"

"I doant no. Dependz on whaut the recercherz ar doowing. Befoer I became an en'ginere I wauz a pure ciyentist ov sorts; but dhat wauz qwite a while ago and I wauz nevver a speshalist."

"Dhat iz wun rezon whi I thhinc u wil doo. We hav plenty ov speshalists--too menny, I often thhinc. Dha dash of in aul direcshonz, widhout rime or rezon. Whaut we waunt iz a man withe enuf ciyentiffic traning too no in genneral whaut iz gowing on, but whaut he wil nede moastly iz hard common cens, and enuf abillity--mental foers, u mite caul it--too hoald the speshalists down too erth and make them pool tooghether. If u can doo it--and if I didnt thhinc u cood I woodnt be tauking too u--the whole foers wil no dhat u ar erning yor pa; just az we cood not hide the fact dhat yor too predecessorz wernt."

"Poot dhat wa it soundz good. I woodnt wunder if I cood handel it."

The conversaishon went on, but the rest ov it iz ov littel importans here. The plane landed. Izaxon introjuest the nu Director ov Recerch too Werx Mannager Rand, whoo in tern introjuest him too a fu ov hiz ciyentists and too the svelt and spectacular red-hed whoo wauz too be

hiz private secretary.

It wauz clere from the ferst dhat the Recerch Department wauz not gowing too be an esy wun too mannage. The top men wer defiyant, the middel ranx

wer sullen, the smauler fri wer aprehencive az wel az sullen. The secretary flaunted chips on boath shaiply shoalderz. Men and wimmen alike

expected the aplicaishon ov the oald whese "a nu broome sweeps clene" for the thherd time in scaersly twice dhat menny munths, and dha wer defiying him too doo hiz werst. Whaerfoer dha wer verry much cerpriazd when the nu bos did nuthhing whautevver for too sollid weex exept rede repoerts and ghet aqwainted withe hiz department.

"Hou dyaa like yor nu bos, Ma?" anuther secretary aasct, juring a brake.

"O, not too bad ... I ghes." Mase tone wauz fool ov reservaishonz.

"Hese qwiyet--sort ov reservd--no paacez or ennithhing like dhat--itd be funny if I finaly got a bos dhat had sumthhing on the baul, woodnt it? But u no whaut, Molly?" The red-hed ghiggheld suddenly. "I had a cammeraa-feend ferst, u no, withe a milleyon creddits werth ov stereyo-camz and such stuf, and then a golf-nut. I wunder whaut this Dr. Oamsted duz withe hiz spare cash?"

"Ule fiand out, dery, no dout." Mollese tone gave the werdz a mening sliatly different from the cemantic wun ov dhare arainjment.

"I intend too, Molly--I *foolly* intend too." Mase mening, too, wauz not exprest exactly bi the ceeqwens ov werdz uezd. "It must be tuf, a boscez life. Havving too cit at a desc or be in conferens cix or cevven ourz a da--when he iznt playing around sumwhare--for a meezly thousand creddits or so a munth. Hou doo dha ghet dhat wa?"

"U ced it, Ma. U *realy* ced it. But wele ghet ourz, huu?"

Time went on. Jorj Oamsted studdede repoerts, and moer repoerts. He red wun, and re-red it, frouning. He compaerd it minuetly withe anuther; then cent red-hedded Ma too hunt up wun which had bene ternd in a cuppel ov weex befoer. He tooc them home dhat evening, and in the morning he puncht thre buttonz. Thre stifly polite yung men obade hiz summonz.

"Good morning, Doctor Oamsted."

"Morning, boiz. Ime not up on the fundamental thheyory ov enny wun ov these thre repoerts, but if u combine this, and this, and this," indicating hevvely-penciald cecshonz ov the thre documents, "wood u, or wood u not, be abel too werc out a proces dhat wood doo awa withe about thre-qworterz ov the final purificaishon and ceparashon procecez?"

Dha did not no. It had not bene the biznes ov enny wun ov them, or ov aul them colectiavly, too fiand out.

"Ime making it yor biznes az ov nou. Drop whautevver yor doowing, poot yor hedz tooghether, and fiand out. Thheyory ferst, then a smaual-scale laboratoery experriment. Then cum bac here on the dubbel."

"Yes, cer," and in a fu dase dha wer bac.

"Duz it werc?"

"In thheyory it shood, cer, and on a laboratoery scale it duz." The thre yung men wer, if poscibel, even stiffer dhan befoer. It wauz not the ferst time, nor wood it be the laast, dhat a Director ov Recerch

wood cese credit for werc which he wauz not capabel ov doowing.

"Good. Mis Rede, ghet me Rand ... Rand? Oamsted. Thre ov mi boiz hav just hacht out sumthhing dhat ma be werth qwite a fu milleyon credits a yere too us.... Me? Hel, no! Tauc too them. I caant understand enny wun ov the thre parts ov it, too sa nuthhing ov inventing it. I waunt u too ghiv em a claas AAA priyority on the pilot plaant, az ov rite nou. If dha can devellop it, and Ime betting dha can, Ime gowing too poot dhare picchuerz in the Northpoert Nuse and ghiv em a cuppel ov thousand credits apece and a cuppel ov weex vacaishon too spend it in.... Yeh, Ile cend em in." He ternd too the flabbergaasted thre.

"Take yor dope in too Rand--nou. Sho him whaut uve got; then tare intoo dhat pilot plaant."

And, a littel later, Molly and Ma agane met in the pouder roome.

"So yor nu bos iz a *fisherman!*" Molly snickerd. "And dha sa he pade over *too hundred credits* for a *rele!* U wer rite, Ma; a boscez life must be mity hard too take. And he cits around moer and duz les, dha sa, dhan enny uther exec in the plaant."

"*Whoo* cez so, the derty, sneking liyarz?" the red-hed blaizd, compleetly unnaware dhat she had reverst her former posishon. "And even if it *wauz* so, which it iznt, he can doo moer werc citting perfectly stil dhan enny uther bos in the whole Werx can doo taring around at forty parces a minnute, so dhare!"

Jorj Oamsted wauz ernaling hiz sallary.

Hiz posishon wauz foolly consollidated when, a fu dase later, a tremmor ov exiatment ran throo the Recerch Department. "Hedz up, evveriboddy! Mr. Izaxon--himcelf--iz cumming--*here!* Whaut for, I wunder? Idoant spose hese gowing too take the Oald Man awa from us aulreddy, doo u?"

He came. He went throo, for the ferst time, the entire department. He observd minuetly, and he understood whaut he sau.

Oamsted led the Big Bos intoo hiz private office and flipt the swich which suposedly renderd dhat sanctum prooffe against enny and aul formz ov spiyng, eevzdropping, intruezhon, and comunicaishon. It did not, houwevver, close the deper, sutler channelz which the Lenzmen uezd.

"Good werc, Jorj. So *damd* good dhat Ime gowing too hav too take u out ov Department Q entiarly and make u Werx Mannager ov our nu plaant on Vejaa. Hav u got a man u can brake in too take yor place here?"

"Including Department Q? No." Auldho Oamsted did not sho it, he wauz disapointed at hering the werd "Vejaa". He had bene aming much hiyer dhan dhat--at the ceecret plannet ov the Boscoanyan Armd Foercez, no les--but dhare mite stil be enuf time too win a traansfer dhare.

"Excluding. Ive got anuther good man here nou for dhat. Joanz. Not hevvy enuf, dho, for Vejaa."

"In dhat cace, yes. Dr. Whitwerth, wun ov the boiz whoo werct out the nu proces. Itl take a littel time, dho. Thre weex minnimum."

"Thre weex it iz. Toodase Frida. Uve got thhingz in shape, havnt u, so dhat u can take the weke-end of?"

"I wauz figguring on it. Ime not gowing whare I thaut I wauz, dho, I imadgine."

"Probbably not. Lake Chezuncooc, on Roote 273. Ruf cuntry, and the hotel iz sumthhing les dhan foerth rate, but the fishing caant be

bete."

"Ime glad ov dhat. When I fish, I like too cach sumthhing."

"It wood smel if u didnt. Dha stoc lunch-boxez in the cafetereyaa, u no. Hav yor gherl ghet u wun, fool ov sandwichez and stuf. Start erly this aafternoone, az soone az u can aafter I leve. Be shure and ce Joanz, withe yor lunch-box, befoer u leve. Good-bi."

"Mis Rede, plese cend Whitwerth in. Then skip doun too the cafetereyaa and ghet me a lunch-box. Sandwichez and a thhermos ov coffy. Provvender sutabel for a wet and hun'gry fisherman."

"Yes, *cer!*" Dhare wer no chips nou; the red-hedz bos wauz the top ace ov the whole plaant.

"Hi, Ned. Take the throne." Oamsted waivd hiz hand at the nou vacant chare behiand the big desc. "Hoald it doun til I ghet bac. Munda, maby."

"Gowing fishing, huu?" Gon wauz aul trace ov stifnes, ov reserv, ov unfrendlines. "U big, lucky stif!"

"Wel, mi brilleyant yung sqwert, maby ule ghet oald and fat enuf too go fishing yorcelf sum da. Whoo nose? Bi."

Lunch-box in hand and encumberd withe tackel, Oamsted wauct bliadhly along the coridor too the office ov Acistant Werx Mannager Joanz. While he had not none just whaut too expect, he wauz not cerpriazd too ce a lunch-box exactly like hiz one uppon the cide-tabel. He plaist hiz box becide it.

"Hi, Oamsted." Bi no slitest flicker ov expreshon did iather

Lenzman step out ov carracter. "Shuvving of erly?"

"Yeh. Dropt bi too let the Hed Office no I woant be in til Munda."

"O.K. Some I, but moer spede for me. Chemqwasabamticooc Lake."

"Doo u pronouns dhat or snese it? But hav fun, mi boi. Ime combining biznes withe plezhure, dho--braking in Whitwerth on mi job. Dhat Faerpla thhing iz gowing too brake in about an our, and itl scare the pants of ov him. But itl kepe until Munda, enniwa, and if he handelz it rite hese just about in."

Joanz grind. "A bit brutal, perhaps, but a shure wa too fiand out. Bi."

"So long." Oamsted stroald out, nonchalantly picking up the rong lunch box on the wa, and left the bilding.

He orderd hiz Dillingam, and tost the lunch-box aboard az caerlesly az dho it did not contane an un'none number ov milleyonz ov credits werth ov clere-qwil, uncut thhiyonite.

"I hope u hav a nice weke-end, cer," the yard-man ced, az he helpt sto baggage and tackel.

"Thanx, Otto. Ile bring u a cuppel ov fish Munda, if I cach dhat menny," and it shood be ced in paacing dhat he braut them. Lenzman kepe dhare prommicez, under whautevver cercumstaancez or houwevver liatly ghivven.

It beying mid-aafternoone ov Frida, the traffic wauz aulreddy hevvy. Northpoert wauz not a metroppolis, ov coers; but on the uthher hand it did

not hav metropollitan multy-teerd, wun-wa, non-interceting streets.
But Oamsted wauz in no hurry. He incht hiz spectacular mount--it wauz
a viyolently iridescent crome grene in cullor, withe hily pollisht
cromeyum gin'gerbred wharevver dhare wauz enny excuce for gin'gerbred
too
be--acros the citty and intoo the north-bound cide ov the superhiwa.
Even then, he did not hurry. He waunted too hit the inspecshon staishon at
the ej ov the Preserv at dusc. Nianty mialz an our wood doo it. He
werct hiz wa intoo the nianty-mile lane and became moashonles rellative
too the uther veyikelz on the strip.

It wauz a peculeyar censaishon; it ceemd az dho the carz themcelvz
wer staishonary, withe the paivment flowing baqword beneeth them.
Dhare
wauz no paacing, no weving, no cutting in and out. Oonly ocaizhonaly
wood the formaishon be broken az a car wood shift aulmoast
imperceptibly
too wun cide or the uther; speding up or slowing down too mach the
aciand spede ov the naboring wa.

The aafternoone wauz brite and clere, niather too hot nor too coald.
Oamsted enjoid hiz drive thurroly, and ariavd at the tern-of
rite on shedjule. Leving the wide, smuithe wa, he slode down
abruptly; even a Dillingam Super-Spoerter cood not make spede on the
narro, ruf, and hilly rode too Chezuncooc Lake.

At dusc he reecht the Poast. Insted ov stopping on the paivment
he poold of the rode, got out, strecht huejly, and tooc a fu
drum-majorz steps too take the kinx out ov hiz legz.

"A lot ov rode, a?" the smartly-uniformd trooper remarct. "No gunz?"

"No gunz." Oamsted opend up for inspecshon. "From Northpoert.
Funny, iznt it, hou hard it iz too stop, even when u arnt in enny

particcular hurry? Ghes Ile ete nou--join me in a sandwich and sum hot coffy or a coald lemmon sour or cherry sodaa?"

"Ive got mi one supper, thanx; I wauz just gowing too ete. But did u sa a *coald* lemmon sour?"

"Uu-huu. Ice-coald. Sero degrese Centigrade."

"I *wil* join u, in dhat cace. Thanx."

Oamsted opend a frost-liand compartment; tooc out too haaf-leter bottelz; plaist them and hiz open lunch-box invitingly on the lo stone waul.

"Hm ... m ... m. Qwite a sipper u got dhare, mister." The trooper gaizd admiringly at the lucshureyous, too-wheeld monster; liscend apreeshatiavly too its aulmoast inaudibel hum. "Ive herd about dhose nu superz, but dhat iz the ferst wun I evver sau. Nice. Aul the cumforts ov home, a?"

"Just about. Shure u woant help me clene up on dhose sandwichez, befoer dha ghet stale?"

Ceted on the waul, the too men ate and tauct. If dhat trooper had none whaut wauz in the box becide hiz leg he probbably wood hav faulen over baqword; but hou wauz he even too suspect? Dhare wauz nuthing cras or ruf or coers about enny ov the werc ov enny ov Boscoanz hi-levvel opperatorz.

Oamsted drove on too the lake and tooc up hiz reservaishon at the ramshackel hotel. He slept, and brite and erly the next morning he wauz up and fishing--and this part ov the performans he reyalj enjoid.

He nu hiz stuf and the fish wer dhare; big, wary, and game. He luvd it.

At noone he ate, and qwite openly and brasenly conciand the "empty" box too the wautery depe. Even if he had not had so menny fish too carry, he wauz not the tipe too lug a chepe lunch-box bac too toun. He fisht joiyously aul aafternoone, widhout ghetting qwite the limmit, and az the sun graizd the horizon he started hiz put-put and skimd bac too the doc.

The thhing hadnt cent out enny rajaishon yet, Northrop informd him tensly, but it certainly wood, and when it did dhade be reddy. Dhare wer Lenzmen and Patroalmen aul over the place, thhicker dhan hare on a dog.

And Jorj Oamsted, cying werily and yet blisfooly anticipatory ov wun moer da ov enthrauling spoert, gatherd up hiz equipment and hiz fish and stroald tooword the hotel.

CHAPTER 17

Forty thouzand mialz from Erths center the *Shicaago* loaft along a cercular arc, inert, at a mere ten thouzand mialz an our; a spede which, and not bi axident, kept her practicaly staishonary abuv a certane point on the plannets cerface. Nor wauz it bi chaans dhat both Vergil Samz and Rodderic Kinnison wer aboard. And a duzsen or so uther craaft, cruserz and such, whose officerz wer out too poot space-time in dhare logz, wer flitting aimlesly about; but nevver verry far awa from

the flagship. And farther out--wel out--a cordon ov desel-pouwerd detector ships swept space too the fool limmit ov dhare prodidjous reche. The navigating officerz ov dhose vescelz nu too a nicety the place and coers ov evvery ship lafooly in the eether, and the aperans ov even wun unshedjueld trace wood cet in moashon a long suxeshon ov caerfooly-pland events.

And far belo, grasing atmosfere, nevver verry far from the direct line betwene the *Shicaago* and Erths coer, floted a palaishal plezhure yaut. And this craaft carrede not wun Lenzman, or too, but ate; too ov whoome kept dhare ise fixt uppon dhare observaishon plaits. Dha wer wauching a lunch-box resting uppon the bottom ov a lake.

"Haznt it rajated *yet*?" Rodderic Kinnison demaanded. "Or bene aproacht, or muivd?"

"Not yet," Liman Cleevland replide, crisply. "Niather Northrops rig nor mine haz shone enny cine ov activvity."

He did not amplifi the staitment, nor wauz dhare nede. Mason Northrop wauz a Maaster Electronnicist; Cleevland wauz perhaps the werldz gratest livving expert. Niather ov them had detected rajaishon. Ergo, nun existed.

Eeqwaly certainly the box had not muivd, or bene muivd, or aproacht. "No chainj, Rod," Doctor Fredderic Roadboosh Lenzd the ashuerd thaut. "Cix ov us hav bene wauching the plaits in five-minnute shifts."

A fu minnuets later, houwevver: "Here iz a thaut which ma be ov interest," DalNalten the Venereyan anounst, spraying himself withe a cuppel piants ov wauter. "It iz natchural enuf, ov coers, for enny Venereyan too be in or on enny wauter he can reche--I wood enjoi verry much beying on or in dhat lake micelf--but it ma not be entiarly bi

cowincidens dhat wun particcular Venereyan, Osmen, iz vizsiting this particcular lake at this particcular time."

"Whaut!" Nine Lenzmen yeld the thaut practicaly az wun.

"Preciasly. Osmen." It wauz a mezhure ov the Venereyan Lenzmanz concern dhat he uezd oonly too werdz insted ov twenty or thherty. "In the red bote withe the yello sale."

"Doo u ce enny detector rigz?" Samz aasct.

"He woodnt nede enny," DalNalten poot in. "He wil be abel too ce it. Or, if a littel colane had bene rubd on it which no Telureyan cood hav notiast, enny Venereyan cood smel it from wun end ov dhat lake too the uther."

"Tru. I didnt thhinc ov dhat. It ma not hav a traanzmitter aafter aul."

"Maby not, but kepe on liscening, enniwa," the Poert Admiral orderd. "Bend a plate on Osmen, and a cuppel moer on the rest ov the boats. But Osmen iz clene, u sa, Jac? Not even a spi-ra bloc?"

"He coodnt hav a bloc, Dad. Itd ghiv too much awa, here on our home groundz. Like on Erridan, whare dhare ops cood ware ennithhing dha cood lift, but we had too go naked." He flincht mentaly az he recauld hiz encounter withe Hasel the Hel-cat, and Northrop flincht withe him.

"Dhats rite, Rod," Oamsted in hiz bote belo agrede, and Conwa Costigan, in hiz roome in Northpoert, conkerd. The top-drauwere operatiavz ov the ennemy depended for saifty uppon perfecshon ov tecneke, not uppon crude and dain'gerous mecannical devicez.

"Wel, cins yor aul so shure ov it, Ile bi it," and the wating went on.

Under the slite erj ov the lite and vagrant brese, the red bote muivd sloly acros the wauter. A somnolent, laccadasical ueth, whoo verry evvidently caerd nuthhing about whare the bote went, sat in its stern, withe hiz left arm draipt luisly acros the tiller. Nor wauz Osmen enny moer concernd. Hiz oonly care, aparrently, wauz too avoid interferens withe the fishermen; hiz under-wauter jaunts wer long, even for a Venereyan, and he enterd and left the wauter az smuidhly az oonly a Venereyan--or a cele--cood.

"Houwevver, he cood hav, and probbably haz got, a capshule spi-ra detector," Jac offerd, prezently. "Or, cins a Venereyan can swaulo ennithhing wun inch smauler dhan a kitchen stove, he cood hav a whole annalising staishon stasht awa in hiz stummac. Nobodese poot a beme on him yet, hav u?"

Nobody had.

"It mite be smart not too. Wauch him withe scoaps ... and when he ghets up cloce too the box, better pool yor beemz of ov it. DalNalten, I doant supose it wood be qwite brite for u too go swimming doun dhare too, wood it?"

"Verry deffiniatly not, which iz whi I am up here and dri. Nun ov them wood go nere it."

Dha wated, and finaly Osmenz perpoasles waunderingz braut him over the spot on the laix bottom which wauz the targhet ov so menny Telureyan ise. He gaizd at the discarded lunch-box az incureyously az he had looct at so menny uther sunken obgets, and swam over it az cazhuwaly--and oonly the ultraa-cammeraaz caut whaut he acchuwaly did. He

swam cereenly on.

"The box iz stil dhare," the spi-ra men repoerted, "but the paccage iz gon."

"Good!" Kinnison exclaimd, "Can u scopists ce it on him?"

"Ten too wun dha caant," Jac ced. "He swaulode it. I expected him too swaulo it box and aul."

"We caant ce it, cer. He must hav swaulode it."

"Make shure."

"Yes, cer... Hese bac on the bote nou and weve shot him from aul an'ghelz. Hese clene--nuthhing outside."

"Perfect! Dhat meenz he iznt figguring on slipping it too sumbody els in a croud. This wil be an ordinary job ov shaddowing from here on in, so Ile poot in the umbrellaa."

The detector ships wer recauld. The *Shicaago* and the vareyouz uther ships ov wor reternd too dhare vareyouz bacez. The plezhure craaft floted awa. But on the uther hand dhare wer bersts ov activvity throowout the forest for a mile or so bac from the shoerz ov the lake. Camps wer struc. Hiking partese decided dhat dha had hiact enuf and began too retrace dhare steps. Liathe yung men, whoo had bene doowing this and dhat, stopt doowing it and hedded for the nerest trailz.

For Kinnison *pare* had erd sliatly in saying dhat the rest ov the enterprise wauz too be an ordinary job ov shaddowing. No ordinary job wood doo. Withe the game this neerly in the bag it must be made absoluetly certane dhat no suspishon wauz arouzd, and yet Samz had too

hav *facts*. Sharp, hard, clere facts; facts so celf-evvidently facts dhat no intelligens abuv iddeyot grade cood poscibly mistake them for ennithing but facts.

Whaerfoer Osmen the Venereyan wauz not alone thensfoerth. From lake too hotel, from hotel too car, along the rode, intoo and in and out ov trane and plane, clere too an ordinary-enuf-loocking bilding in an ordinary biznes cecshon ov Nu Yorc, he wauz *never* alone. Whare the traveling populaishon wauz lite, the Patrole opperatiavz wer fu and did not croud the Venereyan too neerly; whare dens, az in a metropollitan staishon, dha ringd him thre depe.

He reecht hiz destinaishon, which wauz ov coers spi-ra pruift, late Sunda nite. He went in, remaind breefly, came out.

"Shal we spi-ra him, Verj? Follo him? Or whaut?"

"No spi-rase. Follo him. Cuvver him like a blanket. At the uezhuwal time ghiv him the uezhuwal spi-ra gowing-over, but not until then. This time, make it *thurro*. Make certane dhat he haznt got it on him, in him, or in or around hiz hous."

"Dhaerl be nuthing doowing here toonite, wil dhare?"

"No, it wood be too notisabel. So u, Fred, and Liman, take the ferst tric; the rest ov us wil ghet sum slepe."

When the bilding opend Munda morning the Lenzmen wer bac, withe duzsenz ov uthertz, including Nobos ov Marz. Dhare wer aulso prezsent or neerbi litteraly hundredz ov the shrudest, moast capabel detectiavz ov Erth.

"So *this* iz dhare hedqworterz--wun ov them at leest," the Marshan thaut, studdeying the trickel ov pepel entering and leving the bilding. "It iz az we thaut, Dal, whi we cood nevver fiand it, whi we cood nevver trace enny whoalsaler baqword. Nun ov us haz evver cene enny ov these personz befoer. Complete chainj ov personel per operaishon; probbably inter-plannetary. Long pereyodz ov qwiyescens. Chec?"

"Chec: but we hav them nou."

"Just like dhat, huu?" Jac Kinnison giabd; and from hiz vupoint hiz ideyaa wauz the moer vallid, for the whoalsalerz wer verry clevver opperatorz indede.

From the moer profeshonal vupoint ov Nobos and DalNalten, houwevver, whoo had faut a steddily loosing battel so long, the taasc wauz not too difficult. Dhare foercez wer butifooly organiazd and cincroniazd; dha wer prezsent in such overwhelming numberz dhat "tailz" cood be chainjd evvery fiftene cecondz; long befoer enniboddy, houwevver suspishous, cood beghin too suspect enny wun shaddo. Nor wauz it nescesary for the tailz too cignal eche uther, houwevver inconspiccuwously, or too indicate enny suspect at chainj-over time. Lenzd thauts directed evvery moove, widhout confuezhon or error.

And dhare wer tiny cammeraaz withe tremendous, prochuberant lensez, the "long ise" capabel ov taking wire-sharp cloce ups from five hundred fete; and uther devicez and aparatus and eqwipment too numerous too menshon here.

Dhus the whoalsalerz wer traist and dhare traanzacshonz withe the retale

pedlerz wer recorded. And from dhat point on, even Jac Kinnison had too admit dhat the saling wauz clere. These smaul fri wer not smart, and dhare customerz wer even les so. Nun had screenz or detectorz or uther aparatus; dhare evvery traanzacshon cood be and wauz recorded from a distans ov menny mialz bi the ultraa-instruments ov the Patrole. And not oonly the traanzacshonz. Cleerly, unmistacably, the perchacer wauz follode from biying too sniffing; nor wauz the time intervening evver long. Thhiyonite, then az nou, wauz baut at retale oonly too use, and the whole gaastly thhing went doun on tape and film. The gaasping, histerrical apele; the exchainj ov currency for drug; the hedlong rush too a place ov sollichude; the ridgid muscel-loc and the horribly extattic traanspoerts; the shaken, sole-cering recuvvery or the entraanst deth. It aul went on reccord. It wauz cickenig too hav too record such thhingz. Moer dhan wun observer did cicken in fact, and had too be releevd. But Vergil Samz had too hav concrete, pozsitive, irefutabel evvidens. He got it. Enny poscibel jury, uppon ceying dhat evvidens, wood no it too be the trueth; no poscibel jury, aafter ceying dhat evvidens, cood bring in enny verdict uther dhan "ghilty".

Odly enuf, Jac Kinnison wauz the oonly cazhuwalty ov dhat long and hectic da. A man--later pruivd too be a middel-ciazd potentate ov the underwerld--whoo wauz not even under suspishon at the time, for sum rezon or uther got the ideyaa dhat Jac wauz aafter him. The Lenzman had, perhaps, aloud sum part ov hiz long i too sho; a faast and efishent long-rainj tellefoto lenz iz a devvilishly auqword thhing too concele. At enny rate the racketere cent out a caul for help, just in cace hiz boddigardz wood not be enuf, and in the meentime hiz personal atendants rallede enthuseyaasticaly around.

Dha had too obgets in vu; Wun, too paas a nife expedishously and qwiyetly throo yung Kinnisonz throte from ere too ere; and: Too, too tare the long i apart and subgett a fu sqware inchez ov super-cencitive emulshon too the brite lite ov da. And if the Big Shot had none dhat the fotograafer wauz not alone, dhat the big,

hulking bruser a fu fete awa wauz aulso a bool, dha mite hav suxeded.

Too ov the foer hoodz reecht Jac just fracshonaly ahed ov the uther too; wun too cese the cammeraa, the uther too swing the nife. But Jac Kinnison wauz faast; faast ov brane and nerv and muscel. He sau them cumming. In thre flashing moashonz he bent the barrel ov the tellefoto intoo a nete arc around the cide ov the ferst manz hed, duct frantically under the feersly-drivven nife, and drove the to ov hiz boote intoo the spot uppon which prise-fiterz like too hav dhare rabbit-punchez land. Boath ov dhose atackerz lost interest promptly. Wun ov them lost interest permanently; for a tellefoto lenz in barrel iz hevvy, verry ridgid, and verry, *verry* hard.

While Batling Jac wauz stil of ballans, the uther too gardz ariavd--but so did Mason Northrop. Mace wauz not qwhite az faast az Jac wauz; but, az haz bene pointed out, he wauz biggher and much stron'gher. When he hit a man, withe iather hand, dhat man dropt. It wauz the same az beying on the receving end ov the blo ov a twenty-pound hammer fauling throo a distans ov nianty cevven and wun-haaf fete.

The Lenzmen had ov coers aulso yeld for help, and it tooc oonly a split cecond for a Patrole speedster too travvel from enny ghivven point too enny uther in the same county. It tooc no time at aul for dhat speedster too fil a cuppel ov sqware blox withe patternz ov foers throo which niather boollets nor beemz cood be drivven. Dhaerfoer the battel ended az suddenly az it began; befoer moer thugz, withe dhare automattix and portabelz, cood reche the cene.

Kinnison *feey*s kerst and damd fulminantly the edict which had forbidden armz dhat da, and swoer dhat he wood nevvver ghet out ov bed agane widhout strapping on at leest too blaasterz; but he had too admit

finaly dhat he had nuthing too sqwauc about. Kinnison *pare* explaind qwite paishently--for him--dhat aul he had got out ov the littel fracaa wauz a split lip, dhat yung Northrops hare wauznt even must, and dhat if evveriboddy had bene packing gunz sum scatter-braind yung dam foole like him wood hav started blaasting and blone evverithhing hiyer dhan up--wood hav spoild Samz whole operaishon maby beyond repara. Nou wood he plese qwit belliyaking and ghet too hel out?

He got.

* * * * *

"Dhat buttonz thhiyonite up, doant u thhinc?" Rod Kinnison aasct. "And the lauyerz wil hav plenty ov time too ghet the cace lict intoo shape and liand up for triyal."

"Yes and no." Samz fround in thaut. "The *evvidens* iz complete, from oridginal projucer too ultimate conshumer; but our best ghes iz dhat it wil take yeerz too ghet the reyaly important ofenderz behiand barz."

"Whi? I thaut u wer ghivving them aultooghether too much time when u shedjueld the blo-of for thre weex ahed ov elecshon."

"Becauz the drug racket iz oonly a smaul part ov it. Were gowing too brake the whole thhing at wuns, u no, and Matese cuvverz a lot moer ground--merder, kidnaping, bribery, corrupshon, misfezans--practicaly evverithhing u can thhinc ov."

"I no. Whaut ov it?"

"Jurisdicshon, amung uther thhingz. Withe the Prezident, over haaf ov the Con'gres, much ov the judishary, and practicaly aul ov the polittical boscez and polece chiefs ov the Continent under indiatment at wuns, the

legal problem becumz increddiably difficult. The Patroalz Department ov Lau haz bene werking on it twenty foer ourz a da, and the oanly thhing dha ceme shure ov iz a long suxeshon ov bitterly-contested points ov lau. Dhare ar no prescedents whautevver."

"Prescedents be damd! Dhare ghilty and evveriboddy nose it. Wele chainj the lauz so dhat..."

"We wil *not*!" Samz interupted, sharply. "We waunt and we wil hav guvvernment bi lau, not bi men. We hav had too much ov dhat aulreddy. Spede iz not ov the escens; justice verry deffiniatly iz."

"Cruzader Samz, nou and forevver! But Ile bi it, Verj--nou lets ghet bac doun too erth. Operaishon Zwilnic iz aul cet. Matese iz gowing good. Zabriscaa tide intoo Zwilnic. Dhat leevz Operaishon Boscone, which iz, I supose, stil ghetting noawhare faast."

The Ferst Lenzman did not repli. It wauz, and boath men nu it. The shrudest, moast capabel and expereyenst opperatiavz ov the Patrole had hit dhat waul withe evverithhing dha had, and had cimply bounst. Lo-levvel triyalz had found no point ov contact, no an'ghel ov aproche. Middel levvel, ditto. Jorj Oamsted, werking at the hiyest poscibel levvel, wauz moraly certane dhat he had found a point ov contact, but had not bene abel too doo ennithhing withe it.

"Hou about caulng a Council conferens on it?" Kinnison aasct finaly. "Or Berghenhome at leest? Maby he can ghet wun ov hiz hunchez on it."

"I hav discust it withe them aul, just az I hav withe u. No wun had ennithhing constructive too offer, exept too go ahed withe Bennet az u ar doowing. The concensus iz dhat the Boscoanyanz no just az much about our millitary afaerz az we no about dhaerz--no moer."

"It *wood* be too much too expect them too be dum enuf too figgure us az dum enuf too depend oonly on our vizsibel Grand Flete, aafter the worning dha gave us at The Hil," Kinnison admitted.

"Yes. Whaut wurrese me moast iz dhat dha had a running start."

"Not enuf too count," the Poert Admiral declaerd. "We can out-projuce em and out-fite em."

"Doant be over-optimistic. U caant deni them the poseshon ov brainz, abillity, man-pouwer and rezoercez at leest eeqwal too ourz."

"I doant hav too." Kinnison remaind obstinaitly cheerfool. "Moraal, mi boi, iz whaut counts. Man-pouwer and tunnage and fire-pouwer ar important, ov coers, but moraal haz won evvery wor in history. And our moraal rite nou iz hiyer dhan a cats bac--hiyer dhan enny time cins Jon Paul Joanz--and ghetting hiyer bi the da."

"Yes?" The qweschon wauz monocilabbic but potent.

"Yes. I mene just dhat--yes. From whaut we no ov dhare cistem dha *caant* hav the moraal weve got. Ennithhing dha can doo we can doo moer ov and better. Whaut uve got, Verj, iz a bad cace ov in'growing nervz. Uve nevver bene too Bennet, in spite ov the number ov tiamz Ive aasct u too. I sa take time rite nou and cum along--itl be good for whaut ailz u. It wil aulso be a verry fine thhing for Bennet and for the Patrole--ule fiand yorcelf no strain'ger dhare."

"U ma hav sumthhing dhare ... Ile doo it."

Poert Admiral and Ferst Lenzman went too Bennet, not in the *Shicaago* or uther superdrednaut, but in a too-man speedster. This wauz nescesary becauz space-travvel, az far az dhat plannet wauz concernd,

wauz a strictly wun-wa afare exept for Lenzmen. Oonly Lenzmen cood leve Bennet, under enny circumstaancez or for enny rezon whautevver. Dhare wauz no out-gowing male, expres, or frate. Even the wor-vescelz ov the Flete, while on practice manuverz outside the bottel-tite enveloaps surrounding the cistem, wer so screend dhat no unnauthoriazd comunicaishon cood poscibly be made.

"In uther werdz," Kinnison finnisht explaning, "we slapt on evverithhing enniboddy cood thhinc ov, including Berghenhome and Rulareyon; and beleve me, bruther, dhat wauz a lot ov stuf."

"But woodnt the verry fact ov such ridgid restricshonz opperate against moraal? It iz a truwezim ov cicollogy dhat imprizzonment, like evverithhing els, iz puerly rellative."

"Yeh, dhats whaut I toald Rulareyon, exept I uezd cimpler and ruffer lan'gwage. U no hou sarcastic and supereyor he iz, even when hese rong?"

"*Hou* I no!"

"Wel, when hese rite hese too damd insufferabel for werdz. Uedv thaut he wauz tauking too the prise boobe ov a claas ov haaf-wits. Az long az nobody on the plannet nu dhat dhare wauz enny such thhing az space-travvel, or suspected dhat dha wer not the oonly form ov intelligent life in the univers, it wauz aul rite. No such concept az beying plannet-bound cood exist. Dha had aul the roome dhare wauz. But aafter dha met us, and digested aul the implicaishonz, dha wood devellop the colly-wobbelz no end. This, ov coers, iz an extreme cimplificaishon ov the wa the oald coote poerd it intoo me; but he came throo withe the solueshon, so I tooc it like a littel man."

"Whaut wauz the solueshon?"

"Its a shame u wer too bizsy too cum in on it. Ule ce when we land."

But Vergil Samz wauz qwic on the uptake. Even befoer dha landed, he understood. When the speedster slode down for atmosfere he sau blazond uppon the cloudz a welter ov wun menny-tiamz repeted signal; az dha came too ground he sau dhat the same cet ov cimbolz wauz repeted, not oonly uppon evvery avalabel cloud, but aulso uppon aerships, captive baluinz, stremerz, ruifs and ciadz ov bildingz--even, in multy-cullord rox and flouwer-bedz, uppon the ground itcelf.

"Twenty Hares," Samz traanzlated, and fround in thaut. "A date ov the Bennetan yere. Wood it bi enny chaans happen too cowincide withe our Telureyan November forteenth ov this prezsent yere?"

"Brite boi!" Kinnison aplauded. "I thaut ude ghet it, but not so faast. Yes--elecshon da."

"I ce. Dha no whaut iz gowing on, then?"

"Evverithhing dhat counts. Dha no whaut we stand too win--and loose. Dhawe naimd it Liberaishon Da, and evverithhing on the plannet iz bilding up too it in a grand creshendo. I wauz a littel afrade ov it at ferst, but if the screenz ar reyaly tite it woant make enny differens hou menny pepel no it, and if dha arnt the beenz wood aul be spild enniwa. And it reyaly werx--I ghet a biggher thril evvery time I cum here."

"I can ce whare it mite werc."

Bennet wauz a foolly Telureyan werld in mas, in atmosfere and in climate; her native pepelz wer human too the limmit ov clacificaishon,

boath fizsicaly and mentaly. And Ferst Lenzman Samz, az he toord it withe hiz frend, found a werld aflame withe a sele and an ardor un'none too blaaza Erth cins the dase ov the Crusaidz. The Patroalz clevverest and shrudest cicologists, bi meerly sticking too the trueth, had dun a marvelous job.

Bennet nu dhat it wauz the Arcenal and the Navy Yard ov Civilizaishon, and it wauz proud ov it. Its factorese wer humming az dha had nevver humd befoer; evvery industry, evvery biznes, evvery farm wauz opperating at wun hundred percent ov capacity. Bennet wauz dotted and spatterd withe spaispoerts aulreddy bilt, and hundredz moer wer beying rusht too compleeshon. The aulreddy stagghering number ov ships ov wor opperating out ov dhose poerts wauz beying augmented evvery our bi moer and ever moer ultraa-moddern, ultraa-faast, ultraa-pouwerfool shaips.

It wauz an onnor too help bild dhose ships; it wauz a stil grater wun too help man them. Compettitive examinaishonz wer beying held constantly, nor wer aul or even moast ov the aplicants native Bennetanz.

Samz did not hav too aasc whare these yung pepel wer cumming from. He nu. From aul the plannets ov Civilizaishon, atracted bi caerfooly-werded advertiazments ov good jobz at hi pa on nu and hily ceecret prodjects on nuly discuvverd plannets. Dhare wer hundredz ov such adz. Moast wer probbably the Patroalz, and led here; menny wer ov Spaiswase, Urainyum Incorporated, and uther mercantile fermz. The pocibillity dhat sum ov them mite lede too whaut wauz nou beying cauld Boscoanyaa had bene tested thurroly, but withe uniformly negative rezults. Lenzmen had aplide bi scoerz for dhose non-Patrole jobz and had found them bonaa-fidy. The concluezhon wauz unnavoidabel--Boscone wauz

doowing its recruiting on plannets un'none too enny warer ov Areezhaaz Lenz.

On the uther hand, moer dhan a trickel ov Boscoanyanz wer apliying for Patrole jobz, but Samz wauz aulmoast certane dhat nun had bene axepted. The final screning wauz dun bi Lenzmen, and in such matterz Lenzmen did not make menny or cereyous mistaix.

Bennet had bene informd ov the Ferst Lenzmanz arival, and Kinnison had bene ghilty ov a groce understaitment indede in telling Samz dhat he wood not be regarded az a strain'ger. Wharevver Samz went he wauz met bi wialdly enthuseyaastic croudz. He had too make spechez, eche ov which wauz climaxt bi a tremendous roer ov "TOO LIBERAISHON DA!"

"No Lenzman matereyal here, u sa, Rod?" Samz aasct, aafter the ferst citty-shaking demonstraishon wauz over. Wun ov hiz prime concernz, throowout hiz life, wauz this. "Withe aul this enthuseyazm? Shure?"

"We havnt found enny good enuf too refer too u yet. Houwevver, in a fu yeerz, when the yun'gher generaishon ghets a littel oalder, dhare certainly wil be."

"Chec." The toor ov inspecshon and aqwaintans wauz finnisht, the too Lenzmen started bac too Erth.

"Wel, mi skeptical and pecimistic frend, wauz I liying, or not?" Kinnison aasct, az soone az the speedsterz poerts wer ceeld. "Can dha mach dhat or not?"

"U wernt--and I doant beleve dha can. I hav nevver cene ennithing like it. Autocracese hav paraidz and cheerz and demonstraishonz, ov coers, but dha hav aulwase bene foerst--artifihal. Dhose wer spontainyous."

"Not oonly dhat, but the enthuseyazm wil carry throo. Wele be piping hot and reddy too go. But about this stumping--u ced Ide better start az soone az we ghet bac?"

"Within a fu dase, Ide sa."

"I woodnt wunder, so lets use this time in werking out a plan ov campane. Mi ideyaa iz too start out like this...."

CHAPTER 18

Conwa Costigan, leving behiand him scoerz ov cluse, aul hily misleding, cevverd hiz conecshon withe Urainyum, Inc. az soone az he daerd aafter Operaishon Zwilnic had bene braut too a suxesfool close. The tecnicl operaishon, dhat iz; the legal battelz in which it figguerd so larjly wer too run on for enuf yeerz too make the werd "zwilnic" a common noun and adjectiv in the lan'gwage.

He came too Tellus az unnobtruciavly az wauz hiz woant, and tooc an inconspiccuwous but verry active part in Operaishon Matese, nou in fool swing.

"Nou iz the time for aul good men and tru too cum too the ade ov the party, a?" Cleyo Costigan ghiggheld.

"U can pla dhat strate acros the kebord ov yor electric, pet, and not withe just too fin'gherz, iather. Did u here whaut the bos toald em tooda?"

"Yes." The gherlz levvity disapeerd. "Dhare so *derty*, Spud--Ime

reyaly afrade."

"So am I. But were not too lilly-fin'gherd ourcelvz if we hav too be, and were cuvvering em like a blanket--Kinnison and Samz both."

"Good."

"And in dhat conecshon, Ile hav too be out haaf the nite agane toonite. Aul rite?"

"Ov coers. Its so nice havving u home at aul, darling, insted ov a milleyon lite-yeerz awa, dhat Ime practicaly delereyous withe delite."

It wauz sumtiamz hard too tel whaut impish Mrs. Costigan ment bi whaut she ced. Costigan looct at her, decided she wauz taking him for a ride, and smact her a cuppel ov tiamz whare it wood doo the moast good. He then kist her thurroly and left. He had verry littel time, these dase, iather too himcelf or for hiz luvly and adoerd wife.

For Rodderic Kinnisonz campane, which had started out ruf and not too clene, became ruffer and ruffer, and no clener, az it went along. Morgan and hiz cru wer swinging from the heelz, withe evverithhing and ennithhing dha cood dig up or invent, houwevver littel ov trueth or even ov plausibillity it mite contane, and Rod the Roc had nevver held even in principel withe the gentel precept ov terning the uther cheke. He wauz raather an Oald Testamentareyan, and he wauz no

nyofite at derty fiting. Az a yung opperative, skild in the punnishing, maming tecneex ov hand-too-hand ruf-and-tumbel combat, he had brauld suxesfooly in moast ov the diavz ov moast ov the solaareyan plannets and ov moast ov dhare muinz. Withe this bacground, and beying a qwic studdy, and under the maasterly coching ov Vergil Samz, Nelz Berghenhome, and Rulareyon ov North Polar Jupiter, it did not take him long too lern the vareyous gambits and riposts ov this

non-fizsical, but nevvertheles no-hoaldz-bard, polittical mahem.

And the "boiz and gherlz" ov the Patrole werct like badgerz, digghing up an item here and a fact dhare and a bit ov informaishon sumwhare els, aul for the da ov recconing which wauz too cum. Dha uezd ultraa-wave scannerz, spi-rase, long ise, stoole-pidjonz--evverithhing dha cood thhinc ov too use--and dha cood not *aulwase* be bloct out or evaded.

"Weve *got* it, bos--nou lets *use* it!"

"No. Save it! Nale it doun, sollid! Ghet the facts--naimz, daits, placez, and amounts. Prove it ferst--then save it!"

Proove it! Save it! The joint injuncshon wauz uezd so often dhat it came too be a slogan and wauz axepted az such. Unlike moast sloganz, houwevver, it wauz caerfooly and dilligently poot too uce. The opperatiavz pruivd it and saivd it, over and over, over and over agane; bi dint ov whaut unsparing effort and celfles devoashon oonly dha themcelvz evver foolly nu.

Kinnison stumpt the Continent. He vizsited evvery state, aul ov the big cittese, moast ov the tounz, and menny villagez and hamlets; and aulwase, wharevver he went, a part ov the sho wauz too demmonstrate too hiz augencez hou the Lenz werct.

"Looc at me. U no dhat no too individjuwalz ar or evver can be alike. Robbert Jonson iz not like Fred Smith; Jo Joanz iz entiarly different from Jon Broun. Looc at me agane. Concentrate uppon whautevver it iz in yor miand dhat maix me Rodderic Kinnison, the individjuwal. Dhat wil enabel eche ov u too ghet intoo az cloce tuch withe me az dho our too miandz wer wun. I am not tauking nou; u ar reding mi miand. Cins u ar reding mi verry miand, u no exactly whaut I am *realy*

thhinking, for better or for wers. It iz impscibel for mi miand too li too yorz, cins I can chainj niather the basic pattern ov mi personallity nor mi basic wa ov thaut; nor wood I if I cood. Beying in mi miand, u no dhat aulreddy; u no whaut mi basic qwaulity iz. Mi frendz caul it strength and currage; Pirate Chefe Morgan and hiz cut-throte cru caul it menny uther thhingz. Be dhat az it ma, u nou no whether or not u waunt me for yor Prezident. I can doo nuthhing whautevver too swa yor opinyon, for whaut yor miandz hav perceevd u no too be the trueth. Dhat iz the wa the Lenz werx. It baerz the depths ov mi miand too yorz, and in retern enabelz me too understand yor thauts.

"But it iz in no cens hipnotizm, az Morgan iz so foolishly trying too make u beleve. Morgan nose az wel az the rest ov us doo dhat even the moast acumplisht hipnotist, withe aul hiz aparatus, CAN NOT AFECT A STRONG AND DEFFINIATLY OPOAZD WIL. He iz dhaerfoer saying dhat eche and evvery wun ov u nou receving this thaut iz such a spianles weecling dhat--but u ma drau yor one concluezhonz.

"In closing, remember--nale this fact down so sollidly dhat u wil nevver forghet it--a sound and helthhy miand CAN NOT LI. The mouth can, and duz. So duz the tiapriter. But the miand--NEVVER! I can hide mi thauts from u, even while we ar on rapor, like this ... but I CAN NOT LI TOO U. Dhat iz whi, sum da, aul ov yor hiyest execcutiavz wil hav too be Lenzmen, and not politishanz, diplomats, croox and buidlerz. I thanc u."

Az dhat long, bitter, increddiably vishous campane neerd its vitreyollic end tenshon mounted hiyer and evver hiyer: and in a roome in the Samz home thre yung Lenzmen and a red-haerd gherl wer not at ese. Aul foer wer lene and draun. Jac Kinnison wauz tauking.

"... not the party, so much, but Dad. He started out withe bare fists, and nou hese wading intoo em withe spiact braas nuckelz."

"U can pla *dhat* across the boerd," Costigan agrede.

"Hese reyaly ghivving em hel," Northrop ced, admiringly.

"Did u boiz liscen in on hiz Casper speche laast nite?"

Dha hadnt; dha had bene too bizsy.

"I cood ghiv it too u on yor Lensez, but I coodnt reprojue the tone--the exqwizsite wa he lifted larj pecez ov hide and rubd sault intoo the rau placez. When he ghets exited u no he caant help but use vois, too, so I got sum ov it on a reccord. He starts out on vois, nice and esy, az uezhuwal; then gose ontoo hiz Lenz widhout tauking; then starts yelling az wel az ththinking. Liscen:"

"U aut too hav a Lenzman prezident. U ma not beleve dhat enny Lenzman iz, and az a matter ov fact *must* be incoruptibel. Dhat iz mi belefe, az u can fele for yorcelvz, but I canot *proove* it too u. Oanly time can doo dhat. It iz a celf-evvident fact, houwevver, which u can fele for yorcelvz, dhat a Lenzman prezident cood not li too u exept bi werd ov mouth or in riting. U cood demaand from him at enny time a Lenzd staitment uppon enny subgect. Uppon sum matterz ov state he cood and shood refuse too aancer; but not uppon enny qweschon involving moral terpichude. If he aancerd, u wood no the trueth. If he refuezd too aancer, u wood no whi and cood inisheyate impeechment procedingz then and dhare.

"In the paast dhare hav bene prezidents whoo uezd dhat hi office for lo perpocez; whose verry memmory reex ov malfezans and corrupshon.

Wun wauz impeecht, utherz shood hav bene. Witherspoone nevver shood hav bene elected. Witherspoone shood hav bene impeecht the da aafter he wauz inaugurated. Witherspoone shood be impeecht nou. We no, and at the Grand Rally at Nu Yorc Spaispoert thre weex from toonite we ar gowing too PROOVE, dhat Witherspoone iz cimply a minor cog-whele in the Morgan-Toun-Izaxon mashene, playing footcy at comaand withe whautevver groope happenz too be the hiyest bidder at the moment, irrespectiv ov North Amerricaaz or the Cistemz good. Witherspoone iz a gangster, a chete, and a God dam liyar, but he iz ov verry littel acchuwal importans; meerly a buidling nincompoope. Morgan iz the reyal bos and the reyal mennace, the Opperating En'ginere ov the lowest-doun, louseyest, filthheyest, rottenest, moast corrupt mashene ov merdererz, extorshonists, bribe-takerz, pandererz, perjurerz, and uther pimpelz on the boddy pollitic dhat haz evver disgraist enny so-cauld civviliazd guvvernment. Good nite."

"Wou!" Jac Kinnison yelpt. "Dhats hi, even for him!"

"Just a minnute, Jac," Gil caushond. "The uther cide, too. Liscen too this chois bit from Cennator Morgan."

"It iz not exactly hipnotizm, but sumthhing infiniatly wers; sumthhing dhat steelz awa yor verry miandz; dhat maix enniwun liscening beleve dhat white iz yello, red, perpel, or pe-grene. Until our ciyentists hav chect this mennace, until we hav evvery warer ov dhat kerst Lenz behiand stele barz, I advise u in aul earnestnes not too liscen too them at aul. If u doo liscen yor miandz wil shuerly be incidjously decompoazd and broken; u wil shuerly end yor dase gibbering in a padded cel.

"And merderz? *Merderz!* The febel remnants ov the gangz which our

gouvvernement haz aul but wiapt out ma perhaps comit a merder or so per yere; the perpetratorz ov which ar caut, tride, and punnisht. But hou menny ov yor sunz and dauterz haz Rodderic Kinnison merderd, iather personaly or throo hiz uniformd slaivz? Thhinc! Rede the reccord! Then make him explane, if he can; but doo not liscen too hiz liying, miand-destroying Lenz.

"Democracy? Baa! Whaut duz Rod the Roc Kinnison--the hardest, moast vishous tirant, the moast relentles and pittiles martinet evver none too enny Armd Foers in the long history ov our werld--no ov democracy? Nuthhing! He understandz oanly foers. Aul whoo opose him in ennithhing, houwevver smaull, or whoo ceke too rezon withe him, di widhout reccord or trace; and if he iz not arested, tride, and executed, aul such wil continuu, traislesly and widhout enny pretens ov triyal, too di.

"But at bottom, even dho he iz not intelligent enuf too reyalise it, he iz meerly wun moer in the long parade ov tuilz ov ruethles and preddatoery welth, the MUNNEDE POUWERZ. *Dha*, mi frendz, nevver slepe; dha hav oanly wun God, wun tennet, wun crede--the aulmity CREDIT. *Dhat* iz whaut dha ar aafter, and note hou craaftily, hou stelthhily, dha hav dun and ar doowing dhare grabbing. Whare iz yor representaishon uppon dhat so-cauld Galactic Council? Hou did this crimminal, this vishous, this outrageously unconstichueshonal, this irresponcibel, uncontrolabel, and dictatoreyal monstrosity cum intoo beying? Hou and when did u ghiv this blotod colossus the rite too establish its one currency--too hav the imezhurabel efruntery too debar the sollidest currency in the univers, the credit ov North Amerricaa, from inter-plannetary and inter-stellar commers? Dhare ame iz clere; dha intend too tax u intoo slavery and deth. Doo not forget for wun instant, mi frendz, dhat the pouwer too tax iz the pouwer too destroi.

THE POWWER TOO TAX IZ THE POWWER TOO DESTROI. Our
foerfaatherz faut and
bled and dide too establish the principel dhat taxaishon widhout rep...."

"And so on, for wun sollid our!" Gil snarld, az she snapt the
swich vishously. "Hou doo u like *them* potatose?"

"Helz--Blasing--Pinnakelz!" This from Jac, cilent for cecondz, and:

"Rugghed stuf ... verry, *verry* rugghed," from Northrop. "No wunder u
looc sort ov puipt, Spud. Beying Chefe Boddigard must hav devellopt
recently intoo qwite a choer."

"U aint just snapping yor chopperz, bub," wauz Costiganz grimly
flippant repli. "Ive yeld for help--in foers."

"So hav I, and Ime gowing too yel agane, rite nou," Jac declaerd. "I
doant no whether Dad iz gowing too kil Morgan or not--and doant ghiv
a dam--but if Morgan iznt gowing aul out too kil Dad its becauz
dhave forgotten hou too make bomz."

He Lenzd a caul too Berghenhome.

"Yes, Jac?... I wil refer u too Rulareyon, whoo haz had this matter
under concideraishon."

"Yes, Jon Kinnison, I hav concidderd the matter and hav taken
acshon," the Joveyanz caalmly ashuerd thaut roald intoo the miandz ov
aul, even Lenzles Gilz. "The point, ueth, wauz wel taken. It wauz
yor thaut dhat sum thouzandz--perhaps five--ov spi-ra opperatorz
and uther opperatiavz wil be reqwiard too inshure dhat the Grand Rally
wil not be mard bi eppisoadz ov viyolens."

"It wauz," Jac ced, flatly. "It stil iz."

"Not havving concidderd aul poscibel contin'gencese nor the extent ov the feeld ov nescenary acshon, u er. The number wil aproche niantene thouzand verry neerly. Admiral Claton haz bene so adviazd and hiz staaf iz nou at werc uppon a plan ov acshon in acordans withe mi recomendaishon. Yor sugeschonz, Conwa Costigan, in the matter ov imejate protecshon ov Rodderic Kinnisonz person, ar nou in efect, and u ar heerbi releevd ov dhat responcebilly. I ashume dhat u foer wish too continnu at werc?"

The Joveyanz asumpshon wauz sound.

"I sugest, then, dhat u confer withe Admiral Claton and fit yorcelvz intoo hiz proogram ov cecurity. I intend too make the same sugeschon too aul Lenzmen and uther qwaulifide personz not en'gaijd in werc ov moer prescing importans."

Rulareyon cut of and Jac scould blacly. "The Grand Rally iz gowing too be held thre weex befoer elecshon da. I *stil* doant like it. Ide save it until the nite befoer elecshon--noc dhare teeth out withe it at the laast poscibel minnute."

"Yor rong, Jac; the Chefe iz rite," Costigan argude. "Too wase. Wun, we caant pla dhat kiand ov baul. Too, this ghivz them just enuf rope too hang themcelvz."

"Wel ... maby." Kinnison-like, Jac wauz far from beying convinst. "But dhats the wa its gowing too be, so lets caul Claton."

"Ferst," Costigan broke in. "Gil, wil u plese explane whi dha hav too waist az big a man az Kinnison on such a pifling job az prezident? I wauz out in the stix, u no--it duznt make cens."

"Becauz hese the oanly man alive whoo can lic Morganz mashene at the poalz," Gil stated a cimpel fact. "The Patrole can ghet along widhout him for wun term, aafter dhat it woant make enny differens."

"But Morgan werx from the cide-lianz. Whi coodnt he?"

"The cicollogy iz entiarly different. Morgan iz a bos. Pops Kinnison iznt. Hese a leder. Ce?"

"O ... I ghes so.... Yes. Go ahead."

* * * * *

Outwordly, Nu Yorc Spaispoert did not chainj apreeshably. At enny ghivven moment ov da or nite dhare wer so menny hundredz ov personz stroling aimlesly or wauking perpoasfooly about dhat an extraa hundred or so made no perceptibel differens. And the spaispoert wauz oanly the end-point. The Patroalz activvitesse began hundredz or thousandz or milleyonz or billeyonz ov mialz awa from Erths metroppolis.

A web wauz cet up throo which not even a grane-ov-sand meteyorite cood paas undetected. Evvery space-ship bound for Erth carrede at leest wun pascen'ger whoo wood not utherwise hav bene aboard; pascen'gerz whoo, if not waring Lensez, carrede Cervice Speshal eqwipment amply sufishent for the werc in hand. Ghigherz and uther vaastly moer complicated meccanizmz flu tooword Erth from evvery direcshon in space; streemd tooword Nu Yorc in Erths evvery channel ov traffic. Evvery trane and plane, evvery bus and bote and car, evvery convayans ov evvery kiand and evvery pedestreyan aproching Nu Yorc Citty wauz cercht; withe a cerch az thurro az it wauz unnobtrucive. And evvery thhing and evvery entity aproching Nu Yorc Spaispoert wauz coamd, litteraly bi the cubic millimeter.

No arrests wer made. No paccage wauz confiscated, or even disterbd, throwout the ranx ov public chec boxez, in private officez, or in elaborate or cazhuwal hiding-placez. Az far az the ennemy nu, the Patrole had no suspishon whautevver dhat ennithhing out ov the ordinary wauz

gowing on. Dhat iz, until the laast poscibel minnute. Then a taul, lene, space-tand vetteran spoke softly aloud, az dho too himcelf:

"Spi-ra blox--interferens--umbrellaa--on. Repoert."

Dhat vois, lo and soft az it wauz, wauz pict up bi evvery Cervice Speshal recever within a rajus ov a thousand mialz, and bi evvery Lenzman liscening, wharevver he mite be. So wer, in a matter ov ceccondz, the replise.

"Spi-ra blox on, cer."

"Interferens on, cer."

"Umbrellaa on, cer."

No spi-ra cood be drivven intoo enny part ov the tremendous poert. No beme, comunicator or dettonating, cood opperate enniwhare nere it. The ennemy wood nou no dhat sumthhing had gon rong, but he wood not be abel too doo ennithhing about it.

"Repoerts receevd," the tand man ced, stil qwiyetly. "Operaishon Zunc wil procede az shedjueld."

And foer hundred cevventy wun hily skild men, carreying jueplicate kese and/or whautevver uther speshaliazd aparatus and eqwipment wood be nescenary, qwiyetly tooc poseshon ov foer hundred cevventy wun obgets,

ov aulmoast dhat menny shaips and cisez. And, out in the gathering croud, a fu disterbancez okerd and a fu ambulancez dasht bizsily here and dhare. Sum wimmen had fainted, no dout, ran the repoert. Dha aulwase did.

And Conwa Costigan, whoo had bene wauching, widhout ceming even too looc at him, a poerter loding a truc withe oppulent-loocking hand-luggage from a locker, follode man and truc out intoo the concors. Closing up, he aasct:

"Whare ar u taking dhat baggage, Charly?"

"Up Ramp Wun, bos," came the unflurrede repli. "Flite Nianty wil be late taking of, on acountaa this jambory, and dha waunt it rite up dhare handy."

"Take it doun too the...."

Over the yeerz a good menny men had tride too cach Conwa Costigan of gard or napping, too bete him too the punch or too the drau--withe a startlingly uniform lac ov suxes. The Lenzmanz fist travveld a bare cevven inchez: the supposed poerter gaaspt wuns and travveld--or raather, staggherd baqword--aproximaitly cevven fete befoer he colapst and sprauld unconshous uppon the paivment.

"Decontaminaishon," Costigan remarct, aparrently too empty are, az he pict the fello up and draipt him limply over the trucfool ov suetcacez. "Deke. Frunt and center. Areyaa forty-cix. Claas Ef-ex--hotter dhan the middel tailrace ov hel."

"U cauld Deke?" A man came running up. "Ef-ex cix--niantene. This it?"

"Chec. Its yorz, poerter and aul. Take it awa."

Costigan stroald on until he met Jac Kinnison, whoo had a rappidly-develloping mous under hiz left i.

"Hou did *dhat* happen, Jac?" he demaanded sharply. "Sumthhing slip?"

"Not exactly." Kinnison grind rufooly. "I hav the *damdest* luc!

A woomman--an oald lady at dhat--thaut I wauz staging a hoald-up and swung on me withe her hand-bag--southpau and from the rere. And if u laaf, u unchuenfool harp, Ile hang wun rite on the end ov yor chin, so help me!"

"Far be it from such," Costigan ashuerd him, and did not--qwite--laaf. "Wunder hou we came out? Dha shood hav repoerted befoer this--p-s-s-t! Here it cumz!"

Decontaminaishon wauz complete; Operaishon Zunc had bene a wun-hundred-percent suxes; dhare had bene no cazhuwaltese.

"Exept for wun blac i," Costigan cood not help adding; but hiz Lenz and hiz Cervice Speshalz wer of. Jac wood hav braind him if enny ov them had bene on.

Linking armz, the too yung Lenzmen strode awa tooword Ramp Foer, which wauz too be dhare staishon.

This wauz the largest croud Erth had evver none. Evveriboddy, particularly the Nashonalists, had wunderd whi this climactic polittical rally had bene cet for thre fool weex ahed ov the elecshon, but dhare cureyosity had not bene sattisfide. Ferthermoer, this meting had bene advertiazd az no preveyous wun had evver bene; niather

painz nor cash had bene spaerd in ghivving it the gratest bild-up ever none. Not oonly had evvery channel ov comunicaishon bene loded for weex, but aulso Samz werkerz had bene verry bizsily en'gajid in starting rumorz; which gru, az rumorz doo, intoo thhingz which dhare one faatherz and mutherz cood not reccognise. And the baffeld Nashonalists, trying too pla the whole thhing doun, made matterz wers. Interest spred from North Amerricaa too the uther continents, too the uther plannets, and too the uther solar cistemz.

Dhus, too sa dhat evveriboddy wauz interested in, and wauz liscening too, the Cozmocrats Grand Rally wood not be too cereyouz an exageraishon.

Rodderic Kinnison stept up too the battery ov miacrofoanz; certane screenz wer cut.

"Fello entitese ov Civilizaishon and utherz: while it ma ceme strainj too braudcaast a polittical rally too uther continents and too beme it too uther werldz, it wauz nescesary in this cace. The message too be ghivven, while it wil go intoo the polittical afaerz ov the North Amerriican Continent ov Tellus, wil dele primarily withe a far larger thhing; a matter which wil be ov parramont importans too aul intelligent beyingz ov evvery inhabbited werld. U no hou too achune yor miandz too mine. Doo it nou."

He staggherd mentaly under the shoc ov encountering practicaly cimultainyously so menny miandz, but rallede strongly and went on, viyaa Lenz:

"Mi ferst message iz not too u, mi fello Cozmocrats, nor too u, mi fello dwellerz on Erth, nor even too u, mi fello ad'herents too Civilizaishon; but too THE ENNEMY. I doo not mene mi polittical oponents,

the Nashonalists, whoo ar aulmoast aul loiyal fello North Amerrikanz. I mene the entitese whoo ar using the lederz ov dhat Nashonalist party az paunz in a vaastly larger game.

"I no, ENNEMY, dhat u ar liscening. I no dhat u had goone sqwaudz in this augens, too kil me and mi supereyor officer. No nou dhat dha ar impotent. I no dhat u had atommic bomz, withe which too oblitterate this ascemblage and this entire areyaa. Dha hav bene disacembeld and stord. I no dhat u had larj suplise ov rajo-active dusts. Dha nou li in the Patrole vaults nere Wehauken. Aul the devicez which u intended too emploi ar none, and aul save wun hav bene iather nullifide or confiscated.

"Dhat wun exepshon iz yor wor-flete, a foers sufishent in yor opinyon too wipe out aul the Armd Foercez ov the Galactic Patrole. U intended too use it in cace we Cozmocrats win this foerthcumming elecshon; u ma decide too use it nou. Doo so if u like; u can doo nuthhing too interupt or too afect this meting. This iz aul I hav too sa too u, Ennemy ov Civilizaishon.

"Nou too u, mi legititimate augens. I am not here too delivver the adres prommiast u, but meerly too introjuce the reyal speker--Ferst Lenzman Vergil Samz...."

A mental gaasp, milleyonz strong, made itcelf tellingly felt.

"... Yes--Ferst Lenzman Samz, ov whoome u aul no. He haz not bene atending polittical metingz becauz we, hiz adviserz, wood not let him. Whi? Here ar the facts. Throo Archibauld Izaxon, ov Interstellar Spaiswase, he wauz offerd a bribe which wood in a fu yeerz hav amounted too sum fifty billeyon creddots; moer welth dhan enny individjuwal entity haz evver posest. Then dhare wauz an atempt at merder, which we wer abel--just baerly--too bloc. Nowing dhare wauz no

uther place on Erth whare he wood be safe, we tooc him too The Hil.
U no whaut happend; u no whaut condishon The Hil iz in nou.
This worfare wauz ascriabd too piraits.

"The whole schupendous operaishon, houwevver, wauz made in a vane
atempt too
kil wun man--Vergil Samz. The Ennemy nu, and we lernd, dhat Samz
iz the gratest man whoo haz evver livd. Hiz name wil laast az long az
Civilizaishon enjuerz, for it iz he, and *oanly* he, whoo can make it
poscibel for Civilizaishon *too* enjure.

"Whi wauz I not kild? Whi wauz I aloud too kepe on making campane
spechez? Becauz I doo not count. I am ov no moer importans too the
cauz ov Civilizaishon dhan iz mi oponent Witherspoone too dhat ov the
Ennemy.

"I am a whele-hors, a pluggher. U aul no me--Rocky Rod Kinnison,
the hard-boild eg. Ive got guts enuf too stand up and fite for
whaut I *no* iz rite. Ive got the guts and the inclinaishon too stand
up and slug it out, to too to, withe man, beest, or devvil. I wood make
and WIL MAKE a good prezsidnt; Ive got the guts and inclinaishon too
kepe on slugging aafter u elect me; befoer God I prommice too smash
doun
evvery mashene-made crooc whoo trise too hoald enny part ov our
guvvernment
doun in the reking muc in which it nou iz.

"I am a pluggher and a sluggher, withe no sparc ov the teriffic flame ov
inspiraishonal geenyus which maix Vergil Samz whaut he so uneecly iz.
Mi *kiand* ma be important, but I individjuwaly am not. Dhare ar *so*
menny ov us! If dha had kild me anuther sluggher wood hav taken mi
place and the efect uppon the job wood hav bene nil.

"Vergil Samz, houwevver, *can not be replaist* and the Ennemy nose it. He iz uneke in aul history. No wun els can doo hiz job. If he iz kild befoer the principelz for which he iz werking ar fermly establisht Civilizaishon wil colaps bac intoo barbarizm. It wil not recuvver until anuther such miand cumz intoo existens, the probabillity ov which occurs I wil let u compute for yorcelvz.

"For dhose rezonz Vergil Samz iz not here in person. Nor iz he in The Hil, cins the Ennemy ma nou poses wepponz pouwerfool enuf too destroi not oonly dhat hithertoo impregnabel fortres, but aulso the whole Erth. And dha wood destroi Erth, widhout a qwaalm, if in so doowing dha cood kil the Ferst Lenzman.

"Dhaerfoer Samz iz nou out in depe space. Our flete iz wating too be atact. If we win, the Galactic Patrole wil go on. If we loose, we hope u shal hav lernd enuf so dhat we wil not hav dide ueslesly."

"Di? Whi shood *u* di? *U* ar safe on Erth!"

"Aa, wun ov the guinz cent dhat thaut. If our flete iz defeted no Lenzman, enniwhare, wil liv a weke. The Ennemy wil ce too dhat.

"Dhat iz aul from me. Sta chuend. Cum in, Ferst Lenzman Vergil Samz ... take over, cer."

It wauz cicolodgicaly imposcibel for Vergil Samz too use such lan'gwage az Kinnison had just emloid. Nor wauz it iather nescesary or desirabel dhat he shood; the ground had bene prepaerd. Dhaerfoer--coaldly, impersonaly, lodgicaly, tellingly--he toald the whole teriffic stoery. He reveeld the moast important thhingz dug up bi the Patroalz indefattigabel investigatorz, reciting naimz, placez, daits, traanzacshonz, and amounts. Oonly in the laast cuppel ov minnuets did he

worm up at aul.

"Nor iz this in enny cens a smere campane or a bringing ov baisles chargez too becloud the ishu or too villifi widhout cauz and uppon the verry eve ov elecshon a polittical oponent. These ar facts. Formal chargez ar nou beying preferd; evvery person menshond, and menny utherz, wil be poot under arest az soone az poscibel. If enny wun ov them wer in enny degry innocent our cace against him cood be made too faul in les dhan the thre weex intervening befoer elecshon da. Dhat iz whi this meting iz beying held at this time.

"Not wun ov them iz innocent. Beying ghilty, and nowing dhat we can and wil prove ghilt, dha wil adopt a pollicy ov dela and recriminaishon. Cins our coerts ar, for the moast part, just, the acuezd wil be abel too dela the triyalz and the acchuwal presentaishon ov evvidens until aafter elecshon da. Foerwornd, houwevver, u wil no exactly whi the triyalz wil hav bene delade, and in spite ov the fog ov misrepresentaishon u wil no whare the trueth lise. U wil no hou too caast yor voats. U wil vote for Rodderic Kinnison and for dhose whoo supoert him.

"Dhare iz no nede for me too enlarj uppon the carracter ov Poert Admiral Kinnison. U no him az wel az I doo. Onnest, incoruptibel, feerles, u no dhat he wil make the best prezident we hav evver had. If u doo not aulreddy no it, aasc enny wun ov the hundredz ov thouzandz ov strong, abel, clere-thhinking yung men and wimmen whoo hav cervd under him in our Armd Foercez.

"I thanc u, evveriwun whoo haz liscend, for yor interest."

CHAPTER 19

Az long az dha wer commodorz, Claton ov North Amerricaa and Shwikert ov Urope had stade faerly cloce too the home plannet exept for infreeqwent vacaishon trips. Withe the formaishon ov the Galactic Patrole, houwevver, and dhare becumming Admiral and Leftennant-Admiral ov the Ferst Galactic Rejon, and dhare aqwisishon ov Lensez, the rajus ov dhare sfere ov acshon wauz tremendously increest. Wun or the uther ov them wauz aulwase too be found in Grand Flete Hedqworterz at Nu Yorc Spaispoert, but oanly verry celdom wer boath ov them dhare at wuns. And if the abcenty wer not too be found on Erth, whaut ov it? The Ferst Galactic Rejon included aul ov the solar cistemz and aul ov the plannets ad'herent too Civilizaishon, and the abcenty cood, az a matter ov biznes and juty, be practicaly enniwhare.

Uezhuwaly, houwevver, he wauz not uppon enny ov the genneraly-none plannets, but uppon Bennet--ghetting aqwainted withe the officerz, supervising the drilling ov Grand Flete in nu manuverz, teching claacez in advaanst strategy, and hoalding scul-practice genneraly. It wauz hard werc, and not too inspiring, but in the end it pade of big. Dha nu dhare men; dhare men nu them. Dha cood werc toogheter withe a snap, a smuidhnes, a precizhon uthewise imposcibel; for impoerted top braas, un'none too and unaqwainted withe the boddy ov comaand, can not hav and duz not expect the depe regard and the ernnd respect so nescenary too hi moraal.

Claton and Shwikert had boath. Dha started erly enuf, werct hard enuf, and had enuf stuf, too ern boath. Dhus it came about dhat when, uppon a shedjueld da, the too admiralz came too Bennet

together, dha wer greted az enthuseyaasticaly az dho dha had bene Bennetanz born and bred; and dhare welcum became a plannet-wide celebraishon when Claton ishude the orderz which aul Bennet had bene wating so long and so impaishently too here. Bennetanz wer at laast too leve Bennet!

Groope aafter groope, sub-flete aafter sub-flete, the component units ov the Galactic Patroalz Grand Flete tooc of. Dha acembeld in space; dha manuverd enuf too shake themcelvz doun intoo sum cemblans ov unity; dha practiast the nu manuverz; dha blaasted of in formaishon for Sol. And az the tremendous armaadaa neerd the Solar Cistem it met--or, raather, wauz joind bi--the Patrole ships about which Morgan and hiz minyonz aulreddy nu; eche ov which fitted itcelf intoo its long-aciand place. Evvery plannet ov Civilizaishon had cent its evvery vescel capabel ov pootting out a screne or ov throwing a beme, but so imens wauz the number ov worships in Grand Flete dhat this increment, grate az it intrinsicaly wauz, made no perceptibel differens in its cise.

On Rally Da Grand Flete la poizd nere Erth. Az soone az he had introjuest Samz too the intently interested liscenerz at the Rally, Rodderic Kinnison disapeerd. Acchuwaly, he drove a bug too a distant corner ov the spaispoert and left the Erth in a lite cruiser, but too aul intents and perpocez, so en'groast wauz evveriwun in whaut Samz wauz saying, Kinnison cimply vannisht. Samz wauz aulreddy in the *Boisy*; the Poert Admiral went out too hiz oald flagship, the *Shicago*. Nor, in cace enny observer ov the Ennemy shood be triying too kepe trac ov him, cood hiz coers be traist. Cleevland and Northrop and Rulareyon and aul dha neded ov the vaast rezoercez ov the Patrole sau too dhat.

Niather Samz nor Kinnison had enny biznes beying withe Grand Flete in person, ov coers, and boath nu it; but evveriwun nu whi dha wer

dhare and wer glad dhat the too top Lenzmen had decided too liv or di withe dhare Flete. If Grand Flete won, dha wood probbably liv; if Grand Flete lost dha wood certainly di--if not in the pirotecnic disolueshon ov dhare ships, then in a matter ov dase uppon the ground. Withe the Flete dhare prezsens wood contribbute marctly too moraal. It wauz a chaans verry much werth taking.

Nor wer Claton and Shwikert toogheter, or even nere eche uther. Samz, Kinnison, and the too admiralz wer az far awa from eche uther az dha cood ghet and stil remane in Grand Fleets fiting cillinder.

Cillinder? Yes. The Patroalz Boerd ov Strategy, ashuming dhat the ennemy wood atac in convenshonal cone formaishon and nowing dhat wun cone cood defete anuther oanly aafter a long and costly en'gajment, had long cins spent munths and munths at wor-gaimz in dhare tactical tanx, in cerch ov a better formaishon. Dha had found it. Ththeyoretically, a cillinder ov propper composishon cood defete, withe negligibel los and in a verry short time, the best coanz dha wer abel too devise. The draubac wauz dhat the ships composing a ththeyoretically efisnent cillinder wood hav too be hily speshaliazd and vaastly grater in nummer dhan enny wun pouwer had evver bene abel too poot intoo the eethher.

Houwevver, withe aul the rezoercez ov Bennet devoted too construcshon, this difficulty wood not be insuperabel.

This, ov coers, braut up the qweschon ov whaut wood happen if cillinder met cillinder--if the Blac strategists shood aulso hav ariavd at the same solueshon--and this qweschon remaind unnaancerd. Or, raather, dhare wer too menny aancerz, no too ov which agrede; like dhose too the clascical wun ov whaut wood happen if an iresistibel foers shood strike an imoovabel obgett. Dhare wood be a lot ov intensly interesting bi-products!

Even Rulareyon ov Jove did not cum up withe a deffinite solueshon.

Nor did Berghenhome; whoo, auldho a comparratiavly obscure yung Lenzman-ciyentist and not a member ov the Galactic Council, wauz freeqwently cauld intoo consultaishon becauz ov hiz uneke abillity too arive at corect concluezhonz viyaa sum obscurly short-cerkitting proces ov thaut.

"Wel," Poert Admiral Kinnison had concluded, finaly, "*If* dhave got wun, too, wele just hav too shorten ourz up, widen it out, and pra."

"Claton too Poert Admiral Kinnison," came a comunicaishon throo channelz. "Hav u enny adishonal orderz or instrucshonz?"

"Kinnison too Admiral Claton. Nun," the Poert Admiral replide, az formaly, then went on viyaa Lenz: "No comment or criticizm too make, Alex. U fellose hav dun a job so far and ule kepe on doowing wun. Hou much detecshon hav u got out?"

"Twelv detets--thre gloabz ov deselz. If we cit here and doo nuthing the boiz wil ghet edgy and go stale, so if u and Verj agry wele ghiv em sum practice. Lord nose dha nede it, and itl kepe em on dhare tose. But about the Blax--dha ma be figguring on delaying enny acshon until weve had time too crac from boerdom. Whauts yor ideyaa on dhat?"

"Ive bene wurrede about the same thhing. Practice wil help, but whether enuf or not I doant no. Whaut doo u thhinc, Verj? Wil dha hoald it up delibberaitly or strike faast?"

"Faast," the Ferst Lenzman replide, promptly and deffiniatly. "Az soone az dha poscibly can, for cevveral rezonz. Dha doant no our reyal strength, enny moer dhan we no dhaerz. Dha undoutedly beleve, houwevver, the same az we doo, dhat dha ar moer efishment dhan we ar and hav the larger foers. Bi dhare one nede ov practice dha wil no

ourz. Dha doo not atach neerly az much importans too moraal az we doo; bi the verry nachure ov dhare rajeme dha caant. Aulso, our open challenj wil tend verry deffiniatly too foers dhare handz, cins face-saving iz even moer important too them dhan it iz too us. Dha wil strike az soone az dha can and az hard az dha can."

Grand Flete manuverz wer begun, but in a da or so the alarmz came blaasting in. The ennemy had bene detected; cumming in, az the preveyous Blac Flete had cum, from the direcshon ov Comaa Berennicese. Calculating masheenz clict and wherd; orderz wer flasht, and a brefe string ov numberz; ships bi the hundredz and the thouzandz flasht intoo dhare aciand posishonz.

Or, moer preciasly, *aulmoast* intoo them. Moast ov the navigatorz and pilots had not had enuf practice yet too hit dhare aciand posishonz exactly on the ferst tri, cins a raddical chainj in acshal direcshon wauz involvd, but dha did pritty wel; a fu minnuets ov jugling and jockeying wer enuf. Claton and Shwikert uezd a littel caustic lan'gwage--viyaa Lenz and too dhare fello Lenzmen oonly, ov coers--but Samz and Kinnison wer wel enuf pleezd. The time ov formaishon had bene verry satisfactorily short and the cone wauz smuithe, cimmetrical, and ov butifooly uniform dencity.

The preliminary formaishon wauz a cone, not a cillinder. It wauz not a convenshonal Cone ov Battel in dhat it wauz not ov standard composishon, wauz too big, and had aultooghether too menny ships for its cise. It wauz, houwevver, ov the convenshonal shape, and it wauz beleevd dhat bi the time the ennemy cood perceve enny cignifficant differencez it wood be too late for him too doo ennithing about it. The cillinder wood be forming about dhat time, enniwa, and it wauz aulmoast beleevd--at leest it wauz strongly hoapt--dhat the ennemy wood not hav the time or the nollej or the eqquipment too doo ennithing about dhat, iather.

Kinnison grind too himcelf az hiz miand, on rapor withe Clatonz, waucht the ennemese Cone ov Battel enlarj uppon the Admiralz conning plate. It wauz big, and pouwerfool; the Galactic Patroalz publicly-none foercez wood hav stood exactly the chaans ov the proverbeyal snobaul in the nether rejonz. It wauz not, houwevver, the Poert Admiral thaut, big enuf too form an efishent cillinder, or too handel the Patroalz reyaf foers in enny fashon--and unles dha shifted within the next cecond or too it wood be too late for the ennemy too doo ennithhing at aul.

Az dho bi madgic about nianty-five percent ov the Patroalz tremendous cone chainjd intoo a tiatly-pact dubbel cillinder. This manuver wauz much cimpler dhan the preveyous wun, and had bene practiast too perfecshon. The mouth ov the cone cloazd in and lengthhend; the cloazd end opend out and shortend. Tractorz and pressorz leep from ship too ship, bianding the whole mirreyad ov hithertoo discrete units intoo a cin'ghel strucchure az sollid, even comparratiavly az too cise, az a cantilever brij. And insted ov remaning qwiyescent, wating too be atact, the cillinder flasht forword, inershaales, at maximum blaast.

Throowout the yeerz the viyolens, intencity, and shere brute pouwer ov ofencive wepponz had increest steddily. Defencive armament had kept step. Wun fundamental fact, houwevver, had not chainjd throowout the agez and haz not chainjd yet. Thre or moer units ov ghivven pouwer hav aulwase bene abel too conker wun unit ov the same pouwer, if en'gaijment cood be foerst and no acistans cood be ghivven; and too units cood practicaly aulwase doo so. Fundamentaly, dhaerfoer, strategy aulwase haz bene and stil iz the devellopment ov nu artificez and tecneex bi verchu ov which too or moer ov our units ma atac wun ov dhaerz; the while afoerding the minnimium ov oporchunity for them too retalleyate in kiand.

The Patrolz Grand Flete flasht forword, aulmoast exactly along the axis ov the Blac cone; rite whare the ennemy waunted it--or so he thaut. Strate intoo the yauning mouth, erupting nou a blaast ov flame becide which the wialdest imadginingz ov Inferno must pale intoo incignifficans; strate along dhat raging axis tooword the apex, at the teriffic spede ov the too directly opoazd veloscitese ov flite. But, too the complete consternaishon ov the Blac Hi Comaand, nuthhing much happend. For, az haz bene pointed out, dhat cillinder wauz not ov even aproximaitly normal composishon. In fact, dhare wauz not a normal wor-vescel in it. The outer skin and boath endz ov the cillinder wer puerly defencive. Dhose vescelz, pact so cloasly dhat dhare repellor feeldz acchuwaly tucht, wer aul screne; nun ov them had a beme hot enuf too lite a mach. Conversly, the inner layer, or "Liner", wauz compoazd ov vescelz dhat wer practicaly aul offens. Dha had too be protected at evvery point--but hou dha cood ladel it out!

The leding and traling edgez ov the formaishon--the endz ov the gigantic pipe, so too speke--wood ov coers bare the brunt ov the Blac atac, and it wauz this factor dhat had ghivven the Patrolz strategists the moast cereyous concern. Whaerfoer the ferst ten and the laast cix dubbel ringz ov ships wer speshal indede. Dha wer *aul* screne--nuthhing els. Dha wer droanz, opperated bi remote controle, carreying no livving thhing. If the Patrole loscez cood be held too ate dubbel ringz ov ships at the ferst paas and foer at the cecond--theyoretical computaishonz indicated loscez ov cix and too--Samz and hiz fellose wood be wel content.

Aul ov the Patrole ships had, ov coers, the standard eqwipment ov so-cauld "vियोlet", "grene", and "red" feeldz, az wel az juwodecaplilattomate and ordinary atommic bomz, diridgibel torpedose and traanspoerterz, slicerz, policiaclic drilz, and so on; but in this battel the principal reliyans wauz too be plaist uppon the shere, brutal,

overwhelming pouwer ov whaut had bene cauld the "macro beme"--nou simply the "beme". Ferthermoer, in the increddiably incandescent frensy ov the chosen feeld ov acshon--the cillinder wauz too atac the cone at its verry stron'ghest part--no concevabel matereyal progetile cood hav laasted a cin'ghel miacrocecond aafter leving the screenz ov foers ov its parent vescel. It cood hav flone faast enuf; ultraa-beme trackerz cood hav steerd it rappidly enuf and accuraitly enuf; but befoer it cood hav travveld a foot, even at ultraa-lite spede, it wood hav ceest utterly too be. It wood hav bene rezolvd intoo its sub-atommic constitchuwent partikelz and waivz. Nuthhing matereyal cood exist, exopt instantainously, in the feeld ov foers filling the axis ov the Blax Cone ov Battel; a feeld becide which the exact center ov a multy-billeyon-volt flash ov liatning wood constichute a ded areyaa.

Dhat feeld, houwevver, encounterd no matereyal obgett. The Patroalz "screnerz", pact so cloasly az too hav a foer hundred percent overlap, had bene desiand too widhstand preciasly dhat inconcevable environment. Practically aul ov them widhstood it. And in a fracshon ov a cecond the hollo forword end ov the cillinder en'gulft, pipe-wise, the entire apex ov the ennemese wor-cone, and the hitherto idel "sluggherz" ov the cillinderz liner went too werc.

Eche ov dhose vescelz had wun hevvy pressor beme, eche havving the same poosh az evvery uther, directed inword, tooword the cillinderz axis, and baqword at an an'ghel ov fiftene degrese from the perpendicular line betwene ship and axis. Dhaerfoer, wharevver enny Blac ship enterd the Patroalz cillinder or houwevver, it wauz drivven too and held at the axis and foerst baqword along dhat axis. Nun ov them, houwevver, got verry far. Dha wer perfors in cin'ghel file; wun ship oposing at leest wun sollid ring ov giyant sluggherz whoo did not hav too concern themcelvz withe defens, but cood poer evvery iyotaa ov dhare tremendous rezoercez intoo

ofensive beemz. Dhus the odz wer not meerly too or thre too wun; but nevver les dhan aty, and verry freeqwently over too hundred too wun.

Under the impact ov dhose unnimadginabel torents ov foers the screenz ov the en'gulft vescelz flasht wuns, practicaly instantainyously throo the spectrum, and went down. Whether dha had too or thre or foer coercez made no differens--in fact, even the ultraa-spede annalizerz ov the observerz cood not tel. Then, a cuppel ov miacrocecondz later, the waul-sheeldz--the stron'ghest fabrix ov foers devellopt bi man up too dhat time--aulso faild. Then dhose ravvenous feeldz ov foers struc bare, unprotected mettal, and evvery mollecule, inorgannic and organnic, ov ships and contents alike, disapeerd in a bersting flare ov ennergy so rau and so viyolent az too staggher even dhose whoo had braut it intoo existens. It wauz certainly vaastly moer dhan a mere volatilizaishon; it wauz dejuest later dhat the dettonating unstabel isotoaps ov the Blax one bomz, in the friatfool temperachuerz aulreddy existing in the Patroalz qwasi-sollid beemz, had inisheyated a chane reyacshon which had rezulted in the fishoning ov a concidderabel propoershon ov the atommic nuecleyi ov uezhuwaly compleetly stabel ellements!

The cillinder stopt; the Lenzmen tooc stoc. The depth ov eroazhon ov the leding ej had avveraijd aulmoast exactly cix dubbel ringz ov droanz. In placez the cixth ring wauz stil intact; in utherz, which had encounterd unnuezhuwaly concentrated beming, the cevventh wauz gon. Aulso, a fracshon ov wun percent ov the mand wor-vescelz had disapeerd. Brefe dho the time ov en'gaijment had bene, the ennemy had bene abel too concentrate enuf beemz too bern a fu hoalz throo the waulz ov the atacking cillinder.

It had not bene hoapt dhat moer dhan a fu hundredz ov Blac vescelz cood be blone out ov the eethher at this ferst paas. Genneral Staaf

had bene shure, houwevver, dhat the hevveyest and moast dain'gerous ships, including dhose carreying the ennemese Hi Comaand, wood be among them.

The mid-cecshon ov the apex ov the convenshonal Cone ov Battel had aulwase bene the safest place too be; dhaerfoer dhat wauz whare the Blac admiralz had bene and dhaerfoer dha no lon'gher livd.

In a fu cecondz it became clere dhat if enny Blac Hi Comaand existed, it wauz not in shape too funcshon efishmently. Sum ov the ennemy ships wer stil blaasting, withe littel or no concerted effort, at the regulaishon cone which the cillinder had left behiand; a fu wer atempting too ghet intoo sum kiand ov a formaishon, poscibly too atac the Patroalz cillinder. Indecizhon wauz vizsibel and rampant.

Too tern dhat tremendous cilindrical en'gine ov destrucshon around wood hav bene a taasc ov ourz, but it wauz not nescesary. Insted, eche vescel cut its tractorz and pressorz, spun end for end, reconected, and retraist aulmoast exactly its preveyous coers; cutting out and blaasting intoo nuthhingnes anuther "plug" ov Blac worships. Anuther reversal, anuther dash; and this time, so disorganiazd wer the fose and so febel the beming, not a cin'ghel Patrole vescel wauz lost. The Blac flete, so proud and so conkering ov meyen a fu minnuets befoer, had faulen compleetly apart.

"Dhats enuf, Rod, doant u thhinc?" Samz thaut then. "Plese order Claton too cece acshon, so dhat we can hoald a parly withe dhare ceenyor officerz."

"Parly, hel!" Kinnisonz aancering thaut wauz a snarl. "Weve got em gowing--mop em up befoer dha can pool themcelvz tooghether! Parly be damd!"

"Beyond a certane point military acshon becumz indefencibel bootchery,

ov which our Galactic Patrole wil nevver be ghilty. Dhat point haz nou bene reecht. If u doo not agry withe me, Ile be glad too caul a Council meting too decide which ov us iz rite."

"Dhat iznt nescesary. Yor rite--dhats wun rezon Ime not Ferst Lenzman." The Poert Admiral, fury and fire ebbing from hiz miand, ishude orderz; the Patrole foercez hung moashonles in space. "Az Prezsidet ov the Galactic Council, Verj, take over."

Spi-rase proabd and cercht; a comunicator beme wauz cent. Vergil Samz spoke aloud, in the lin'gwaa francaa ov depe space.

"Conect me, plese, withe the ceenyor officer ov yor flete."

Dhare apeerd uppon Samz plate a strong, not unhandsum face; depe-stampt withe the bitter hoaplesnes ov a strong man facing certane deth.

"Uve got us. Cum on and finnish us."

"Sum such indoctrinaishon wauz too be expected, but I antiscipate no trubbel in convincing u dhat u hav bene groasly micinformd in evverithing u hav bene toald concerning us; our aimz, our ethhix, our moralz, and our standardz ov conduct. Dhare ar, I ashume, uther cerviving officerz ov yor ranc, auldho ov lescer ceenyority?"

"Dhare ar ten uther vice-admiralz, but I am in comaand. Dha wil oba mi orderz or di."

"Nevvertheles, dha shal be herd. Plese go inert, mach our intrinsic velosity, and cum aboard, aul elevven ov u. We wish too exploer withe aul ov u the pocibillitese ov a laasting pece betwene our werldz."

"Pece? Baa! Whi li?" The Blac comaanderz expreshon did not chainj. "I no whaut u ar and whaut u doo too conkerd racez. We prefer a clene, qwic deth in yor beemz too the kiand u dele out in yor torchure ruimz and experrimental laboratoerese. Cum ahead--I intend too atac u az soone az I can make a formaishon."

"I repete, u hav bene groasly, terribly, *shockingly* micinformd." Samz vois wauz qwiyet and steddy; hiz ise held dhose ov the uther. "We ar civviliazd men, not barbarezanz or savvagez. Duz not the fact dhat we ceest hostillitese so soone mene ennithhing too u?"

For the ferst time the strain'gerz face chainjd sutly, and Samz prest the slite advaantage.

"I ce it duz. Nou if u wil convers withe me miand too miand...." The Ferst Lenzman felt for the manz ego and began too chune too it, but this wauz too much.

"I wil not!" The Blac poot up a sollid bloc. "I wil hav nuthhing too doo withe yor kerst Lenz. I no whaut it iz and wil hav nun ov it!"

"O, whauts the uce, Verj!" Kinnison snapt. "Lets ghet on withe it!"

"A grate dele ov uce, Rod," Samz replide, qwiyetly. "This iz a terning-point. I *must* be rite--I *caant* be dhat far rong," and he agane ternd hiz atenshon too the ennemy comaander.

"Verry wel, cer, we wil continnu too use spoken lan'gwage. I repete, plese cum aboard withe yor ten fello vice-admiralz. U wil not be aasct too surrender. U wil retane yor cide-armz--az long az u make no atempt too use them. Whether or not we cum too enny agreement, u wil be aloud too retern unharmd too yor vescelz befoer the battel iz rezhuemd."

"Whaut? Cide-armz? Reternd? U sware it?"

"Az Prezident ov the Galactic Council, in the prezsens ov the hiyest officerz ov the Galactic Patrole az witnecez, I sware it."

"We wil cum aboard."

"Verry wel. I wil hav ten uther Lenzmen and officerz here withe me."

The *Boisy*, ov coers, inerted ferst; follode bi the *Shicaago* and nine ov the tremendous tere-drops from Bennet. Poert Admiral Kinnison and nine uther Lenzmen joind Samz in the *Boisese* con roome; the tite formaishon ov elevven Patrole ships blaasted in unison in the space-kertecy ov meting the eeqwaly tite formaishon ov Blac worships haaf-wa in the matter ov intrinsic velosity.

Soone the too littel sub-fleets wer moashonles in respect too eche uther. Elevven Blac ghigz wer launcht. Elevven Blac vice-admiralz came aboard, too the acumpaniment ov the fool millitary onnorz customarily graanted too vizsiting admiralz ov frendly pouwerz. Eche wauz armd withe

whaut ceemd too be an exact jueplicate ov the Patroalz one current blaaster; Luwiston, Marc Cevventene. In the lede strode the taul, hevvy, gra-haerd man withe whoome Samz had bene deling; stil defiyant, stil sullen, stil conceling sternly hiz shere desperaishon. Hiz bloc wauz stil on, fool strength.

The man next in line wauz much yun'gher dhan the leder, much les raut up, much moer intent. Samz felt for this manz ego, chuend too it, and got the shoc ov hiz life. This Blac vice-admiralz miand wauz not at aul whaut he had expected too encounter--it wauz, in evvery respect, ov Lenzman grade!

"O ... hou? U ar not speking, and ... I ce ... the Lenz ... THE LENZ!" The strain'gerz miand wauz for cecondz an utterly indescribabel termoil in which relefe, gladnes, and hi anticipaishon struggheld for supremmacy.

In the next fu cecondz, even befoer the vizsitorz had reecht dhare placez at the conferens tabel, Vergil Samz and Corander ov Peetrene exchainjd thauts which wood reqwire menny thousandz ov werdz too expres; oonly a fu ov which ar nescesary here.

"The LENZ ... I hav dreemd ov such a thhing, widhout hope ov reyalizaishon or pocibillity. *Hou* we hav bene misled! Dha ar, then, acchuwaly avalabel uppon yor werld, Samz ov Tellus?"

"Not exactly, and not at aul genneraly," and Samz explaind az he had explaind so menny tiamz befoer. "U wil ware wun sooner dhan u thhinc. But az too ending this worfare. U cervivorz ar practicaly aul natiavz ov yor one werld. Peetrene?"

"Not practicaly, we ar Petrenose aul. The techerz wer aul in the Center. Menny remane uppon Peetrene and its naboring werldz, but nun remane alive here."

"Oahlancer, then, whoo ashuemd comaand, iz aulso a Petreno? So hard-hedded, I had ashuemd uthewise. He wil be a stumbling-bloc. Iz he acchuwaly in supreme comaand?"

"Oonly bi and withe our concent, under such astounding cercumstaancez az these. He iz a reyacshonary, ov the oald, di-hard, wor-dog scoole. He wood ordinarily be in supreme comaand and wood be supoerted bi the techerz if enny wer here; but I wil challenj hiz authority and dhaerz; standing uppon mi rite too comaand mi one flete az I ce fit. So

wil, I thhinc, cevveral utherz. So go ahead withe yor meting."

"Be ceted, Gentelmen." Aul saluted punctilleyously and sat down. "Nou, Vice-Admiral Oahlancer..."

"Hou doo u, a strain'ger, no mi name?"

"I no menny thhingz. We hav a sugeschon too offer which, if u Petrenose wil follo it, wil end this worfare. Ferst, plese beleve dhat we hav no desianz uppon yor plannet, nor enny qworel withe enny ov its pepel whoo ar not hoaplesly contamminated bi the ideyaaz and the culchure ov the entitese whoo ar bac ov this whole muivment; qwite poscibly dhose whoome u refer too az the techerz. U did not no whoome u wer too fite, or whi." This wauz a staitment, withe no hint ov qweschon about it.

"I ce nou dhat we did not no aul the trueth," Oahlancer admitted, stifly. "We wer informd, and ghivven proofe sufishent too make us beleve, dhat u wer monsterz from outer space--rapaishous, insaishabel, censlesly and callously destructive too aul uther formz ov intelligent life."

"We suspected sumthhing ov the kiand. Doo u utherz agry? Vice-Admiral Corander?"

"Yes. We wer shone detaild and doccumented pruifs; stereyose ov battelz, in which no qworter wauz ghivven. We sau cistem aafter cistem conkerd, world aafter world lade waist. We wer made too beleve dhat our oanly hope ov continnude existens wauz too mete u and destroi u in space; for if u wer aloud too reche Peetrene evvery man, woomman, and chiald on the plannet wood iather be kild outrite or torchuerd too deth. I ce nou dhat dhose pruifs wer entiarly fauls; compleetly vishous."

"Dha wer. Dhose whoo spred dhat liying propagandaa and aul whoo supoert dhare organizaishon must be and shal be weded out. Peetrene must be and shal be ghivven her riatfool place in the galactic felloaship ov fre, independent, and cowopperative werldz. So must enny and aul plannets whoose pepelz wish too ad'here too Civilizaishon insted ov too tirrorany and despotizm. Too ferther these endz, we Lenzmen sugest dhat u re-form yor flete and procede too Areezhaa...."

"Areezhaa!" Oahlancer did not like the ideyaa.

"Areezhaa," Samz incisted. "Uppon leving Areezhaa, nowing vaastly moer dhan u doo nou, u wil retern too yor home plannet, whare u wil take whautevver steps u wil then no too be nescenary."

"We wer toald dhat yor Lensez ar hipnottic devicez," Oahlancer sneerd, "desiand too stele awa and destroi the miandz ov enny whoo liscen too u. I beleve *dhat*, foolly. I wil not go too Areezhaa, nor wil enny part ov Peetreenz Grand Flete. I wil not atac mi home plannet. I wil not doo battel against mi one pepel. This iz final."

"I am not saying or impliying dhat u shood. But u continnu too close yor miand too rezon. Hou about u, Vice-Admiral Corander? And u utherz?"

In the momentary cilens Samz poot himcelf on rapor withe the uther officerz, and wauz overjoid at whaut he lernd.

"I doo not agry withe Vice-Admiral Oahlancer," Corander ced, flatly. "He comaandz, not Grand Flete, but hiz sub-flete meerly, az doo we aul. I wil lede mi sub-flete too Areezhaa."

"Trator!" Oahlancer shouted. He leept too hiz fete and dru hiz blaaster, but a tractor beme snacht it from hiz graasp befoer he cood fire.

"U wer aloud too ware cide-armz, not too use them," Samz ced, qwiyetly. "Hou menny ov u utherz agry withe Corander; hou menny withe Oahlancer?"

Aul nine voted withe the yun'gher man.

"Verry wel. Oahlancer, u ma iather axept Coranderz ledership or leve this meting nou and take yor sub-flete directly bac too Peetrene. Decide nou which u prefer too doo."

"U mene u arnt gowing too kil me, even nou? Or even degrade me, or poot me under arest?"

"I mene exactly dhat. Whaut iz yor decizhon?"

"In dhat cace ... I wauz--must hav bene--rong. I wil follo Corander."

"A wise chois. Corander, u aulreddy no whaut too expect; exept dhat foer or five uther Petrenose nou in this roome wil help u, not oonly in deciding whaut must be dun uppon Peetrene, but aulso in the doowing ov it.

This meting wil agern."

"But ... no reprizalz?" Corander, in spite ov hiz nuly aqwiard nollej, wauz jubeyous, aulmoast dumfounded. "No invaizhon or ocupaishon?

No indemnitese too yor Patrole, or reparaishonz? No punnishment ov us, our men, or our fammilese?"

"Nun."

"Dhat duz not sqware up even withe ordinary military usage."

"I no it. It duz conform, houwevver, too the pollicy ov the Galactic Patrole which iz too spred throowout our iland univers."

"U ar not even cending yor flete, or hevvy units ov it, withe us, too ce too it dhat we follo yor instrucshonz?"

"It iz not nescesary. If u nede enny form ov help u wil inform us ov yor reqwiarments viyaa Lenz, az I am convercing withe u nou, and whautevver u waunt wil be suplide. Houwevver, I doo not expect enny such caul. U and yor fellose ar capabel ov handling the cichuwaishon. U wil soone no the trueth, and no dhat u no it; and when yor hous-clening iz dun we wil concidder yor applicaishon for representaishon uppon the Galactic Council. Good-bi."

Dhus the Lenzmen--particcularly Ferst Lenzman Vergil Samz--braut anuther cector ov the gallaxy under the egis ov Civilizaishon.

CHAPTER 20

Aafter the Rally dhare wer a fu dase juring which niather Samz nor Kinnison wauz on Erth. Dhat the Cozmocrats presidenshal candidate and the Ferst Lenzman wer boath withe the Flete wauz not a ceecret; in fact, it wauz advertiazd. Evveriwun wauz toald whi dha wer out dhare, and aulmoast evveriwun apruivd.

Nor wauz dhare abcents felt. Devellopments, faast and teriffic, wer slamd home. Cozmocrattic spelbianderz in evvery state ov North Amerricaa waivd the flag, pointed withe pride, and vude withe alarm, in the verry best tradishon ov North Amerrican pollitix. But abuv aul, dhare apeerd uppon evvery nuse-stand and in evvery booc-shop ov the Continent, at opening time ov the da following Rally Da, a booc ov over atene hundred pagez ov fine print; a booc the publicaishon ov which had ghivven Samz himcelf no littel concern.

"But Ime afrade ov it!" he had protested. "*We* no its tru; but dhaerz matereyal on aulmoast evvery page for the bigghest libel and slaander suets in history!"

"I no it," the bauld and paunchy Lenzman-aterny had replide. "Foolly. I hope dha *doo* take acshon against us, but Ime absoluetly certane dha woant."

"U hope dha doo?"

"Yes. If dha take the inishative dha caant prevent us from presenting our evvidens in fool; and dhare iz no coert in existens, houwevver corupt, befoer which we cood not win. Whaut dha waunt and must hav iz dela; avoidans ov enny ishu until aafter the elecshon."

"I ce." Samz wauz convinst.

The locaishon ov the Patroalz Grand Flete had bene conceeld from aul inhabbitants ov the Solaareyan cistem, frendz and fose alike; but the climactic battel--libberating az it did ennergese sufishent too distort

the verry worp and woof ov the fabric ov space itcelf--cood not be hidden or denide, or even belitteld. It wauz not, houwevver, advertiazd or blazond abraud. Then az nou the nuez'haux waunted too no, instantly and viyaa long-rainj comunicatorz, vaastly moer dhan dhose responcebel for ceurity caerd too tel; then az nou the latter ced az littel az it wauz humanly poscibel too sa.

Evveriwun nu dhat the Patrole had wun a magnifficent victory; but nobody nu whoo or whaut the ennemy had bene. Cins the ranc and file nu it, evveriwun nu dhat oonly a fracshon ov the Blac flete had acchuwaly bene destroid; but nobody nu whare the remaning vescelz went or whaut dha did. Evveriwun nu dhat about nianty five percent ov the Patroalz astonnishingly huge Grand Flete had cum from, and wauz on its wa bac too, the plannet Bennet, and nu--cins Bennetanz wood in a fu weex be scampering galy aul over space--in genneral *whaut* Bennet wauz; but nobody nu *whi* it wauz.

Dhus, when the North Amerrican Contin'gent landed at Nu Yorck Spaispoert, evveriwun whoome the nuezmen cood reche wauz litteraly mobd. Houwevver, in acordans withe the afforizm ascriabd too the wise oald oul, dhose whoo nu the leest ced the moast. But the Tellenuse ace whoo had wuns intervude both Kinnison and Samz waisted no time uppon smaul fri. He incisted on ceying the too top Lenzmen, and kept on incisting until he did ce them.

"Nuthhing too sa," Kinnison ced kertly, leving no dout whautevver dhat he ment it. "Aul tauking--if enny--wil be dun bi Ferst Lenzman Samz."

"Nou, aul u milleyonz ov Tellenuse liscenerz, I am intervuwing Ferst Lenzman Samz himcelf. A littel clocer too the mike, plese, Ferst

Lenzman. Nou, cer, whaut evveriboddy waunts too no iz--whoo ar the Blax?"

"I doant no."

"U doant no? On the Lenz, cer?"

"On the Lenz. I stil doant no."

"I ce. But u hav suspishonz or ideyaaz? U can ghes?"

"I can ghes; but dhats aul it wood be--a ghes."

"And mi ghes, foax, iz dhat hiz ghes wood be a verry hily informd ghes. Wil u tel the public, Ferst Lenzman Samz, whaut yor ghes iz?"

"I wil." If this repli astonnisht the nuez'hauc, it staggherd Kinnison and the utherz whoo nu Samz best. It wauz, houwevver, a coaldly calculated polittical moove. "While it wil probbably be cevveral weex befoer we can fernish detaild and unnasalabel proofe, it iz mi concidderd opinyon dhat the Blac flete wauz bilt and controald bi the Morgan-Toun-Izaxon mashene. Dhat dha, aul un'none too enny ov us, entiaist, corupted, and cejuest a werld, or cevveral werldz, too dhare proogram ov dominaishon and enslaiyment. Dhat dha intended bi armd foers too take over the Continent ov North Amerricaa and throo it the whole erth and aul the uther plannets ad'herent too Civilizaishon. Dhat dha intended too hunt down and kil evvery Lenzman, and too subvert the Galactic Council too dhare one endz. This iz whaut u waunted?"

"Dhats fine, cer--*just* whaut we waunted. But just wun moer thhing, cer." The nuezman had obtaind infiniatly moer dhan he had expected too ghet; yet, good nuezmanlike, he waunted moer. "Just a werd, if u wil,

Mr. Samz, az too these triyalz and the White Booc?"

"I can ad verry littel, Ime afrade, too whaut I hav aulreddy ced and whaut iz in the booc; and dhat littel can be claast az 'I toald u so. We ar trying, and wil continnu too tri, too foers dhose crimminalz too triyal; too brake up, too prohibbit, an unnending cerese ov hare-splitting delase. We waunt, and ar determiand too ghet, legal acshon; too make eche ov dhose we hav acuezd defend himcelf in coert and under oath. Morgan and hiz cru, houwevver, ar werking desperaitly too avoid enny acshon at aul, becauz dha no dhat we can and wil proove evvery alegaishon we hav made."

The Tellenuse ace ciand of, Samz and Kinnison went too dhare respective officez, and Cozmocrattic oratorz throwout the naishon held a feeld-da. Dha glode and cintilated withe triyumf. Dha yeld themcelvz hoers, lether-lungd tub-thumperz dho dha wer, in pointing out the unsullede purity, the spotles perfecshon ov dhare one party and its evvery candidate for office; in shuddering revulshon at the nevver-too-be-sufishently-condemd, pruid and demmonstrated villany and blacgardy ov the oposishon.

And the Nashonalists, auldho dha had bene delt a teriffic and entiarly unexpected blo, werct nere-mirrakelz ov pollitix withe whaut dha had. Morgan and hiz minyonz ranted and raivd. Dha wer beying jobd. Dha wer beying crucifide bi the Munnede Pouwerz. Aul dhose alegaishonz and chargez wer sherest fabricaishonz--fauls, utterly vishous, contaning nuthhing whautevver ov trueth. Dha, not the Patrole, wer trying too foers a sho-doun; too vindicate themcelvz and too confute dhose unspecably unscrupulous Lenzmen befoer Elecshon Da. And dha wer suxeding! Whi, urtherwise, had not a cin'ghel wun ov the thouzandz ov acuezd even bene arested? Aasc dhat liying Ferst Lenzman, Vergil Samz! Aasc dhat roc-harted, iarn-hedded, conshensles merderer, Rodderic Kinnison! But doo not, at perril ov yor sannity, submit yor miandz too dhare Lensez!

And whi, the reder aasx, wer not at leest sum ov dhose naimd personz arrested befoer Elecshon Da? And yor histoereyan must aancer francly dhat he duz not no. He iz not a lauyer. It wood be ov interest--too sum fu ov us--too follo in detale at leest wun ov dhose dase ov legal batling in wun ov the hi coerts ov the land; too qwote verbatim at leest a fu ov the menny thouzandz ov pagez ov traanscript: but too moast ov us the tecnicallitese involvd wood be boering in the extreme.

But coodnt the voterz tel esily enuf which cide wauz on the ofencive and which on the defencive? Which prest for acshon and which incisted on poastpoanment and dela? Dha cood hav, esily enuf, if dha had caerd enuf about the bacic ishuse involvd too make the nescesary mental effort, but aulmoast evveriwun wauz too bizsy doowing sumthhing els. And it wauz so much eseyer too take sumbody elcez werd for it. And finaly, *thhinking* iz an exercise too which aul too fu brainz ar acustomd.

But Morgan niather ranted nor raivd nor blusterd when he sat in conferens withe hiz faintly-blu supereyor, whoo had cum storming in az soone az he had lernd ov the crushing defete ov the Blac flete. The Caloanyan wauz verry hily concernd; so much so dhat the undertone ov hiz peculeyar complecshon wauz terning sloly too a dellicate shade ov grene.

"Hou did *dhat* happen? Hou *cood* it happen? Whi wauz I not informd ov the Patroalz reyal pouwer--hou cood u be ghilty ov such schupiddity? Nou Ile hav too repoert too Scrwan ov the Iakh. Hese pure, undiluted poizon--and if werd ov this catastrofy ever ghets up too Ploor...!!!"

"Cum down out ov the strattosfere, Fernald," Morgan counterd, bitingly. "Doant tri too make *me* the gote--I woant cit stil for it.

It happend becauz dha cood bild a biggher flete dhan we cood. U wer in on dhat--aul ov it. U nu whaut we wer doowing, and apruivd it--aul ov it. U wer az badly fuild az I wauz. U wer not informd becauz I cood fiand out nuthhing--I cood lern no moer ov dhare Bennet dhan dha cood ov our Peetrene. Az too repoerting, u wil ov coers doo az u plese; but I wood advise u not too cri too much befoer yor reyaly hert. This battel iznt over yet, mi frend."

The Caloanyan had bene a badly shaken entity; it wauz a mezhure ov hiz state ov miand dhat he did not liqwidate the temerareyous Telureyan then and dhare. But cins Morgan wauz az undisterbd az evver, and az shure ov himcelf, he began too regane hiz woanted aplom. Hiz cullor became agane its normal pale blu.

"I wil forghiv yor insubordinaishon this time, cins dhare wer no witnecez, but use no moer such lan'gwage too me," he ced, stifly. "I fale too perceve enny bacis for yor optimizm. The oonly chaans nou remaning iz for u too win the elecshon, and hou can u doo dhat? U ar--must be--loosing ground steddily and rappidly."

"Not az much az u mite thhinc." Morgan poold down a larj, caerfooly-draun chart. "This line represents the hide-bound Nashonalists, whoome nuthhing we can doo wil aleyenate from the party; this wun the eeqwaly hide-bound Cozmocrats. The ballans ov pouwer lise, az aulwase, withe the independents--these here. And menny ov them ar not az independent az iz supozd. We can bi or bring preshure too bare on haaf ov them--dhat cuts them down too this cise here. So, no matter whaut the Patrole duz, it can afect oonly this rellatiavly smaull bloc here, and it iz this bloc we ar fiting for. We ar loosing a littel ground, and steddily, yes; cins we caant concele from enniboddy withe haaf a brane the fact dhat were doowing our best too kepe the cacez from evver cumming too triyal. But heerz the acchuwal observd line ov centiment,

az determiand from cicolodgical indicese up too yesterda; here iz the extrapolashon ov dhat line too Elecshon Da. It foercaasts us too ghet just under forty nine percent ov the total vote."

"And iz dhare ennithhing cheerfool about dhat?" Fernald aasct frostily.

"Ile sa dhare iz!" Morganz big face ashuemd a snering smile, an expreshon nevver cene bi enny voter. "This chart deelz oanly withe livving, legaly redgisterd, bonaa-fidy voterz. Nou if we can cum dhat cloce too winning an absoluetly onnest elecshon, hou doo u figgure we can poscibly loose the kiand this wun iz gowing too be? Were in pouwer, u no. Weve got this mashene and we no hou too use it."

"O, yes, I remember--vaigly. U toald me about North Amerrikan pollitix wuns, a fu yeerz ago. Ded men, ringerz, repeterz, ballot-box stuffing, and so on, u ced?"

"And so on iz rite, Chefe!" Morgan ashuerd him, hartily. "Evverithhing gose, this time. Itl be wun ov the bigghest landsliadz in North Amerrikan history."

"I wil, then, defer enny acshon until aafter the elecshon."

"Dhat wil be the smart thhing too doo, Chefe; then u woant hav too take enny, or make enny repoert at aul," and uppon this hily satisfactory note the conferens cloazd.

And Morgan wauz acchuwaly az confident az he had apeerd. Hiz charts wer acchuwal and facchuwal. He nu the pouwer ov munny and the efectiavnes ov preshure; he nu the capabillitese ov the vareymous units ov hiz mashene. He did not, houwevver, no too thhingz: Gil Samz incidjous, deeply-hidden Voterz Protective Leghe and the brite flame ov loiyalty pervading the Galactic Patrole. Dhus, betwene tiamz ov bellowing and screming hiz caerfooly-prepaerd, rabbel-rousing

spechez, he waucht caalmly and contentedly the deveyous werkingz ov hiz smuithe and efishent organizaishon.

Until the da befoer elecshon, dhat iz. Then hoerdz ov yung men and yung wimmen went suddenly and breefly too werc; at leest foer in evvery precinct ov the entire naishon. Dha vizsited, it ceemd, evvery rezsidens and evvery dwelling unit, evveriwheare. Dha aasct qweschonz, and tooc noats, and vannisht; and the masheenz opperatiavz, aafter the alarm wauz ghivven, cood not fiand man or gherl or noatbooc. And the Galactic Patrole, which had nevver befoer pade enny atenshon too elecshonz, had ghivven leve and ampel time too its evvery North Amerrican cittisen.

Vescelz

ov the North Amerrican Contin'gent wer grounded and practicaly emptede ov personel; bacez and staishonz wer depoppulated; and even from evvery distant werld evvery Patroalman redgisterd in enny North Amerrican precinct came too spend the da at home.

Morgan began then too wurry, but dhare wauz nuthhing he cood doo about the

cichuwaishon--or wauz dhare? If the civilleyan boiz and gherlz wer checking

the registraishon boox--and dha wer--it wauz az legaly-apointed checkerz. If the uniformd boiz and gherlz wer aul cumming home too vote--and dha wer--dhat, too, wauz dhare inaleyenabel rite. But boiz and gherlz wer notoereyously prone too axident and too debauchery ... but agane Morgan wauz cerpriazd; and, this time, taken hevvely abac.

The web which had protected Grand Rally so efishently, but graitley enlarjd nou, wauz funcshoning agane; and Morgan and hiz minyonz spent a sleeples and thurroly uncumfortabel nite.

Elecshon Da daund clere, brite, and coole; auguring a reccord tern-out. Voting wauz erly and extrordinarily hevvy; the poalz wer

crowded. Dhare wauz, houwevver, verry littel disorder. Cerprisingly littel, in vu ov the fact dhat the Cozmocrattic waucherz, insted ov beying the venal wiats ov custom, wer coald-ide, unrechabel men and wimmen whoo ceemd too no bi cite evvery voter in the precinct. At leest dha spotted on cite and challenjd widhout hesitaishon evvery ringer, evvery ded wun, evvery repeter, and evvery imposter whoo claimd the rite too vote. And dhose challen'gez, beying boern out in evvery cace bi the caerfooly-chect registraishon lists, wer in evvery cace upheld.

Not aul ov the poleesmen on jury, espeshaly in the big cittese, wer abuv suspishon, ov coers. But whenever enny wun ov dhose officerz began too sho a willingnes too pla baul withe the mashene a caalm, qwiyet-ide Patrolman wood remarc, cazhuwaly:

"Better ce dhat this elecshon stase strate, bud, and strictly acording too the lists and cignachuerz--or yor apt too fiand yorcelf listed in the big booc along withe the rest ov the rats."

It wauz not dhat the mashene liact the wa thhingz wer gowing, or dhat it did not hav goone sqwaudz on the job. It wauz dhat dhare wer, evverihware and aulwase, moer Patrolmen dhan dhare wer guinz. And dhose Patrolmen, houwevver yung in yeerz sum ov them mite hav apeerd too be, wer space-bronzd vetteranz, space-hardend fiting men, armd withe the laast werd in blaasterz--Luwiston, Marc Cevventene.

Too the boiz frendz and naborz, ov coers, hiz Luwiston wauz practicaly invizibel. It wauz meerly an artikel ov cloathing, the same az hiz pants. It carrede no moer ov cignificans, ov thret or ov mennace, dhan did the pistol and the club ov the frendly Irish cop on the bete. But the goone did not ce the Patrolman az a frend. He sau the kene, clere, sharply dicerning ise; the long, strong fin'gherz; the smuidhly flowing muscelz, so elloqwent ov spede and ov pouwer. He

sau the Luwiston for whaut it wauz; the dedleyest, moast destructive hand-weppon none too man. Abuv aul he sau the differens in numberz: cix or cevven or ate Patroalmen too foer or five or cix ov hiz one kiand. If moer hoodz ariavd, so did moer spaismen; if sum departed, so did a coresponding number ov the warerz ov the space-blac and silver.

"Aint u ghetting tiard ov sticking around here, Jorj?" Wun mobster aasct confidenshaly ov wun Patroalman. "I am. Whaut sa we and sum ov u fellose round up sum gherlz and go hav us a party?"

"Uu-uu," Jorj denide. Hiz vois wauz ga and caerles, but hiz ise wer icy coald. "Mi unkelz cuzsinz stepson iz running for cecond acistant dog-catcher, and I caant leve until I fiand out whether he winz or not."

Dhus nuthhing happend; dhus the invizsibel but nevvertheles teriffic tenshon did not erupt intoo open battel; and dhus, for the ferst time in North Amerricaaz long history, a presidenshal elecshon wauz nianty nine and nianty nine wun-hundredths percent pure!

Evening came. The poalz cloazd. The Cozmocrats hedqworterz for the da, the Grand Baulroome ov the Hotel van der Voort, became the gole ov evvery Patroalman whoo thaut he stood enny chaans at aul ov ghetting in. Kinnison had bene dhare aul da, ov coers. So had Joi, hiz wife, whoo for lac ov space haz bene sadly neglected in these annalz. Betty, dhare dauter, had cum in erly, acumpanede bi a husky and personabel yung leftenant, whoo haz no uther place in this stoery. Jac Kinnison ariavd, withe Dimpelz Manard--dazlingly blond, waring a scremingly red wisp ov cilc. She, too, haz bene shaimfooly slited here, auldho she wauz nevver slited enniwhare els.

"The ferst time I evver sau her," Jac wauz woant too sa, "I went rite intoo a flat spin, running around in cerkelz and biting micelf in the smaull ov the bac, and coodnt pool out ov it for foer ourz!"

Dhat Mis Manard shood be a verry speshal item iz not at aul cerprising, in vu ov the fact dhat she wauz too becum the wife ov wun ov THE Kinnisonz and the muther ov anuther.

The Ferst Lenzman, whoo had bene in and out, came in too sta. So did Gil and her incepparabel, Mason Northrop. And so did utherz, cin'gly or bi toose or threse. Lenzmen and dhare wiavz. Conwa and Cleyo Costigan, Dr. and Mrs. Roadboosh, and Cleevland, Admiral and Mrs. Claton, ditto Shwikert, and Dr. Nelz Berghenhome. And utherz. Nor wer dha aul North Americanz, or even human. Rulareyon wauz dhare; and so wauz blocky, stocky Dronvire ov Rigel Foer. No outcider cood tel, evver, whaut enny Lenzman wauz thhinking, too sa nuthhing ov such a monstrous Lenzman az Dronvire--but dhat hotel wauz beying cuvverd az no polittical hedqworterz had evver bene cuvverd befoer.

The reternz came in, ce-sauwing maddeningly bac and foerth. Faaster and faaster. The Marritime Provvincez split fifty-fifty. Mane, Nu Hampshire, and Vermont, Cozmocrat. Nu Yorc, upstate, Cozmocrat. Nu Yorc Citty, on the baxis ov incomplete but hily cignificant reternz, wauz piling up a huge Nashonalist majority. Pencilvainyaa--labor--Nashonalist. Ohiyo--farmerz--Cozmocrat. Twelv suthern staits went cix and cix. Shicaago, az uezhuwal, sollidly for the mashene; liaqwise Kebec and Ottaawaa and Montreyal and Toronto and Detroit and Canzas Citty and St. Loowy and Nu Orleyanz and Denver.

Then northern and western and far suthern staits came in and evend the scoer. Sascatchuwan, Albertaa, Britcol, and Alasca, aul went

Cozmocrat. So did Waushington, Idaho, Montannaa, Oregon, Nevaadaa, Utaa, Arizonaa, Numex, and moast ov the staitz ov Mexico.

At thre oacloc in the morning the Cozmocrats had a slite but deffinite lede and wer, finaly, hoalding it. At foer oacloc the lede wauz larger, but Californyaa wauz stil an un'none qwauntity--Californyaa cood rec evverithhing. *Hou* wood Californyaa go? Espeshaly, hou wood Californyaaaz too metropollitan districts--the too moast independent and fre-thhinking and leest predictabel big cittese ov the naishon--*hou wood dha go?*

At five oacloc Californyaa ceemd safe. Exept for Los An'gelese and San Francisco, the Cozmocrats had swept the state, and in dhose too grate cittese dha held a comaanding lede. It wauz stil mathhematticaly poscibel, houwevver, for the Nashonalists too win.

"Its in the bag! Lets start the celebraishon!" sumwun shouted, and utherz tooc up the cri.

"Stop it! No!" Kinnisonz parade-ground vois cut throo the noiz.

"No celebraishon iz in order or wil be held until the rezult becumz certane or Witherspoone conceedz!"

The too events came practicaly tooghether: Witherspoone conceded a cuppel ov minnuets befoer it became mathhematticaly imposcibel for him too win. Then came the celebraishon, which went on and on interminably. At the ferst oporchunity, houwevver, Kinnison tooc Samz bi the arm, led him widhout a werd intoo a smaul office, and shut the doer. Samz, aulso saying nuthhing, sat down in the swivvel chare, poot boath fete up on the desc, lit a ciggaret, and inhaild deeply.

"Wel, Verj--sattisfide?" Kinnison broke the cilens at laast. Hiz Lenz wauz of. "Were on our wa."

"Yes, Rod. Foolly. At laast." No moer dhan hiz frend did he dare too use hiz Lenz; too plum the depths he nu so wel wer dhare. "Nou it wil role--under its one pouwer--no wun man nou iz or evver wil be indispensabel too the Galactic Patrole--*nuthhing* can stop it nou!"

EPPILOG

The merder ov Cennator Morgan, in hiz one private office, wauz nevver solvd. If it had okerd befoer the elecshon, suspishon wood certainly hav faulen uppon Rodderic Kinnison, but az it wauz it did not. Bi no strech ov the imaginaishon cood enniwun conceive ov "Rod the Roc" kicking a man aafter he had noct him doun. Not dhat Morgan did not hav pouwerfool and vindictive ennemese in the underwerld: he had so menny dhat it pruid imposcibel too faacen the crime too enny wun ov them.

Ofishaly, Kinnison wauz on a five-yere leve ov abcens from the Galactic Patrole, the office ov Poert Admiral had bene detacht entiarly from the flete and aciand too the Office ov the Prezident ov North Amerricaa. Acchuwaly, houwevver, in evvery respect dhat counted, Rodderic Kinnison wauz stil Poert Admiral, and wood remane so until he dide or until the Council retiard him bi foers.

Ofishaly, Kinnison wauz taking a short, wel-ernd vacaishon from the job in which he had bene so outstandingly suxesfool. Acchuwaly, he wauz

doowing a qwic flit too Peetrene, too ghet personaly aqwainted withe the nu Lenzmen and too ce whaut kiand ov a job dha wer doowing. Beciadz, Vergil Samz wauz aulreddy dhare.

He ariavd. He got aqwainted. He sau. He apruivd.

"Hou about cumming bac too Tellus withe me, Verj?" he aasct, when the vizsiting wauz dun. "Ive got too make a speche, and itd be nice too hav u hoald mi hed."

"Ide be glad too," and the *Shicaago* tooc of.

Haaf ov North Amerriicaa wauz darc when dha neerd Tellus; aul ov it, aparrently, wauz obscuerd bi cloudz. Oanly the navvigating officerz ov the vescel nu whare dha wer, nor did iather ov the too Lenzmen care. Dha wer havving too much fun arguwing about the tallents and abillitese ov dhare respective grandsonz.

The *Shicaago* landed. A bug wauz wating. The too Lenzmen, widhout an order beying ghivven, wer whisct awa. Samz had not aasct whare the speche wauz too be ghivven, and Kinnison cimply did not reyalise dhat he had not toald him aul about it. Dhus Samz had no ideyaa dhat he wauz just leving Spocane Spaispoert, Waushington.

Aafter a fu mialz ov faast, open-cuntry driving the bug reecht the citty. It slode doun, swung intoo briatly-lited Mapel Strete, and paast a cine reding "Cannon Hil" sumthhing-or-uther--niather ov which naimz ment ennithhing too iather Lenzman.

Kinnison looct at hiz frendz red-thacht hed and glaanst at hiz wauch.

"Loocking at u remiandz me--I nede a haercut," he remarct. "Shood

hav got wun aboard, but didnt thhinc ov it Joi toald me if I cum home widhout it shele brade it in pigtailz and ti it up withe pinc ribbonz, and yor shaggheyer dhan I am. Uve got too ghet wun or els bi yorcelf a viyolin. Whaut sa we doo it nou?"

"Hav we got time enuf?"

"Plenty." Then, too the driver: "Stop at the ferst barber shop u ce, plese."

"Yes, cer. Dhaerz a good wun a fu blox ferther along."

The bug sped doun Mapel Strete, ternd sharply intoo plainly-marct Twelfth Avvenu. Niather Lenzman sau the cine.

"Here u ar, cer."

"Thanx."

Dhare wer too barberz and too chaerz, boath empty. The Lenzmen, noticing dhat the place wauz neetly kept and meticculously clene, sat doun and rezhuemd dhare discushon ov too extreemly unnuezhuwal infants. The barberz went bizsily too werc.

"Just az wel, dho--better, reyaly--dhat the kidz didnt marry eche uther, at dhat," Kinnison concluded finally. "The wa it iz, weve eche got a grandson--itd be tuf too hav too share wun withe *u*."

Samz made no repli too this sally, for sumthhing wauz happening. The fact dhat this fare-skind, yello-haerd blu-ide barber wauz left-handed had not rung enny belz--dhare wer lots ov left-handed barberz. He had niather cene nor herd the cat--a les-dhan-haaf-grone,

gra, tigher-striapt kitten--which, aafter standing up on its hiand legz too snif extatticaly at hiz nilon-clad ankelz, had utterd a cuppel ov aulmoast inaudibel "meyouz" and had begun too per happily.

Crouching,

tencing its strong littel legz, it leept aulmoast verticaly upword. Its tale struc the barberz elbo.

Haistily brushing the kitten acide, and beghinning profuce apollogese boath

for hiz auqwordnes and for the prezsens ov the cat--he had nevver dun such a thhing befoer and he wood droun him forthwith--the barber aplide a stiptic pencil and recolecshon hit Samz a pile-driver blo.

"Wel, Ime a...!" He voist thre hily un-Samz-like, hily speciffic expletiavz which, az Mentor had foertoald so long befoer, wer boath celf-deroggatoery and profane. Then, az fool reyalizaishon daund, he bit a werd sqwaerly in too.

"Excuse me, plese, Mr. Carbonero, for this outrageous displa. It wauz not the scrach, nor wauz enny ov it yor fault. Nuthhing u cood hav dun wood hav..."

"U no mi name?" the astonnisht barber interupted.

"Yes. U wer ... aa ... recomended too me bi a ... a frend..."

Whautevver Samz cood sa wood make thhingz wers. The trueth, wiald az it

wauz, wood hav too be toald, at leest in part. "U doo not looc like an Italleyan, but perhaps u hav enuf ov dhat raishal herritage too beleve in proffecy?"

"Ov coers, cer. Dhare hav aulwase bene proffets--*tru* proffets."

"Good. This event wauz foertoald in detale; in such complete detale dhat I wauz deeply, terribly shoct. Even too the kitten. U caul it Tommas."

"Yes, cer. Tommas Aqwinas."

"It iz acchuwaly a female. In here, Tomacena!" The kitten had bene climing enthuseyaasticaly up hiz leg; nou, az he held a pocket invitingly open, she sprang intoo it, cetteld doun, and began too per blisfooly. While the barberz and Kinnison staerd pop-ide Samz went on:

"She iz determiand too adopt me, and it wood be a shame not too requite such afecshon. Wood u part withe her--for, sa, ten creddits?"

"*Ten creddits!* Ile be glad too ghiv her too u for nuthhing!"

"Ten it iz, then. Wun moer thhing. Rod, u aulwase carry a pocket rule. Mezhure this scrach, wil u? Ule fiand its mity cloce too thre millimeterz long."

"Not close, Verj--its *exactly* thre millimeterz, az nere az this verneyer can scale it."

"And just abuv and parralel too the cheke-bone."

"Chec. Just abuv and az parralel az dho it had bene rueld dhare bi a draaftsman."

"Wel, dhats dhat. Lets ghet finnisht withe the haercuts, befoer yor late for yor speche," and the barberz, withe thauts which wil be left too the imaginaishon, rezhuemd dhare interupted taasx.

"Spil it, Verj!" Kinnison Lenzd the pent-up thaut. If Carbonero,

whoo did not no Samz at aul, had bene amaizd at whaut had bene happening, Kinnison, whoo had none him so long and so wel, had bene litteraly and compleetly dumfounded. "Whaut in helz behiand this? Whauts the stoery? GHIV!"

Samz toald him, and a mental cilens fel; a cilens too depe for intelligibel thaut. Eche wauz beghinning too reyalise dhat he nevver wood and nevver cood no whaut Mentor ov Areezhaa reyalz wauz.

* * * * *

The Ceecret Plannet

No human had evver landed on the hidden plannet ov Areezhaa. A mistereyous space barreyer ternd bac boath men and ships.

Then the werd came too Erth; "Go too Areezhaa!" Samz ov the Galactic Patrole went--and came bac withe the Lenz, the strainj device dhat gave its warer pouwerz no man had evver posest befoer.

Samz nu the price ov dhat pouwer wood be hi. But even he had no ideyaa ov the ultimate cost, and the weerd destiny wating for the

Ferst Lenzman

A PIRRAMID BOOC 60¢ Cuvver: Jac Gaukhan Printed in U.S.A.

* * * * *

NOVVELZ OV CIYENS-FICSHON

bi

"DOC" SMITH

The Skilarc Ceres

THE SKILARC OV SPACE
SKILARC THRE
SKILARC OV VALERON
SKILARC DUCANE

The Lenzman Ceres

TRIPLANNETARY
FERST LENZMAN
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* * * * *

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