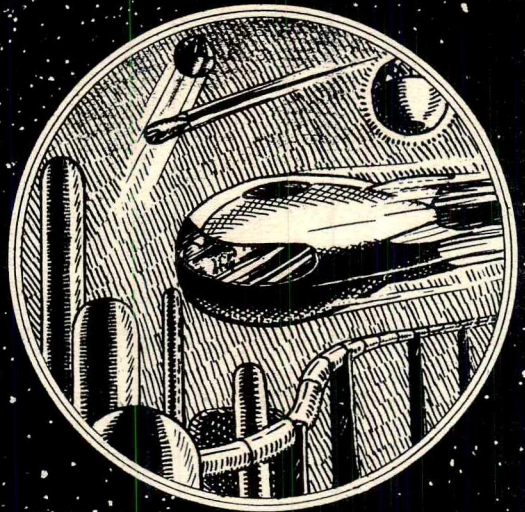


-LETHE-



LETHE

Number 9

and that is all

September 1948

contents

FICTION

Lovecraftiana by Jay Edwards p 2
Fantasy--The British Pro. by Jack Riggs p 19
The Worm Turns--Book Revoo--by J. Schaumberger p9

Desolation by Eldred Smith p 7
The Flight by Jack Riggs p 11

POEM

— The Neurotic by Rifka p 6

art — by Joseph Krucher, Bill Kroll and Jack Riggs

EDITORIAL

This is the last issue of Lethe. It takes an incredible amount of time to gather material, dummy it, stencil it, run it off, staple, stamp and address a fanzine. More leisure time than I can afford to spend. It was fun while it lasted though. "It" has lasted for quite some time too. I've had a hand in pubbing a fanzine off and on since 1941; about time I dropped from exhaustion.

Some of you have subscriptions to Lethe. I will not refund the money due you unless you ask for it. I will consider it a donation to the Cause and right now I thank all you who don't ask for your lousy little nickels.

Now is a good time to mention that there are no back issues of Lethe available. There never have been many anyway for I followed a practice of mailing all but three or four every issue.

I had great plans for this issue. It was to be profusely illustrated. Two color heading for every heading. I was going to try to obtain pages and pages of fiction and articles. Lethe was to go out in a blaze of glory. But I'm tired of it all. I did the best I could with a minimum of strain.

So adios to all of you jokers that I like (and this issue is strictly limited and goes only to my friends and favorite readers) and hope you won't go into a fugue state upon seeing Lethe's death notice.

pubbed edited and all that
by Jack Riggs, 1620 Chest-
nut St. Berkeley-2-Calif..
last of the Outhouse Press
publications(we're outside)

LOVECRAFTIANA

by Jay Edwards

This is the third and perhaps final article on Howard Phillips Lovecraft. The first article dealt with a Lovecraft "history" with dates, place names, and events from before the advent of Earth to its last denizens. The second article gave quotes from the Necronomicon and other documents of Lovecraft's fertile imagination.

Before August Derleth gained recognition for HPLovecraft through the Arkham House books "The Outsider and Others", "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" and "Marginalia", I had vaguely wondered at the sources of his Mythos. Realizing that most of it was the product of his own imaginings and dreams, somehow the feeling persisted that I had heard of some of the names of those horrendous gods before. In this I was partly mistaken.

In Harold W. Cheney's amateur magazine Atres Artes #3(and the final issue) there was an article by a George Wetzel headed "Some Derivations of the Cthulhu Mythos." In this article Wetzel traced Azathoth of Lovecraft through the Hebrew singular Asharah (Moon Goddess) the plural Asharothe, through the similarity of Ash and Az, and the dropping of the "r" and the addition of "th" in its stead to possibly make the word more allied to the Egyptian and so more "mysterious."

The Philistines had Dagon, a half-man half-fish type of God. The Innsmouth people of Lovecraft who were followers of Dagon had the "Innsmouth look"; a look of something repulsive from the depths of the sea. The similarity of conception of function was noted.

The origin of the Lovecraft Book of Dzyan, according to Wetzel, is from the adjective dzan, meaning: "that which is to be understood only by the initiated; esoteric; doctrine that is taught secretly."

The Lovecraft Hastur and the Derleth addition to the Mythos, Ithqua are also discussed. But the article was disappointingly short leaving one with the feeling that if he had done a little more library research he would have found much more along that line.

Others have noted that ring of familiarity. Somewhere (I think in the fan press somewhere) I recall coming across an item with reference to H.P. Lovecraft's Mi-Go or Abominable Snowmen. The author claimed that in the folklore of northern India or Tibet there is an almost identical description of evil beings who dwell amidst the ice and snow of the forbidding high country.

Lovecraft the man is just as interesting as his tales. Many of you have copies of "Marginalia", but one of the most interesting short pieces about him came from Esquire. Esquire of January 1946 to be exact. The article was entitled "The Ten-cent Ivory Tower." It was written by John Wilstach who met him several times in New York.

Wilstach began the article by describing how highbrow critics praise his work. Enthusiasts have formed a literary cult. He told how Lovecraft's work would probably have been lost were it not for the efforts of Derleth and Wandrei of Arkham House.

Told of meeting Lovecraft through Hart Crane, poet; and discovering that Lovecraft had just approached Harpers, Century, and Scribners; instead of the Munsey or Street and Smith chains; with a manuscript. Any beginner would have known that he had a better chance there. He meant manuscript too in the real sense of the word. It was in handwriting, rolled up and tied with a string.

Wilstach admits he could see no commercial possibilities for the man. After reading several manuscripts he came to the conclusion that Lovecraft wasn't writing stories merely to sell. He could see no hope for him. He says he was glad he was wrong. For; he says; "Most of the work of the shrewd professionals dates, now, but whatever may be the future of Lovecraft his stories cannot date, for they are placed in an ageless period, with motives of fear and terror and horror."

In the few pages of the article he paints a very good word picture of Lovecraft as he knew him. His living on fifty cents a day aside from his room while in New York. Later his income of ten dollars a week on which he managed to subsist neatly. His interest in Amateur Journalism. His first published story "The Alchemist" appearing in Vagrant in 1917. His death of cancer of the intestine in 1937. The shyness of the man in interviews. The openness of him in his voluminous correspondence. The frightful dreams, so terrible that when a friend suggested he stimulate dreams by a drug, he exclaimed he would go mad if they were any worse. His never having held a job of any kind. His utter lack of interest in sports. His belief that prolonged exposure to cold would be fatal to him. His unconscious fight against an overly protective mother. His revulsion at even the sight of sea food.

Wilstach mentions comments of others comparing him to Poe, James Machen, Blackwood and a touch of Dunsany. Lovecraft said the authors that influenced him most were Dunsany, Poe, Arthur Machen and Alger-

LIKE THE HOODED COBRA, YALUSIA'S
SERPENT MAN IS PREPARED TO STRIKE
AT LIGHTNING SPEED



non Blackwood. Even so Wiästach is of the opinion that weird fiction owes more to Lovecraft than Lovecraft owed to all the preceeding writers in that field. "Better, consider him as standing alone," he says and winds up the article by saying that Lovecraft has a very real chance for enduring fame.

Aside from the three Arkham House books and the book "Weird Shadow over Innsmouth", there have been several items of his elsewhere. I have no way of knowing where some of his stories appeared aside from Weird Tales, Astounding and Amazing. I do have a small printed Marvel Tales March-April 1935 containing "The Doom That Came to Sarnath." A Shepard-Wollheim printed publication called Fanciful Tales, and dated Fall 1936 with "The Nameless City." There is probably no telling of the other unknowns. In 1944 Bart House came out with a pocketbook entitled "The Weird Shadow over Innsmouth." 1945 saw another from Bart House; "The Dunwich Horror." Sometime during the war Armed Services Edition came out with their odd size pocketbook "The Dunwich Horror and other Weird Tales." Recently I picked up the Avon pocketbook #136; "The Lurking Fear and Other Stories." Also there was the 49¢ World edition; "Best Supernatural Stories of H F Lovecraft."

Following are the tables of contents to the above mentioned four pocketbooks and one book. Some tales are duplicated and the ones that are are followed by the initials of the duplicating edition(s).

Armed Forces Edition lists these;

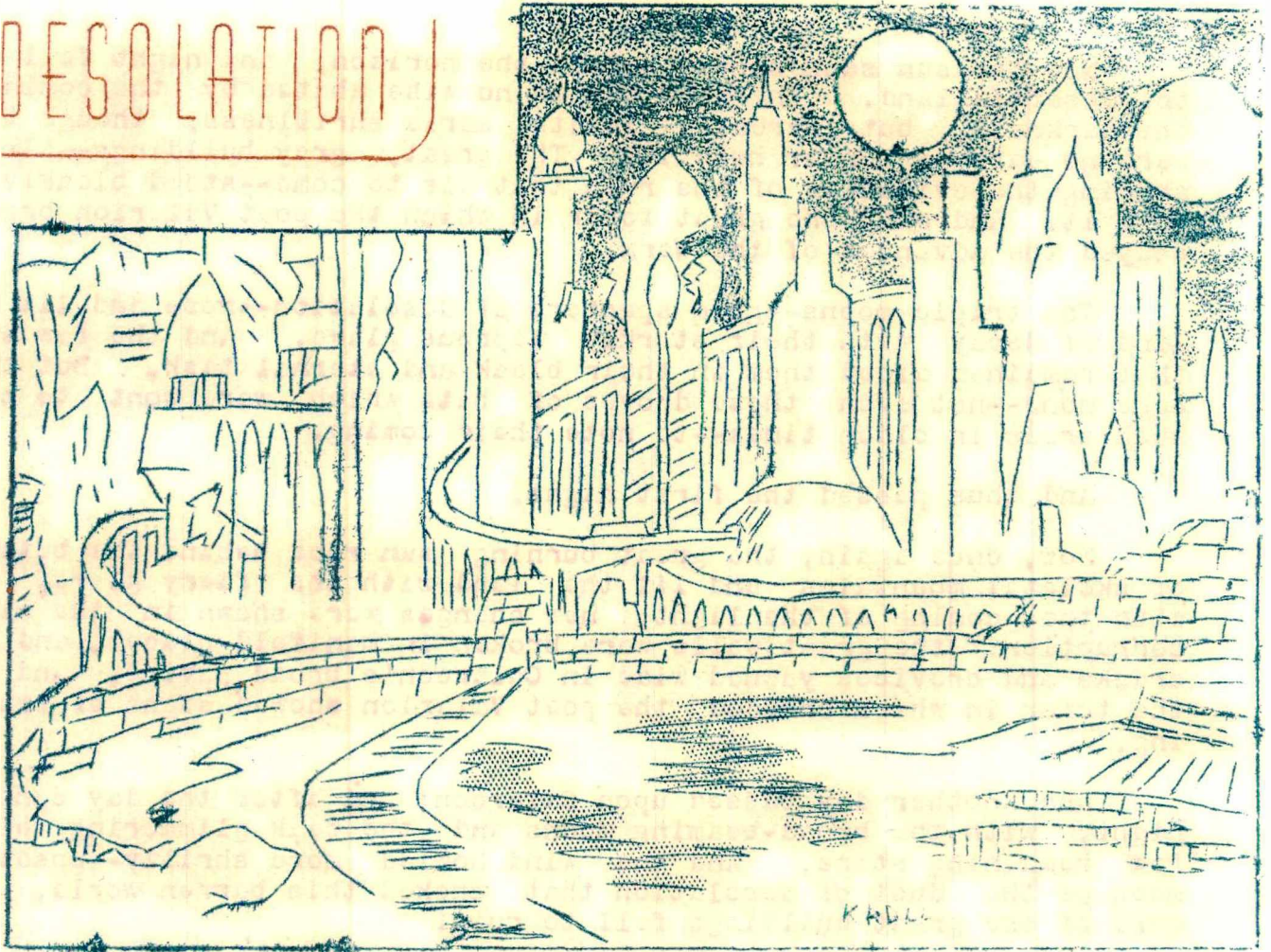
| | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Dunwich Horror | --DunHor-- | and BSSofHPL |
| In The Vault | BSSofHPL | |
| The Rats in the Walls | BSSofHPL | |
| Pickman's Model | Avon | and BSSofHPL |
| The Music of Erich Zann | BSSofHPL | |
| The Colour Out of Space | Avon | and BSSofHPL |
| The Outsider | WeirdShad | and BSSofHPL |
| The Call of Cthulhu | Avon | and BSSofHPL |
| The Whisperer in Darkness | WeirdShad | and BSSofHPL |
| The Shadow over Innsmouth | WeirdShad | and BSSofHPL |
| The Moon-Bog | Avon | |
| The Hound | Avon | |
| <u>Weird Shadow</u> (Bart House) | | |
| The Festival | | |
| <u>Dunwich Horror</u> (Bart House) | | |
| The Shadow Out of Time | | |
| The Thing on the Doorstep | -BSSofHPL | |
| <u>avon--Lurking Fear...</u> | | |
| The Lurking Fear | | |
| The Nameless City | | |
| Arthur Jermyn | | |
| The Unnamable | | |
| Cool Air | -BSSofHPL | |
| <u>Best Supernatural St of HPL</u> | | |
| The Hunter of the Dark | | |
| The Picture in the House | | |
| The Terrible Old Man | | |

THE NEUROTIC

To be alone, and cold, and much afraid;
To fear the morning, knowing it will bring
Nothing of all the things I greatly need;
To hate the night as, seeing evening fade
I know no sleep will come. To try to cling
To shadows of some long-past word or deed;
To try to pray and find no shred of God
Left in my heart; to watch the days a-creep
As though each were an old rheumatic crone;
To feel my brain laboriously plod
Too tired to think; to feel too sick to weep,
Too chilled, too weak, too weary even to moan.
To have no power with which to break and flee
To see no plant but desolation grow;
To have the world draw off, aloof and strange;
To walk an earth one cannot even see ---
I watch the grey clouds gathering their snow
And know
That loneliness can easily derange
A mind
And find
That speech with devils were a welcome change.

by rifka

DESOLATION



by Eldred Smith

In his great tower, overlooking the seaport city of Calaroon, Valarion, poet of Samovar sat silently before his great, graven desk of ancient hardwood. No one disturbed the silence of his meditation—for there was no one about. The city was deserted. Three nights previously, a pall of death and destruction had fallen upon the hapless city; and when it had lifted, there was only a ruin where a thriving metropolis had stood; and now, in the midst of this monstrous ruin, and surrounded by a silence in all wise impenetrable, the poet, whose verses had once thrilled all the thousands of the ivory, pondered.

Dust covered the city; and dust covered the tower of Valarion. Likewise, did dust cover the room in which the poet meditated, and hide his long thin hands in its coverlet where they lay upon the carved table. But neither the dust nor the hollow shrillness of the moaning wind disturbed the poet.

Now the sun sank slowly behind the horizon, and night fell upon the deserted land. The wind was in no wise abated by the coming of the darkness, but increased in its eerie shrillness, though there were no ears to longer heed it. The great, gray buildings--already showing the evidences of the ruin that was to come--stood bleakly before it. And only the great tower in which the poet Valarion brooded stayed the advances of the Worm.

The triple moons--grim specters of desolation--rose and lit this land of decay with their starkly leprous glare. And the few stars that remained aided them in their bleak and eternal task. But there were none--not even those droves of bats which were wont to haunt such areas in olden times--to note their coming.

And thus passed the first night.

Now, once again, the great burning sun rose behind the buttress of skeletal mountains and lit the land with its fiery glare. And with the coming of the light, new changes were shown in the city's corruption: the great walls were broken in manifold places, and huge cracks and crevices yawned wide in Calaroon's broad paving. And even the tower in which brooded the poet Valarion showed signs of crumbling.

And another day passed upon Calaroon; and after the day came the night, with the broad-beaming moons and the weak glimmering of the few remaining stars. And the wind howled more shrilly--upsetting much of the dust of desolation that choked this barren world. And more of the great buildings fell to ruin.

But this night, also, passed and again came day. And for the first time since the coming of the destruction, Valarion stirred. From amongst the clutter of the dust and debris that surrounded him, the poet salvaged pen and paper, and commenced to write; and all through the night he wrote; and all through the day that followed. And, also, continued the decay. And by the following morn, but few of the magnificent towers, that had before been so prolific in the ivory city, stood. And ever wrote the poet.

Then, he ceased. His last poem was completed; and with its completion, the poet died; and his tower, that was the last of Calaroon's marvelous buildings, fell into the corruption of its neighbors. And the last sign of life upon that desolate world was effaced. Only the manuscript of Valarion's last work longer remained.

And the title of that manuscript was: DESOLATION.

THE WORM TURNS

BY Joe Schaumburger

"The Sign of the Orange Gostak" by David H. Merwin Jr. (Slime Press, \$122.50 plus tax, 2 vols., 1800pp.)

"The Sign of the Orange Gostak" is one of the most interesting books that has come off the presses in the last few years. While not actually fantasy, and hardly stf, and perhaps not true "literature" in the exact sense of the word, it still has a certain "something" that will have an attraction for the truly mature reader.

Unfortunately, or otherwise (depending how you look at it), in any discussion of the book, I feel it only fair to mention that certain parts of "The Sign of the Orange Gostak" have what might be called a tendency to emphasize some of the coarser aspects of sex (vulgar word!). This makes a really impartial discussion of the book's merits impossible, as the whole thing depends on the reader's individual judgement. To quote from Chapter 75:

"John leered slowly at Matilda as she shrank from him in loathing.

'My God is Woman,' he muttered hoarsely, 'and my altar their bodies. And I want to worship. Now!'

'You beast,' she screamed, 'remember, I am your sister!'

John smiled evilly, and moved closer. His hands....."

Basically, the story is a conflict between Good and Evil. Good is more or less represented by Matilda De Bauchery, a pretty, sophisticated young shoplifter. Her brother, John, is Evil Incarnate, lurking behind the mask of an army recruiting sergeant.

As the story opens, Matilda has just been indicted for manslaughter. For various reasons (admirably explained in Chapters 4, 5, and 6), she has shot and killed her aged grandmother. Things look very black for Matilda, for she finds herself short of money with which to bribe the jury. At this point, John enters the story. By a bit of clever perjury, he manages to convince the judge that Matilda is somebody else. This leads to complications later.

However, John is not the carefree, cheerful fellow that he seems. He secretly broods (see Chapters 45-56) over the fact that he has a tail. This, he imagines, makes him repulsive to women. To test this, he lures his sister to his room, and forces her to live with him. Three years later, she manages to escape, and starts life anew. But traces of his evil influence still remain.

It is at this point in her life that Matilda makes a surprising discovery. After she has recovered from the birth of her son, the doctor tells her, to her horror, that she has six fingers on her left hand! She is a mutant! Matilda never recovers from the shock of this discovery, and dies soon after.

Her son, Raymond, grows up amid squalor and poverty. But he is a bold, cheerful fellow just the same. Though he is forced to live for seventeen years on 13¹/₂¢ a day, his character rises above such things, and he is the pleasantest fourflusher that ever sold the Brooklyn Bridge to visiting farmers.

As might be expected, Raymond leaves home. He travels over much of the world, always seeking something, but never knowing just what. Finally, he decides to return to the United States.

At this point, the continuity of the book is marred somewhat by a long, and rather pointless biography of John Paul Jones.

Three hundred pages later, the narrative resumes. The author finds to his horror that he has three pages to finish the story in. He wastes one of them on an epic poem bemoaning this, but is obliged to cease as he is unable to find a rhyme for "orange".

When Raymond returns home from his wanderings, his father is standing on the pier with open arms to welcome him home. But Raymond has been approached by strange men before, and he knows how to handle them. He refuses to recognize his father, and that worthy gentleman departs in a huff (size 9).

His father plots revenge, and disguising himself as a dope peddler, lures Raymond to an abandoned canning factory, where he gives him the once over with a meat cleaver. This is graphically described.

The story has a surprise ending, so I won't spoil your fun by telling you how it ends. A hint: Remember Raymond's mother's extra finger? Well.....

The book is well up to the author's previous efforts, and surpasses many of them. (Cf. "The Stink in the Cellar", "Wife Everlasting", etc.).

I highly recommend this book as a Christmas or birthday gift to wee tots from four to seven.

THE FLIGHT

by Jack Riggs

Sted Buarnt uneasily watched the small Space Patrol Ship maneuver gently to the surface of his planetoid. Not stirring from the doorway of his home he waited until the airlock opened and two figures emerged and began to walk toward him. When the two officers were close enough to speak to without shouting Sted said sardonically "Greetings; Defenders of the Empire."

The shorter man who was of higher rank than his companion to judge by the amount of braid on his tunic nodded agreeably as the taller man said "And a good day to you, Citizen."

"I'm Sted Buarnt, owner of this planetoid; you wanted to see me about something?"

"Yes we do." smiled the short man. "We have a few questions to ask of you, but first let me apologize. We know this is private property, but we were unable to contact you over the radio to obtain your clearance, so we landed anyway. Hope you don't mind?"

"Nope. I guess not. If I'd heard the signal buzzer I'd have granted permission anyway."

"Thank you." said the tall man. "Let me introduce ourselves. I'm Lieutenant McGraw and this is Captain Bassett."

They shook hands around and Sted waited for the SID officers to explain the purpose of their visit.

The Lieutenant relaxed and looked around. "You've certainly

done a nice job of planetscaping on this "rock." Our meters indicated you have an exhilarating point nine gravity here; and the chultha seems to be doing nicely." he complimented.

Sted laughed deprecatingly. "Well Lieutenant, the convenience is only secondary. Point nine is the best gravity for the chultha, and of course, cheaper to operate the Gravitators. Got a bumper crop of chultha coming up too, the whole planetoid is loaded with it. He waved an arm vaguely.

"Ah; chulthat! The best smoke a man ever had!" exclaimed the Captain digging into his jacket pocket. "Have a cigarette?" He passed the pack to the others.

"Thanks." said Sted as he opened the door to the house. "Won't you come in?" he asked. The officers entered silently behind him and followed on to the living room. When they were comfortably seated Sted spoke. "Shall we get down to brass tacks? What did you want to ask me?"

Captain Bassett cleared his throat. "Citizen Buarnt we will be direct as possible with a minimum of "toe treading". It seems that you have been buying large quantities of equipment to construct what appears to be an interstellar ship." The Captain leaned back in the foamite chair and looked at the ceiling. "We are from the Security and Investigation Division; and as our superiors pointed out; the facts are suspicious. We are not, however, accusing you of anything we merely want to be satisfied as to the innocence of the following facts.

"One. You can buy an interstellar spaceship cheaper than you can assemble one yourself. Two. The parts were bought from separate companies, hinting at desired secrecy. Why the mystery? Three. Minor revolts against the Empire have occurred on planetary systems near here. Four. There might be a connection between facts one-two and three; such as weapon smuggling. Bluntly we are here to see if there is."

Sted sat silently; wondering whether to laugh or be angry.

"We are hoping for your co-operation Citizen Buarnt" said Lieutenant McGraw putting anxiety into his voice. "You see we have a search warrant but would rather do it with your assistance; its so much easier on everyone. What do you say?" The two SID men tensely awaited the answer.

"Gentlemen. I am a chultha planter; you are Security men. I have my job and you have yours. I don't, can't, blame you personally for prying into my affairs; that would be stupid, of course I'll co-operate." snapped Sted.

The Captain and the Lieutenant relaxed and grinned broadly. "We wish everyone had that attitude. Thanks for understanding our position," smiled the Lieutenant. "Now for fact one?" enquired the Captain politely.

"It is true that one can buy a ship cheaper than one can assemble the parts even though the labor is free, but this is a special job. My son designed it himself." Sted said proudly. "He is a genius although he is only 18 Terran years old; and my chultha crops have made me rich enough to indulge him.

"Fact two as stated by you is essentially correct, we did desire secrecy. My son, Waylor, is publicity shy. If we bought the works from one company the news services would be certain to hear of it. Do you know our family history?"

"We made it our business to find out before we came. You worked in chultha on Marconte until you had accumulated enough money to start here on your own. While on Marconte, you met and married a Sthithian woman. A most man-like race, but still alien, and through a billion to one chance your wife bore you a child. You are mildly famous in a Ripley sort of way you know," finished Captain Bassett.

"It never happened before, and may never happen again," put in Lieutenant McGraw.

Sted looked out the window. "I suppose most people think I was fortunate in having a child, and in a way I was; but my wife died in childbirth. That is neither here nor there though.

"You see, Waylor has an odd effect on all Terrans. He irritates them in some strange way. They instinctively dislike him. So the less he is around people, the less trouble there will be. If my son was given any publicity interest in him would be re-aroused and the curious would be here in droves. They would trample my chulthas, and peer at my son, and ask thousands of questions. There would likely be a riot when and if their anger was aroused against him."

"Quite understandable" murmured the Lieutenant.

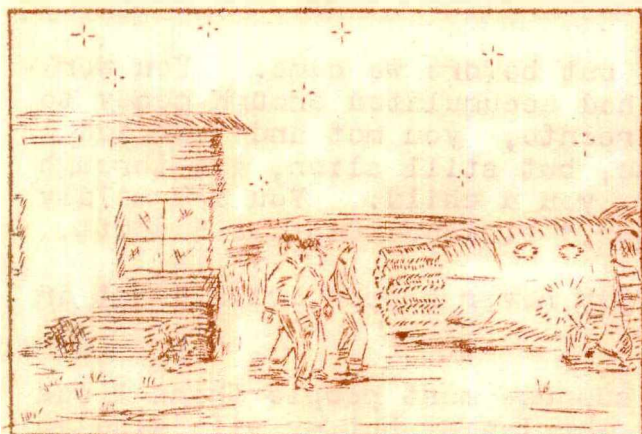
Captain Bassett was not satisfied so easily and pressed Sted for more details. "For what use is the ship intended? I mean what possible use could a mere lad have for an interstellar ship?"

Sted twisted about in his chair and replied evasively. "Perhaps we ought to go out back where my son and the ship are."

The two officers had telescanned the entire planetoid before landing and knew the location of every building and prominence on it. No effort had been made at concealment. A planetoid full of chulthas with neat roads running through it. A house. A barn for harvesting and planting equipment. An old, but apparently spaceworthy freighter that was used to transport the chulthas to the planet Marconte.

The small spaceship in the rear of Sted's house was the one they were interested in and it was obviously nearly, if not already completed. Both officers felt Sted was concealing something. His answers had tallied with their known facts so far but that feeling persisted.

Rounding the corner of the house they took in the scene with quick eyes. There was a helmeted figure welding the last few plates on the hull, while sparks from the arc bounced from the metal and fell to the ground. The ship was even smaller when seen close by than it had when viewed from space; much smaller than any ship that was intended to travel in terms of light years had any right to be. The officers were more puzzled than when they had first landed.



The unanswered and evaded questions were piling up. Perhaps with Sted Buarnt and his son Waylor together it would be easier to obtain the whole answer, thought Captain Bassett. At least the task of inspecting it would be easier than they had hoped. A completed ship was likely to have no secrets that would not be quickly brought to light under their expert eyes. Any weapons would be quickly found, and any mounts for energy weapons would be easy to spot.

The man welding the plates couldn't possibly have heard them approach for they were yet too far to be heard, but the arc broke and the hood snapped back with a quick jerk of his head.

Waylor Buarnt was short, squat and almost wholly humanoid with the exception of certain facial characteristics reminiscent of the Sthithian. The almost round eyes; the short stub of a nose, small, square mouth and practically no chin were indications of that alien breed. He stood quietly, helmet in hand, waiting for the three men to come up to him.

"Waylor" smiled Sted fondly "This is Captain Bassett....and Lt. McGraw from the Empire Security and Investigation Division."

"Yes?" asked Waylor expectantly.

Suddenly the thought of a lonely chultha planter and an 18 year old half-breed aiding revolts almost single-handedly seemed absurd to both Empire men. But Captain Bassett was doggedly determined to go through with the business he set out on. Feelings be damned, he thought, the facts must be answered.

Bassett began, "The Empire's Security and Investigation Division, in the interests of public safety, desires to know more about the spaceship you have under construction here. We would like to know to what use you intend to put this craft to. Certainly not business, for the chultha can be marketed here in this planetary system more profitably."

Waylor smiled. "I'm merely curious. I wish to travel through the Empire and see things with my own eyes. Books are fine but can

never approximate actual, tangible conditions. You might call its purpose educational pleasure. I am a psycho-social student.

"And Captain...I might point out that I've met all legal requirements in the construction of the ship; in the matter of visas, and so forth."

"I'm afraid we cannot be satisfied with such a simple statement. We've reports of rebellion on several planets, one in the Antarean system which isn't far from here. Not to imply that you would; but such a ship as yours would be useful in running weapons to alien enemies of the Empire." The Captain began to feel unaccountably irked at this competent 18 year old man. He hesitated and went on "I have papers here allowing me to inspect your craft thoroughly for any such indications."

Unbuttoning the top flap of his tunic the Captain pulled forth official looking documents complete with seals and fine print. "Here they are." said the Captain handing the papers to Sted Buarnt and ignoring Waylor. "Now may we go aboard?"

"Certainly. Certainly. By all means. Go right ahead. Up the ladder there." grinned Waylor.

"Thank you." nodded the Lieutenant stiffly; for he began to feel an intense dislike for the smug son of Sted Buarnt.

Halfway up the ladder the Captain stopped. "Not coming?" he asked Waylor and Sted.

Waylor spoke. "The ship is small. You are familiar with space craft, and so I don't think I could show you anything you wouldn't already know."

The Lieutenant and the Captain climbed up and inside without replying. The two officers went aft and entered the engine room and stopped; stopped with mouths agape. The layout was totally unfamiliar with either of the two experts. No standard or even orthodox drive equipment or controls were here. Consulting a list the Captain mumbled half to himself, "Originally two Equinox Hyper-Drives were shipped here and the component parts of those drives are here in this engine room, but....." he fumbled. "Lieutenant. There have been additions and modifications....not minor ones either.....Those Equinoxes represent practically the latest engineering development; is the boy Waylor a genius that he alters them at his whim?"

"Only one way to find out Captain," said the Lieutenant. "I'll get some tools from the compartment here and we'll take the housings off and see for ourselves. Perhaps he has discovered some new drive principle; it's not impossible you know."

"Never mind that for now. There is a much shorter method of finding what I strongly suspect. Let's go forward to the control room."

Captain Bassett strode out of the engine room and up the alley-

way, into the control room and over to the instrument panel. He took one look and turned triumphantly to Lieutenant McGraw.

"Waylor Buarnt is a madman or a genius; this flight gage is built to register not in light years alone; but parsecs too? Parsecs! Man do you realize what that means if Waylor's drive works?"

"The Empire will no longer be confined to a few hundred suns for lack of speedy communications. Expansion. Wealth. The subject aliens of the Empire will no longer grumble; they'll have jobs and money galore when we exploit this thing. That's what this super drive means!"

"Hold on a minute Captain!" Perhaps there is more here than meets the eye. Even a genius would experience tremendous technological problems in drafting and engineering such a drive. I personally cannot believe he built it unaided. But where would his help come from?"

"All qualified human technicians are already at work on the problem of improving our spatial drives. We don't teach such things to alien races and their technologies in this line never even approached ours which was why we were able to subjugate them."

A buzzer buzzed somewhere to the rear of them and the two officers turned; startled to see the spatial televisor begin to glow into operation. The chromatic shifting ceased abruptly and left an alien being regarding them blankly. They saw only the upper part of its body. The head was bucket-shaped with no perceptible neck; three eyes, two parallel and the other in the middle and above the others; the torso was barrel-shaped with many thick,ropy appendages dangling loosely in the general region of what would be the shoulders in a Terran. That was all they saw before the image suddenly winked out.

"What was that?" cried the Lieutenant.

"The one you were just talking about apparently," came the Captain's shaky reply.

"What? Who...what was that?"

"That unknown and unclassified alien we saw in undoubtedly Waylor Buarnt's little helper. Now we know definitely that he did not construct this super-ship alone and unaided.

"It seems that we shall have to take Citizens Sted and Waylor Buarnt into custody and bring them to Marconte. This thing has grown too big for either of us to handle. This might uncover an Empire-wide plot to overthrow the Terran government with assistance from outside. Let's go!"

The two officers tumbled down the ladder and confronted Sted and Waylor who were standing exactly where the Empire men had left them.

"You cannot fool the representatives of the Empire any longer, Waylor," began the Captain angrily. "We've seen your Hyper Drives.

Your flight gage metered in parsecs. Even your alien friends!"

Waylor never moved a muscle, just stood calmly and smiled. Sted looked worried.

"It appears that we might have nipped a major revolt in the bud eh Lieutenant?" chortled the Captain. "Do you, Citizen Waylor; or you, Citizen Sted, desire to say anything before we take you to Marcote? For we intend to file treason charges against you. Specifically for breaking the section of the Alien Races Security Act which demands that all Terrans inform the Empire of hitherto unreported or suspicious aliens.

"Yes. I do desire to say something," said Waylor firmly. "I shall be as brief and to the point as possible.

The Aliens who taught me to build my ship are natural telepaths as am I. I cannot help but read your minds. That is why you do not like me, because you instinctively "feel" my prying.

But to explain the situation to you: My alien friends have a stable, sane society that is partly based on the fact that not even a telepath can hide his deepest thought all of the time. Dishonesty is unthinkable under such conditions. They have a place for me in their society. The Empire actually has nothing to fear from them, they are many many parsecs from here. They, in fact, have more to fear from an expanding Empire.

You know that Aliens outnumber Terrans many times over and only Terra's superior arms keeps them under control. Aliens are Second and Third Class Citizens, and they are not loyal; and why should they be when they are denied equal right in the Empire. Terra is due for a rude awakening in approximately twenty years and if you could get our Hyper Drive it would only be a stop-gap measure. It won't make First Class Citizens out of Aliens and that is where the trouble lies. Being telepathic I can "feel" the extent of the discontent; and let me assure you that the Aliens are sure to band together under this social pressure and blow the Empire apart. I for one don't care to stay in the confines of the Empire and chance being reduced to atoms when the Blowup occurs. So I fully intend to leave; and now!"

A numbing coldness gripped their minds in gigantic hands and wrung their consciousness out into utter blackness. The two officers sagged to the ground like limp rag soldiers.

The Lieutenant came to the foggy awareness that someone was slapping his wrist very rhythmically and methodically. "Ah. Stop it I'm alright," he mumbled.

"Okay then;" barked the Captain. "Open your eyes and say something intelligent to prove it."

The first thing the Lieutenant noted was the absence of Sted,

Waylor, and their very valuable ship.

"What hit me..." growled Lieutenant McGraw "... and where are the Buarnts and that ship?"

Captain Bassett looked down at his still supine fellow officer and handed him a paper. "Waylor was nice enough to leave us this to take back to Marconte to show to the Department." he sneered.

The Lieutenant reached up, took the note and read; "As you will surmise upon awakening, telepathy is not the fullest extent of my mental powers. Sorry to have put you under but there was no other course open to me.

I justify all my actions upon the necessities of logic. When one meets the Irresistable Force and is not the Immovable Object, it would be foolish heroics to stay and fight and go down to oblivion. Flight in such a case is indicated and flee I have like a prudent rat from the sinking ship of Empire.

From your point of view it is unfortunate that we have escaped and I'm afraid you will have to report the complete failure of your mission to your Security and Investigation Department.

----Waylor"

