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THIS ZINE IS A

MISH MOSH

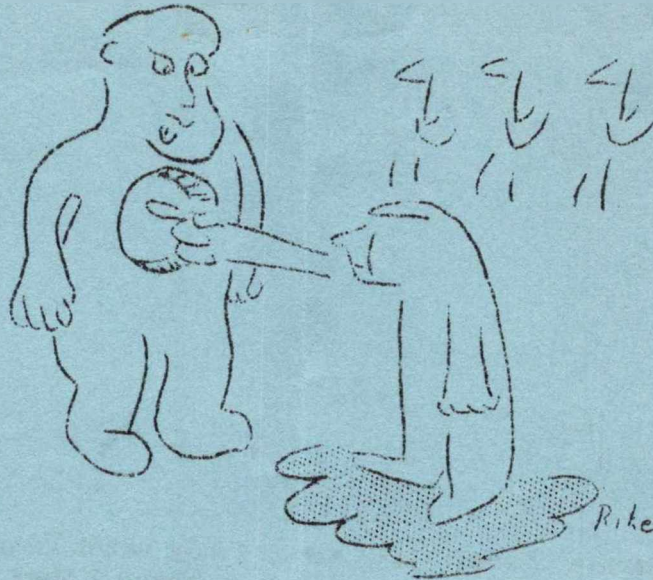
Ted E. White

1044 North Tuckahoe Street

Falls Church, Virginia

OF MATERIAL FORMERLY

PUBLISHED ELSEWHERE...



"YESSIREE! THAT LI'L FLYING SAUCER WENT RIGHT THIS WAY!"

I RECEIVED GMC'S WAPA-LETTER TODAY, AND I MUST SAY THAT IT HAS GIVEN ME A WONDERFUL, TIMESAVING, TRUFANNISH METHOD OF RUSSHING OUT A BULKY FMZ.

YEA, VERILY, THIS HERE ZINE IS A VERITABLE MISH MOSH OF STUFF, MOST OF WHICH FIRST SAW PUBLICATION IN THE CULT'S FANTASY ROATOR. NOT JUST ANY ISSUE, HOWEVER... I'M LIMITED (AS THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE CULTISTS KNOW) TO NUMBERS: 5, 8, 9 & 10... HOWEVER, #5 FEATURED 50 PAGES, #8 30 PAGES, AND 9 AND 10 COMBINED HAD A GRAND TOTAL OF 60 PAGES--REAL INCENTIVE TO JOIN THE CULT HERE...OR AM I BEING SUBVERSIVE TO THIS VENABLE ORGINAZATION?

GETTING SERIOUS FOR A MOMENT, I THINK MRS. CARR'S IDEAS ARE THE BEST YET PRESENTED. IN SHORT, I'M FOR 'EM.

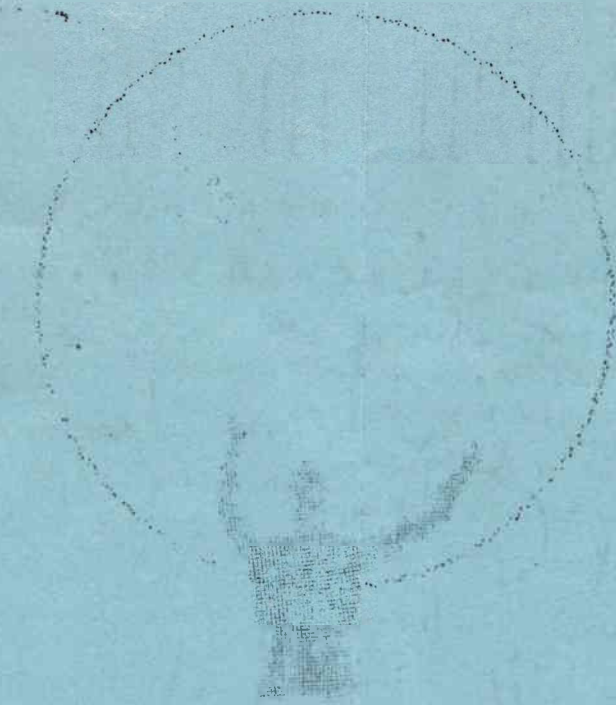
AND INCIDENTALKLY, THO GLZAP! #2 WAS INTENDED FOR GENERAL DISTRIBUTION, I HAVEN'T YET GOTTEN AROUND TO ASSEMBLING THE NON-WAPA ISSUES...

ZIP IS COMING: MY INTEREST HAS REVIVED TO THE POINT THAT I CUT A STENCIL A DAY NOW... DIMENSIONS FOR LAST AUGUST RECEIVED...MUST BE HARLAN CUTS A STENCIL A DAY TOO...

NO CONTENTS LISTING, AS I HAVEN'T DECIDED WHICH STENCILS I'LL USE YET... WHY NOT TURN INSIDE AND FIND OUT...?

March-1955

Ted E. White
MADMAN WHITE



IMPRESSIONS OF IMPENDING DOOM BY WHITE

It was early in the morning (about 3:30 a.m., if my watch meant anything.) Something woke me, and I was, without knowing why, quite hungry. I went down stairs to the refrigerator, and got out some cold turkey left over from last Sunday. I made a sandwich, and moved into the living room. I hadn't turned on the light, preferring to eat in the unusually bright moonlight that cast a pale blue ray in thru the living room window. As I glanced at my watch again, my gaze slid over the evening paper with its red-inked headline—"REDS DECLARE WAR"—that looked as black as the rest of the print in this strange light. I did not dwell on it, but glanced at the clock to see if my watch had stopped. But the clock too said only 3:31...

Then for the first time I looked out the window to the east—and saw a brilliant blue star high in the sky. As I watched, it visibly swelled, growing to twice its original size in mere seconds, and doubling again! It seemed that it must burst. Now the brilliant blue light that radiated from it lit the sky to daytime splendor. But it was a different sort of light; the trees, houses, everything that were bathed in those rays seemed almost translucent!

All thoughts of food forgotten, I rushed to the door, flinging it open, and dashed into the bright yard. A great feeling seemed to swell inside me—to merge with that now-gigantic blue sphere. A feeling of life—of being—seemed to engulf me from the flaming ball of blue. Now it covered the entire heavens blotting out all else. In those precious seconds my overworked senses felt only warmth and comfort, altho I knew that it should be well below freezing out here where I stood.

As I went up onto the porch to read the thermometer, the roof seemed to melt away into the blueness that was everything.

I reach up into that glorious blue that now engulfs me...

CALYPSO

BLUES

"Sittin by de ocean,
Sittin by de ocean, My heart sne feell so sad!
Me pockets full of empty: My heart sne feell so sad.

"Have you ever concieved what a great thing is your Blues?" the Martian mused, to no one in particular, as he nursed a waterglass of sawtooth rye. "The rhythm-patterns of that, for instance," He began to draw a simple pattern on the bar with the rim of his glass, "fall into a scheme immediately Terran, and lonely. A great thing...your Blues."

Turk (the Martian equivalent was inaudible, but the nickname fit) might have been the greatest arranger or composer of music in all the Lunar Colonies, except that like all Martians he had no conception of melody. Beethoven and the later master Kenton were, to him, merely arrangements of varying rhythm sequences, some in different keys and sounds than others. Music to Turk meant percussion.

"They tell me this Blues was invented by a minority almost two centuries ago. A group of men who were different, somehow?" His eyes narrowed, clear and steady after an hour of rye in the late morning. Except for no joints of bone, and an alien stamp, Turk appeared an Earthman. Martians survived for a million years on this protective mimicry.

"Not really different, Turk," I said. "You see, some people are different by heredity; skin, hair, eyes might tend each to a specific color----and people like that might be considered a group to themselves. And, for a long while, a lot of people thought those differences were evidence of Real difference. They were wrong, though. With the Real differences men have met in space, and the general rise of conditions on Earth, the races have fused....both literally, and in the mind. There never were any Real differences."

Turk took another long sip of his drink. "But..at the time...? The inventors of your Blues....they felt different? People thought them different?"

"Yes, Turk. People thought each other into little square cubby-holes. Even the round pegs got into the wrong holes sometimes."

"Must have been so. Nothing like your Blues can come from a people who are content."

The song playing at the time was part of a rare archeological find. First discovered were odd discs of a metal called gold, much revered by the ancients, and then some clay-lacquer models were also found. It was six months before their relationship to magnetapes was established, and the odd method of translation discovered, but the folk-history of the 1950's benefited greatly. For a while players all over four planets hummed with the old yet oddly exciting music; then the craze died. Still, though no one else ever played them, Bob Silverberg managed to keep a few on his vend-machine for Turk. He liked them very much.

"You can say a lot of things with music," I ventured, not wanting to break the Martian's reverie.

"But never...never could I say..That, so well."

That was a great compliment, from Turk. For a few years he handled six drums in the best clubs on Luna....did a solo act that had tears and laughs and dancing in it...and every night ad lib, too. But then things changed, and Martian drummer-acts went out of vogue. He made a living in an East side dive, but barely that.

"Another, Bob, please," he said to Silverberg, the owner. "Then make an oddly disjointed race, do they not? Your music....your Blues especially...so good; your whiskey so bad. No insult, Bob?"

"'Sokay, Turk," the bar-tender said, used to the comment at that hour of the morning, as he poured another tumbler-full of man-killer. Turk had a constitution that stood liquor as if it were a median between weak tea and creme-de-menthe. Bob cut his price to Turk, though neither mentioned it. Martians were rare enough and good-natured enough to deserve a little consideration.

"I picked up your habits...developed even your tastes..but I have not your weaknesses." Half the glass gulped down without the flicker of an eyelash.

Turk got himself plastered only once, and then it took half a gallon of red-eye. The trouble was, his nightmare-contortions and assumed-shapes as he slept it off frightened friends and patrons alike, and when he sobered up Bob and all his pals trooped Turk down to the Luna City A.A., to pledge at least moderation...while it's said a few of the crowd secretly signed to complete abstinence, Turk's D.T.'s had been so violent.

"When I was young.....I dreamed of making rhythms with power such as that...power to reach across Race and Difference and affect everyone the same. It should have been nice to try."

Mars had a highly developed planetary culture which revered and sanctified arts. That was before the war, of course. Turk's tentacled hand was beating a complimentary tattoo on the bar to the simple tune playing through the speakers. I knew Martian rhythms a little, and once took a course in Early 20th Century Folklore, yet I couldn't place this system of intricate percussion. The damp bar was no substitute for a hide drum-head, but Turk made it do. And, as I listened to his complimentary pattern....not a melody-rhythm, but as close to a new melody as he could get....I realized that, though humanity had borne the Blues, at least one creature from a different world was weaving his own emotional ideas into it, and with it. As I watched and listened to the absent thumping, an intangible sadness settled over me. And I was aware it wasn't the effect of the whiskey.

The tune ended in a drawn staccato which, before it finished, Turk embellished and embroidered with half a dozen varying patterns, all saying the same thing. Then he added a flourish, and gulped another mouthfull of liquor.

"The man who accomplished this must have been a very tired, very lonely man," he said slowly. "Your Blues is the very soul of loneliness."

"I wonder," I said deliberately. "Can music go so deep it really touches the soul?"

Turk sipped at his drink before answering. "Good music...must always communicate to the soul. For.....in what other respect are listeners alike with creators?"

He downed the last of the rye and put some money on the bar. "I must leave, to sleep. The evening comes soon to one so old. Thank you, Bob, and you may keep the change this time. I am not so deep in debt as I was. Goodby, my friends."

"So long, Turk," waved Bob, still polishing a glass in that end-of-hours calm.

"Bob," I said commanding, "Give me a double bourbon, straight."

"Hey, isn't it early in the week for a reporter to..."

"I'm calling the shots."

"Okay. I just serve 'em. I don't try to figure 'em out."

It stung going down and I had to cough, but it was just what I wanted. "God, Bob, it must be Hell for that little guy!"

"Turk? Oh, he never complains."

"Doesn't he? Did you ever really listen to that rhythm? Did you?"

"I...yeah. I have."

"None of us will ever know what it's like to be alone... the way he's alone."

"I don't know," said Bob, trying to ease the philosophical animosity of the bourbon. "He always has his music."

"Only in a way," I said, discovering the truth as I uttered it. "He can't ever share his music, Bob. Can any human being really understand a Martian drum-soloist? He has to play it for himself alone, and all the while knowing he's alone. And yet...is there any Real difference between him and us?"

I thought of the swift-running hounds of plague that decimated Martian cities that second year after contact, and the corralary disintegration of Mars' culture as it collided with a more virile and less acute, less artistic one. And when Terrans and Martians were proved esthetically, morally, and physically incompatible, how we forced them, solemnly and tragically, to begin a war we knew they could not wage. I remembered gleeful tabloids shrieking MILLION MARS-MEN EXTERMINATED IN H-BLAST, as though they were troublesome vermin, and I remembered the last census-count of a few hundred Martian survivors, only a handfull of whom had ever left the planet that was their home.

"No wonder he likes the Blues so much," Bob said.

"Why doesn't he hate us? He's got every reason. In the name of God, Bob, why can't he hate us?"

"I don't know, Larry," he said, absently dunking another glass. "Maybe he'd like to...but he can't. Hateful as we must be, maybe he can't. Because...who would he have left, then? Horrid as we are, Larry, we're all that's left."

"Me heart sne hurt from homesick;

Me feet sne hurt from shoes.

Me pockets full of empty:

I got Calypso blues."

—LARRY STARK

ANGER

BY LARRY STARK

"God Damn you Max, I'll kill you one of these days! I swear I will. I'll kill you!" They stood tense and glaring at one another in the suddenly silent bar. For an instant I almost thought Geis capable of carrying out his threat. Then abruptly he quit the ominous stare-down to hurry after the Martian who was heading uncomplaining toward the door. "No, wait Turk, please." He took his arm and brought him to a table. "He doesn't mean it. He's drunk, that's all."

Max swayed uncertainly against the bar and smirked at Geis' concern. "A Goddamned snake-lover! That's what Geis is — a snake-lover." He sat down beside me, giggling to impart the confidence of his private joke. "Did you know Geis was a snake-lover?"

Captain Geis was right, he was pretty drunk. I've heard it described all the way from "feeling good" to "feeling no pain," depending on how close to that condition the describer had been before, and how often, but I'd say the party had to be rolling quite some time before that stage was reached. His eyes, every once in a while, seemed to roll back up into his skull of their own volition.

"Did I in'erduce myself? I am Maxwell Gordin, the famous space pilot. And there is my wife — Mrs. Maxwell Gordin. And there—" his hand indicated generally the seating arrangements, "is my one-time friend, Captain Richard E. Geis. He usta think he was a space pilot too, HuHah! But he couldn't fly worth a Damn!"

I could see Geis' grip on the glass before him tense up, but if he repeated his frequently-heard threat of murder, it was not audible.

"He doesn't really like that eel-man. Nobody does. Martians are slimy; everybody knows that. Shoulda killed all the slimy eel-men when we had the chance! Every goddam one of 'em!"

I glanced in Turk's direction, unable to free myself of Max' presence and attention. He was sitting, head sunk forward over the table, trying to appear as though he had not heard — yet

sensitive to every word. Turk had been studying Sociology and Ecology of Planetary Relations at the Luna City Academy, and trying to teach Terrans something about Martian society, when the war broke out. Somehow the ivory tower of scholarship saved him, while his race suffered almost extinction. I knew the Max Gordin philosophy had been repudiated by most Terrans with intelligence, and Turk knew it too. But the words stung just the same.

"He saved my life once — Yeah, and I saved his, too. But he hates me now. You know why?" Max' alcoholic breath suddenly thrust confidingly close to mine. "Because I can fly better than he could, and he knows it. When he saved my life, that was just his job, and he knows that. But I didn't have to save his. I just felt like it. And now he hates me — because I flew better than he ever could."

"Want another drink, Larry?" Bob Silverberg interrupted, before things exploded again.

"You know, Bob," Max thrust in, happily, "I was just thinking, maybe we might like another round. That is — if this young gentleman might be prevailed upon to—— "

"Now Max, you've had enough!" His wife left the table where she, Max, and Geis had been sitting before the argument, and came to his side. Max was a constant and ingratiating moocher; no one really knew how the couple managed to exist. "No more, please."

"But Ruthy, I can't disappoint this gentleman." Max never could remember names. "It's... It's almost a debt of honor!"

"How about it, Bob?" I asked, not wanting to start an argument between Max and 'Mrs. Max'. If anyone could judge a man's limit, Silverberg could.

"Okay," Bob sighed, "if it's the last--- "

"Whiskey, plea-- !"

"---And only beer! You're going to leave my place under your own power tonight."

"Anyone'd think I was drunk er somethin'," Max pouted, but he took the beer.

"Will you have something, Mrs. Gordin?" I offered.

"No, please. One of us will have to see going home."

"I heard you!" He gulped down most of the beer, "And it's not true. You... You'll give my friend a bad impression of me. You don't believe my wife, do you friend? Course not! Why, I could have a dozen more, and never even notice it."

"Well, not in my bar you can't," Bob said. "That's your last."

"I always did think you had it in for me, Bob. So you're against me too, huh? Okay! Keep your goddam beer!" But he drained the glass before lurching into motion. "I'll show you who's too drunk to get more."

"Now Max. Wait a minute--!" his wife began, but his motion was sharp and angry as he turned his swimming eyes on her.

"You stay here! What'd you tell him I was drunk for? I'll show all of you! — all of you." This last to himself as he moved unsteadily across the floor. He paused a moment at the door to observe: "I should have known better than to try to get a drink in any crummy eel-man's bar!"

Geis almost rose to the attack once more, but let him go. Turk never once moved a muscle. In the tense silence, it was Mrs. Max who finally gave way to action. Despite her husband's caution to remain, she suddenly flung out the door behind him: "He's liable to walk into a truck... or something," she half-apologised as she went. The tensions Max' loud opinions created in the room didn't leave with him.

"Pour a whiskey, Bob," I asked, and took it and my untasted beer over to the table. "Try this, Turk," I said. "It usually helps me feel better."

"Thank you, Larry. I don't really mind any more."

"Oh, it's my fault too, Turk," Geis scowled, "using you like a football the way we did. But he gets me so dann mad, with his pig-headedness. And it's even harder to reason with him when he's drunk. Well, let him rot! I won't go chasing after him."

Captain Geis always wore the faded and dirtied coat of a Space Service officer, but with all insignia carefully removed. Beyond that, and Gordin's sneering references to him as "Captain Richard E. Geis" there was no basis for our assumption, but everyone I knew called him captain. And most of the time he looked and acted the part. His wild black beard was laced with an occasional grey filament now, and even that added to his dignity.

"What gets into a man like Spacebuster Gordin and makes him hate so viciously?" I wondered out loud. "Until I met him, he was my synonym for hero. Stuff like he pulled tonight makes me wonder."

Spacebuster Gordin was an East Side character -- a laudable Bohemian rebel, or a bum, depending on your tastes. He and his wife lived mostly by beggary of one sort or another, and Max at least managed to stay more drunk than sober.

"Sometimes it is necessary that a man hate, for his own good," Turk said, downing part of his drink. "He cannot be blamed for what he himself cannot help doing."

"Maybe I'm misjudging him, because he hasn't fulfilled my ideals,"

I speculated. "I used to dream I'd be a space pilot, like Max. That's part of it, too."

"Max was the best," Geis said suddenly. "In his day it took courage and a damn strong stomach to blast-off. Now— it's all math and calculators. But even today Max could show them some things."

"He's never acted — well, the hero type, though," I protested.

"Hero!" the captain exploded. "Heroes are just accidents that never should have been allowed to happen. For every hero there's some jerk who made a stupid mistake. And even heroes aren't so brave and so good all the time. Some damn rotten heels get to be heroes, sometimes. One of them just left — if that's your heroic portrait. But he was a damn good pilot! At least I'll say that."

Geis and Gordin were constantly together, and constantly at one another's throats. It was even rumored that Max often shared Geis' pension-checks, though no one could swear checks were even received, or that "captain" wasn't just Max' term of exaggerated contempt. When drunk, however, which was usually, Max would repudiate all connection with the bearded man in the uniform coat, and insult and blaspheme any attempts he made at aide.

"He's going too far, though," Geis repeated to himself. "No one can associate with a character like him — always arguing — when they're fed up. He can go hang himself for all I care. If he only weren't so damned pig-headed!"

"It's the liquor, captain," I soothed.

"Only part of it. He's always hated Turk — and me, I guess, so far as that goes — even though he knows nothing about him. Damned space pilot's stupid prejudices...and their independence. Even if he is wrong as hell, he'd rather make me knock his head in than shut up about it. Makes me sick." Geis finished his drink as punctuation.

"Another, captain?" I suggested.

"No thanks! At least I can tell when I've had enough. But that. Aah, what's the use. He's probably down at The Chameleon by now, trying to prove he's sober!" He paused, speculating. I suddenly realized I had never seen the captain truly drunk. "Or Barney's. They're not so strict as Silverberg down there."

"Was he really one of the first on Mars?" I asked.

Geis snorted. "Huh! And Venus, too, if he's telling it. I'll bet if you asked him about Earth he'd tell you how he saved New York from the Martians, too! Max knows some damn dirty stories about Earth, if he ever wants to tell them."

I would have liked him to go partner, but he didn't. "Was he really the hero I remember Spacebuster Gordin being?"

"Max Gordin was just a damn good pilot! He could fly better than any man alive, I guess. So people told him he was a hero — and maybe they thought they were right. And Max thought he'd stop flying and try the heroing business.

"Only people don't like their heroes to stop whatever they were doing and become human beings. They can't understand why he can't look heroic all the time. So they rubbed his nose in the shit and tossed him back in space again.

"He never understood. He still can't understand why he isn't a hero to everybody. He never changed; but he can't understand that, once they found out things besides the heroic about him, maybe they changed. They just don't let you stay a professional hero long, if you don't work at it."

Geis seemed almost to be talking to himself; he was remembering, re-living things I wanted desperately to hear him be more specific about. The riddle of Spacebuster Gordin's past seemed just within reach, after years of interest and confusion.

"But Max put on one hell of a good show before he was finished. Yessir! Damn if he didn't show them all. Every last one of 'em!"

But I was selected again. Before I had even had a chance to pursue the conversation, the door of the Spaceship flung abruptly open and Mrs. Max stood breathless at our table.. "Captain! It's Max.... fighting. Some kids..." I don't believe I've ever seen terror so apparent in anyone's eyes.

Geis was on his feet so fast his chair flew back and upset. I followed Mrs. Max, toward the faint noise of angry voices, and the few people inside the bar were following, too. Even Turk was at my shoulder. I wasn't sure if it was curiosity or indignation that moved them.

Luna City is hydroponically aerated, and doesn't grow its entire food supply, but even the best of sciences has yet to clean all the streets or erase all the refuse of a slum district. The spotlight of a dimming street-lamp was all that lit the scene.

Half a dozen ten-age boys stood in a tense, curious flock, a powerful and militant compatriot before them. Max Gordin was sprawled back on the sidewalk, half supporting himself with an arm over some battered trash-can. His face was huddled against the crook of his elbow, and for a moment he seemed to be sobbing. Geis took one inclusive look, and advanced on the young tough with teeth and fists clenched.

"What did you do to him?" he glared, slowly, then roared. "What have you done!"

"Well, he started on me!" The adolescent retreated, but grudgingly.

"Why, you god damn little squirt! Got to beat up an old man to show how big you are—and one who's drunk, too. Go on — get the hell out of here. Get out!" He was blazing, and I almost expected him to charge into the kids. But, alibi-ing their attack and their retreat to one another, they moved off down the street. Their rout was a slow one, but none the less decisive.

"Are you hurt, Max?" Mrs. Max was already tenderly at his side, but he suddenly shoved her roughly away and turned a tear-streamed face in our direction.

"Let me alone! You're all against me. Well I'll show you! All of you." He hid his self-pity once more in the crook of his arm and shook with audible sobs.

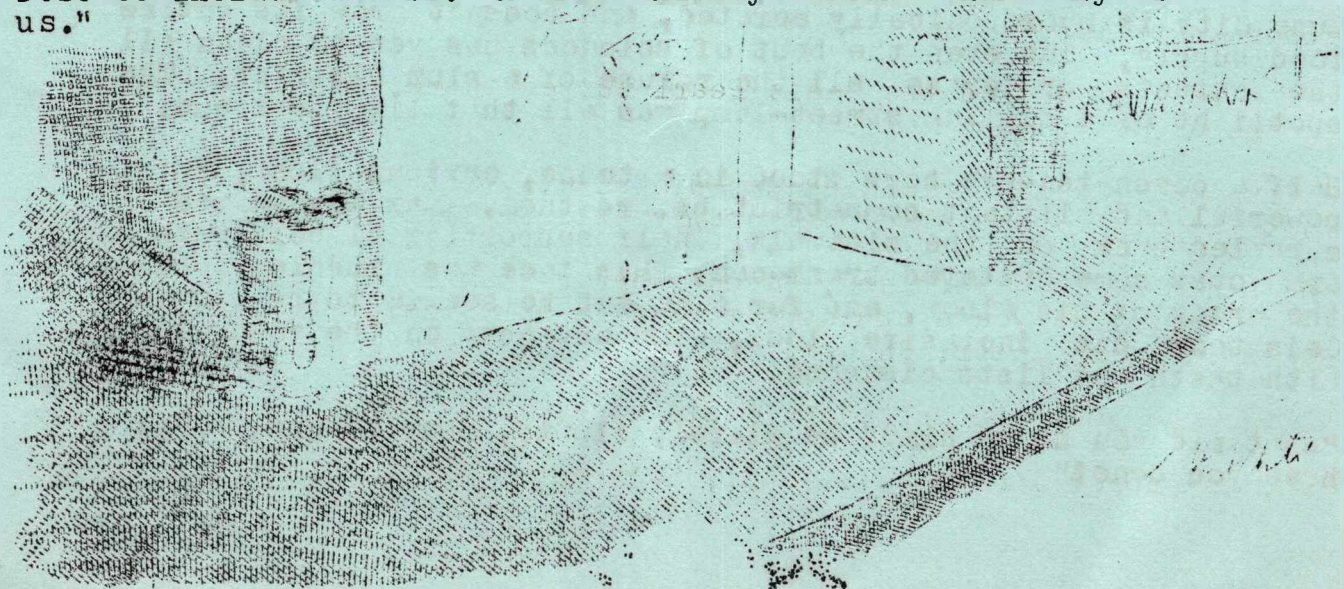
For a second no one seemed to know what to do. Then, gently, Mrs. Max touched his shoulder. "Nobody's trying to hurt you, Max. We just want to help.---if you'll let us." He looked into her face. "We're all your friends, Max." She took his arm. "Let me help you up."

Geis stepped forward to aid her, so very different and yet still proper in this new attitude of tenderness. "Let's go, Max. I'll help you get home, and then we can see about a doctor."

Still weeping, and a little unsteady, Max allowed himself to be lifted and aided down the street. They were too concerned with each other to notice the few onlookers. They made an odd trio: Geis, his savage beard adding to the concern in his face as he supported Max' shrivelled, unkempt weight; and Mrs. Max, taking his arm and speaking in soothing, inaudible tones.

"So odd," I heard Turk at my elbow, "the many ways they prove their love of one another."

Bob Silverberg coughed uneasily. "Come on inside," his voice rose to include us all. "A free whiskey wouldn't hurt any of us."



"THE PHILISTINES ARE UPON THEE, SAMPSON"

BY LARRY STARK

"So this is your little find, huh? I must admit, Larry, I can't say much for your tastes in night-spots." Jack Gilbert stood, hands on hips, surveying The Spaceship with that haughty connoisseur's eye that belongs exclusively to a college sophomore on the town.

"My God Larry, it's positively Medieval!" Janice shrieked. Miss Haffner's vocabulary of epithets derived largely from a "stunning" survey course in Terran Literature.

"I told you it wasn't the kind of place you drop into after the theatre." I tried not to sound apologetic. Pearl McKenney made no comment, but seemed politely curious.

"Oh no, we insisted," Jack said, surveying the murky atmosphere, and the few customers almost startled at the bar. "I thought it was about time we got a look at this Bohemia you keep telling me still exists." His impeccable clothes didn't seem to fit somehow. "Not a very clean Bohemia though, is it?"

"Hey look, tables!" Janice discovered. "Come on, Pearl. Let the cave-men examine the new quarters if they like. I'm exhausted after that hike!"

As we fell in around the table Pearl turned to me. "Is this where you said you met the Martian?"

"Martian!" Janice grimaced her distaste. "Not tonight, please! Just thinking about those big crawly things gives me the creeps!"

"He's not big," I reasoned, "even shorter than I am. And he looks just about like you'd expect the average human being to look. He comes in a lot later, though."

"I thought you said he played music here," Jack said.

"Oh, not here! That's a.... Well, it's not a place you take a girl.

Traditional name is dance-hall, but the real money's made upstairs. The spacers tease him a lot, but it's the only work Turk can get. A shame, too. It's the best music I know of."

"I don't know, Larry; I'd love to find Janice in a place like that," Jack leered, and got his face slapped. Lightly.

"I've heard Martian drumming," Janice disclosed. "Danny Trevert's tapes feature a lot of it."

"That Trevert's really got a band, too," Jack agreed.

"But it's not really Martian," I had to disagree. "It's a sort of bastard-Martian that any drummer with a good ear could repeat, and it's glossed up with commercial arrangements."

"Danny spent two years studying Martian rhythms before he formed his band," Jack said.

"And Turk spent the first twelve years of his life trying to become a drum-priest. He's here now only because a student-exchange program—"

"Good evening, Larry. Would you like to order something?" Bob Silverberg stopped what may have become an irrevocable argument. Despite our friendship and the long lapse since I'd seen him last, Jack Gilbert's expertism was wearing out my patience. I was glad for the interruption, but it seemed to me as though Bob were being unusually correct and formal.

"SpinDizzy!" Janice shouted.

"That's right, and make mine real dry. Do you want your frugal little Bohemian's Delight, Larry?"

"I.. no. Make mine a cocktail too, Bob." I detest mixed drinks, but somehow tonight this wasn't the place for tradition-soaked drinks. "What about you, Pearl, a beer?"

"Whatever the rest of you have."

"Four SpinDizzy's then, in just a minute."

"Larry," Janice leaned, whispering, across the table, "Do you know him?"

"You mean Bob Silverberg? Why, sure. We're good friends. I've sat out plenty of lonely newspaper stories with Bob."

"Why Larry!" Jack feigned shock. "Associating with proles; and at your age!"

Janice giggled. "One semester of The 20th Century Novel and he's cursing in a whole new language!"

"Hey, a VendaTune!" Jack discovered, heading for it eagerly. "No kidding, Larry, you mean this place isn't really built with pieces of the first rocket?"

"Built by Harriman himself!" Janice laughed, dashing after him. "Hey, see if they have any of Danny Trevert's..."

"I shouldn't have brought you here," I said, more to myself than Pearl. I liked her, and she was polite enough to let me, but I didn't want to make her feel she'd been stuck with me, as Jack and Janice were stuck with The Spaceship. Janice had presumably been my date when the evening began, but the presumption didn't fit the facts for very long. Perhaps some of the occasional sharpness to our conversation was because I resented Jack's acting as though he had to prove his enjoyment of the victory.

"It isn't as gay a place as they're trying to make it," Pearl said, examining the room more closely. "It wouldn't ask strangers to stay long enough to like it....although I think I could. It seems almost a lonely place," she concluded. Then, looking suddenly up into my face, "You look a little like that once in a while, too."

What do you do when someone finds what may be a truth about you? I examined my nails for non-existent dirt. "The Spaceship's not a lonely place. A little more relaxed, more thoughtful maybe. The word 'sober' doesn't seem so wrong, either. You can take your time here. You don't have to prove to everyone in the place that you're enjoying yourself."

"Hey, what kind of a machine is this?" Jack shouted indignantly across the room. "'When The Saints Go Marchin In', 'String of Pearls', ---Look at this, Janice: 'How High The Moon'!!! Hey, Larry, we can't dance to those! What is this, a VendaTune or a course in medieval music?"

But Janice plugged in a coin and stabbed at the keyboard. "Oh, play any old thing. I want some music!"

What came out was 'Tuxedo Junction'. "Now how the hell do you expect to dance to that!" was Jack's comment.

"Aw, c'mon! Maybe we can do an Aerial Shuffle to it." They turned down the gravitator-batteries in their shoes and tried the newest social sensation. It was a combination wrestling match and acrobatics workout; more than half the standard figures were executed off the floor, and the rest was sheer improvisation. The Glenn Miller music remained doggedly Earthbound and stubborn, however. While they struggled to subdue it, Bob served the obnoxiously colored cocktails.

"They trying to get arrested?"

"It's Jack's first vacation from the Military Academy," Pearl explained. "They're just feeling their importance to society."

"I cornered them into a ballet tonight, and maybe this is their method of getting revenge."

"I enjoyed the ballet," Pearl said. "Jack let me think it was his idea, though."

Bob still eyed the two dancers and their defiant tune. "Tell them to watch out. If people around here get the idea they're as drunk as they act, they won't have a cent left once they're back uptown."

"Ah, the hell with it," Jack quit suddenly and stalked back to the table. "How the hell do you expect to dance to that!"

"Hey!" Janice arrived in a flurry of indignation, looking for bruises. "Next time you don't expect to be there to catch a girl, blow a whistle, will you?"

"When that was written the idea was to stay on the floor at least part of the time," Pearl twinkled. I caught her smile, and had to agree with it.

"You mean like that stuff tonight?" Jack frowned noisily. "'The Afternoon of A Deer' or something? Give me a good air-dance any day."

"Didn't you even like the music?" Pearl seemed genuinely surprised. "Oh that stuff's for -- low-brows is it, Jack?"

"High brows, Janice honey. Highbrows and longhairs. I'll make you an expert on the 20th century yet!"

"Didn't their hair cover up their brows?" Janice thought her imagery hilarious.

"Sometimes," I said. "Probably they only let them show when the right people were around."

"Hey, liquid sustenance!" Jack discovered. They dove in together, but suddenly Jack was gagging. "Call this a SpinDizzy?"

"It's liquor, isn't it?" Janice surfaced long enough to gasp.

"The dope made them with rum, I'll bet." He approached the bar militantly, drink in hand. "Hey, barkeep! What's his name, Larry? Silverstein! Haven't you got any good gin? I --- Here, ---" Suddenly he popped up behind the bar and gathered some bottles. "Let me show you how to mix a SpinDizzy!"

"Jack! For God's sake what are you trying to prove?"

For what seemed an eternal moment there was no sound in the bar except the VandaTune, finishing its tape. I had time to notice my fingers seem to tremble as I stood gripping the back of my chair, and I didn't know whether it was in fear or rage. He

looked up in a defiant pose that was almost masked behind clever self-righteousness and incredulity. "What's the matter? I'm just——"

"He's right, Jack. Can't you act a little more like a human being?" It was Pearl, gentle and icy, but obviously angry.

Jack placed the bottles on the bar and came back to the table. He was obeying public opinion, but not agreeing with it. "What'd I do? Just cause your precious barkeep doesn't know gin from rum, don't start picking on me!"

"I don't like this place, anyway," Janice decided suddenly. "I know! Let's try the Marsopolis. They have music you can dance to; and at least it's uptown where there's more people!"

"Suits me fine. Let's go."

"I don't think I'd better," I decided. I knew I wouldn't stay peaceful much longer. "I-- I get lost in crowds. I fit in easier here."

"Well I don't!" Janice blazed. "Run down neighborhood---dirty chairs---and not even any music! Let's go, Jack."

"You coming, Pearl?"

"No thanks, Jack. I'm... I'm just getting used to it."

"Well you can have it!" Janice flung as they left. "I like live people better."

"Careful the Martians don't get you!" Jack called as they disappeared, convulsed at the excellence of their own wit. I was relieved that they took their noise with them. I glanced at Pearl.

"You didn't have to, you know."

"I wouldn't have enjoyed myself with them either," she said. "They just can't understand that quiet people might be happy, too. I think this whole place seems better without them."

"It isn't a gay place; not wide-open gay. But we don't tell each other how happy we are. Most of us take that for granted." I was confusing things, but she seemed to understand.

"You never even tasted that SpinDizzy,"

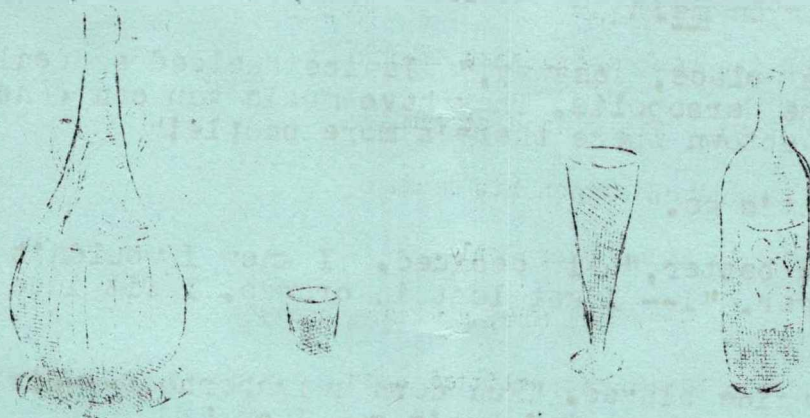
"I never wanted it. But, what I'd usually have is a drink associated with happier times... better company. Under the circumstances I could feel just as uncomfortable in front of one of these monstrosities as anything else." And maybe it was a private show of contempt. I thought too little of them to share a drink I might have preferred.

She smiled and held up her glass. "I never touched mine, either."
We clinked untasted glasses, and suddenly we were laughing.

"Bob?"

"Yes, Larry?"

"A Bohemian Special — a shot-glass and a bottle of Chianti.
And find a cool beer for Pearl, too. We're having a celebration.
Just a nice, quiet celebration."



AS YOU CAN SEE, MOST OF THE MATERIAL IN THIS THING IS FICTION, AND MOST OF IT IS BY LARRY STARK. FRANKLY, I CAN THINK OF FEW FEN WHO CAN WRITE BETTER, OR MORE ENTERTAININGLY, IN A SERIOUS VEIN, THAN STARK. YOU MAY REMEMBER HIS "DIRTY PRO" IN PSY #17...

THIS SERIES, ENTITLED TEN NIGHTS IN A BARROOM, IS CURRENTLY RUNNING IN THE FANTASY ROTATOR, OO OF THE CULT. THE STORIES PRESENTED HERE ARE THE FIRST THREE, AND APPEARED IN #5 AND 10, RESPECTIVELY (THE LATTER TWO ARE BOTH FROM #10...).

FRANKLY, I HOPE YOU NON-CULTISTS ENJOY THIS, AND TO THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE IN THE CULT, I'M SORRY, BUT THAT'S THE WAY THE BALL BOUNCES—I DECIDED TO REPRINT, AND IT HAPPENS THAT THE OLNLY OTHER STUFF I HAVE KICKING AROUND IS FROM ZIP, WHICH TOO MANY OF YOU HAVE SEEN.

FRANKLY, I AM IN THE HOPES THAT THIS WILL ENCOBRAGE SOME OF YOU (GMC?) TO THINK OF JOINING THE CULT. IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, WRITE TO ME, AND I'LL BRIEF YOU ON WHAT THE CULT REALLY IS...

THIS SEEMS TO BE ABOUT IT FOR NOW; I HOPE SOMETHING MORE WORTHWHILE COMES OUT OF WAPA IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS...

NIGHT RIDE

Across the Night's former silence
We hear a tattoo of horse's hooves.
A great black steed with sweat agleam
Pounds through the silent wood.
Upon its back a gruesome figure
Rides with fiery cape streaming.
No head has he upon his neck,
A bloody stump there only.
But from under an arm, a visage peers
through bloodshot, slitted eyes.
This grisly thing, a Head of Death,
Through grim yet snarling lips,
Screams over and over in a hellish voice,
"The Horseman rides again!"
Over the hills he rides, and pausing
Naught, through interfering trees passes.
Then the horrible, horrible monster
Fades until at last, a graveyard grim
Is neared - then vanishes to some region dim.
Oh ne'er fear, my friend, if you choose
To doubt this tale of grisly Fate.
You may disbelieve to your heart's content,
But friends, be not so foolish as to doubt
When through the night you hear him come -
Damned fool, get out of his way!

Samuel Johnson

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