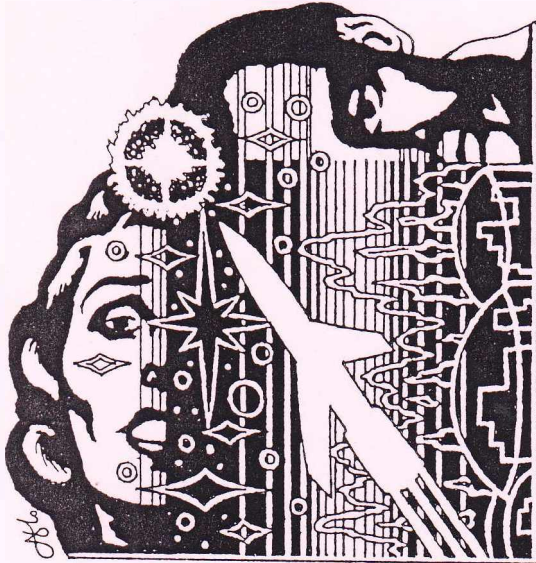


QUARO 20



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A PRESENT FOR SANTA CLAUS

What can you get Santa for Xmas? The same thing that every other dirty old man wants who doesn't have one. A sure cure for depression.

Depression? What depression? In spite of 43 days of dark & dreary rain out of the last 50, which wdv had me in a blue funk for sure, I'm walking on air & singing in the rain like Gene Kelly. You guessed it; I'm in love! There's nothing to cure depression like a new sweetie.

Her name is Shirley, she's a retired kindergarten teacher & Reichian therapist, and *mirabile dictu*, she grew up and went to school in Highland Park, LA where I lived the first 7 of my years in Calif. She also

attended LA City & State, where I got my education. While there, she was in the honorary Law Society, & met Gene Roddenberry who was majoring in--ahem--Administration of Justice-- cop training, that is. Later, she dated Tom Noguchi for a while. Some of you may remember that he was later the stormy petrel county coroner for LA, on whom the TV series *Quincy*, was modeled.

We met in October, saw a few movies & dinners together, then she cooked me the greatest Christmas dinner ever, and I was a gone goose. The weather & both family scheds precluded our being with them, so it worked out nicely. In early January, she took me down to Ventura to meet her kids etc etc, & we were marooned there when the big storms & floods hit.

That was a saga in itself. Her dotr Lottie was getting a new bed, so Shirley wanted L's old queensize so we could stay at Shirley's place more often instead of mine, which has heating problems. But my car picked that time to develop a peculiar ailment which required a part that the local mechanic didn't normally keep in stock, & then Santa Rosa sent him the wrong one, which meant my car had to sit for a week until the next UPS shipment came up. (Some of the downside of living in a small town, no matter how beautiful). In any case, I was dubious about transporting a mattress on my roof in the kind of weather we were having.

Shirley's old VW beetle didn't seem like a good bet either, but she also had an old VW bus that had been sitting for a couple of months with a rundown battery & a soft tire, so we huff & we puff, huff puff, huff puff huff puff for about 20 min, & got the tire round enough to make it to a service station. Then we jump started it & let it fast idle about an hour.

The next day we tossed our luggage in it, gave each other a long searching look, crossed all our fingers, toes, arms, legs etc & started off for Ventura. But it wasn't idling properly. Every time we came to a stop the motor would die. I didn't much relish the prospect of dealing with that in big city

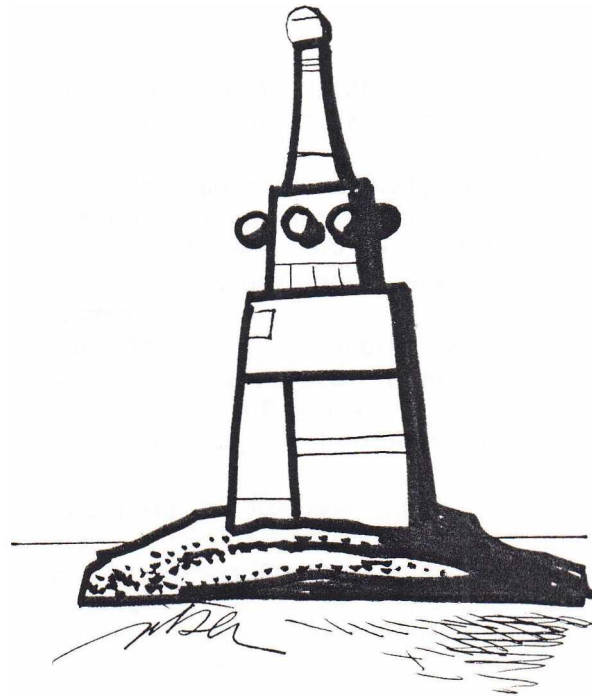
traffic, so we stopt at the mechanics place to check on the status of my car part, & while we were there wheedled the mek into ajusting the carbs. Much better. I told him to add it to the bill for my car, but he didnt. Nice guy. I know where to get my next set of tires.

After the late start & me driving an unfamiliar car & the rain getting heavier & heavier as we went south, we only made it as far as Gilroy. As soon as we settled into a Motel 6, the rain stopt, of course. So we decided to take a little walk. A leisurely walk, of course, so we cd stop from time to time & smell the garlic. And of course, as soon as we got far enuf away from the hotel to get really soaked, it started pouring again.

The next day it began to clear a bit as we approached Salinas, & we began to be hopeful that we myt make it all the way to Ventura without undue struggling. Alas, we reckond without the turbulence that follows the passing of a cold front. The wind pickd up, & the slab-sided bus became more and more difficult to control. This particular bus, a '71, not only presented the usual lg # of sq ft/lb of body wt, but had an extra top section so that one cd stand up inside. Not only that, but it was permanent, not one of the telescoping kind.

I slowed from 65 to 55 (a big concession for me). Then we saw the small camper on the northbound side, completely flipt upside down. I slowd to 45, but the wind kept increasing & the bus became more and more difficult to control. Im talking serious Beaufort Scale, here, #9 or 10. Uprooted trees and the whole schmear. We were down to 35, & holding our breaths every time a big 18 wheeler went booming past. I said, "Forgive me for being a devout coward, but that looks like a nice IHOP over there. I vote for a nice leisurely lunch & waiting until the trees get vertical again." Shirley sighed in relief. "I thot you were *never* going to give up."

We sat in the IHOP a couple of hours, watching unfortunate shoppers struggling to get to & from their cars, umbrellas going inside out, etc. Finally things let up a little,



& we were able to do about 50 down to Paso Robles, where we gave it up for the nite.

So it took us three days to get there. We got there.

There were dinners & other relatives & friends coming over & I got along famously. I especially liked our hosts, Lottie, (Shirleys dotr), her husband Mike (both teachers) & their dotr Megan, 8.

Lottie is pregnant, due in March, so Megan was happy to get some attention from Santa Claus himself. I began to feel useful as well as ornamental. I read stories to her, played games, etc. I was especially pleased to find a good edition of Kipling's *Just So Stories* on an expedition to old downtown Ventura wch is blest with several xln't used book stores. It had Kipling's own illos, & I got to read "The Elephants Child" & "The Cat Who Walked by Himself" (my 2 favorites) to Megan.

The next day we were on our way to dinner & Megan asked if she cd marry me.

Uh-oh. I wiggled out of that one by telling her that Grandma had first dibs on me. But you see how easily these child-adult "love affairs" get started. Im glad she didnt know about the *troises* in this apa and elsewhere. I also appreciate that her parents & grandma were cool, kept their mouths

shut and let me handle it. But I was extra careful after that abt story time, snuggling & lap sitting.

We had pland to start back on Mon 9 Jan, but youll remember the heavens really opend & the floods came. We watchd TV with growing apprehension as they sandwiched accounts of the Guerneville disaster between dramatic footage of what was going on in the Southland. We knew that we had to cross the Russian River to get home, but cdnt find out for sure if the new brij near Jenner was open, if the slide prone Meyers grade was still in one piece, or what. Meanwhile, 101 had been cut near Santa Barbara, & the Santa Clara River, a ½ mile wide dry wash (just across the divided hiway that ran past Lottie's back yard) was rapidly becoming a very wet wash.

It came right up to the edge & then went down again. At one point I was in Megan's room (since her window faced the flood and she was in skool), viewing the matter with some concern, sighting one island of debris against another to keep track of the height of the water. Eveeverybody made it to school that day, but had some trouble getting home. I happened to be in bare feet, & as I crowded up to the window to see better (the wind was blowing the rain so hard, it was difficult to see) I became aware that my feet were wet & making squishy noises. The carpet next to the wall was soaked!

I called Shirley & she got Mike on the phone at his school. He told her to get hold of the tract supervisor, since it was a brand new house & still under warranty. I was surprised when a guy in oilskins showed up within an hour. His name was Peewee (about 5'2"), & altho he was very thoro & knew his stuff, this had him stumped. He soon determined that the water was not coming in around the window as I had thot, but somewhere else, so he got a ladder & went up into the attic to check the vents. It wasnt there, either.

We went downstairs & checked next to the wall under Megan's room, where there was no window, & surenuf, there was about a 10' stretch of wet carpet there also. Shirley & I helped him move furniture & get the carpet elevated on 2x4s so it cd dry w/o mildew. He then had to buzz off to similar calls in that block at houses likewise oriented to the blast coming unblocked across the river. We learnd later that the wind was blowing so hard that it was driving the rain right thru the stucco! The tract builder eventually took care of everything at no cost. I was imprest--not that it wasnt the proper thing to do, but that any tract I ever lived in or anybody I know ever lived in, didnt get that kind of service, even after weeks of kvetching & badgering.

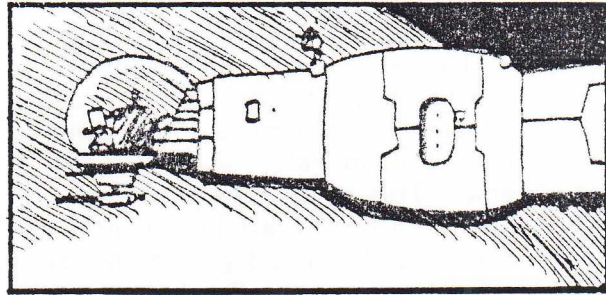
At last 101 cleared at mud-plagued Santa Barbara & we made a break for it. We made good time, but the rain began again & we gave up at San Jose. We found the new 85 cutoff we had come down on, & decided on a Motel 6 somewhere near the Stevens Creek exit. Unfortunately, we turnd the wrong way on SC, & shortly found ourselves lost in the hills. I thot if I kept making right turns I'd hit something familiar, but it didnt work that way. I did manage to get back to 280 & start over, but that turnd out to be north of SC still, & I didnt relish the prospect of being swept into San Francisco with the commute traffic. At my age, driving at nite is difficult, in the rain is a pain, & both together is dangerous, so I turnd off again, figuring to go down to ElCamino & find another M6 or its equivalent.

It was ironic; two oldsters doing their best to get out of the way of all the people who obviously had children in imminent danger & were hurrying home to avert some kind of disaster. I finally found ElCamino, but a part of it I had never been on bfor in spite of attending several Pensfa meetings &

a lot of Fapa collations when Seth Goldberg, the perennial OE, lived in Palo Alto. All the motels seemed to have folded themselves into the 4th dimension like Heinleins "Crooked House." We finally headed into a Jack in the Box to get majuberated, combobulated & to look at maps at leisure, instead of peering at them under insufficient illumination at traffic lites with people honking at us. I found the new definition of nanosecond to be correct: the tiny interval between a traffic lite turning green & the person behind you blowing his horn. With Shirley's help, I finally got it figured out, but reckoned without the ambiguity of the Lilliputian maps Motel 6 puts in their catalog, so we turnd the wrong way on Mathilda & soon found ourselves on the Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road. Again. For the 3rd or 4th time! Ooops! Oh well, we'll just do a 180. Of course, Murphy's Law set in about that time, & there was no chance to double back until we got to 280 again! AAAARGH! We also spent a lot of time on Hollenbeck. You cant tell me that that street isnt a mobiusstrip. I spose all this is pretty boring to non-Bareans, but I take comfort in the thot that everybody from the South Bay is laughing their asses off.

We finally got back to the other end of Mathilda & more irony. Not only was M6 there--but there were *two* of them! No lullabies needed that nite! As we got ready for bed, I said, "Y'know we cdvbn in San Francisco in the time we spent flub-dubbing around this stupid town." Shirley said, "Oh shut up, & come to bed."

The next day dawnd with blue skies, fluffy white clouds & dry roads & we thot it boded well for getting home without trouble. Things went fine across the Golden Gate, but as we went north, it got darker & darker, & it started raining again around Petaluma. I was pushing it, hoping to get across the Russian River bfor it started to rise again. It was pouring by the time we got^{to} St Anthony Farms. Then we came



down the hill & the flat was covered with water. The car ahead of us stopt, then eased on thru. Being up high in the bus gave us a feeling of confidence, so we followed. But a couple miles up the road where Hiway 1 comes in from Tomales, things looked pretty iffy. But the lead car took a chance, the second car turnd back, believing the ROAD CLOSED sign. It was our turn. I looked at Shirley. "Dont look at me," she said, "Youre driving." "Right," I said, & drove thru the shallow lake & up a small hill. On the other side of the hill, at the intersection with Hiway 1, a long line was backed up bhind a CHP car in the other lane. People went on, one by one, with some going back south on 1. When it was our turn the officer askt where we were going. I held my breath and said "Gualala." He paused while my heart sank. He gave us a dirty look & said reluctantly, I thot, "Hiway One is still open, but the next time you see a ROAD CLOSED sign, obey it! OK?"

"Oh yessir," I said in my best mild-mannerd English Teacher Mode, & started to go. "Hold it!" Woops. I held it, while he gave us a severe lecture about the stretch up ahead just bfor Valley Ford, wch was down to one lane, but with still twoway traffic.

We plowed on grimly, thru Bodega Bay & on up the coast withe storm lashing us, getting heavier & heavier. Then as we came down the grade from the Goat Rock road, we anxiously awaited our first view of the Russian River. Huzzah! The brij was above the flood, & open, & best of all, the

Dogfight

Hey! Dont skip over to something else. This is not about pit bulls, but the aerial dogfite of the century. This is abt The Red Baron & the Yellow Baron with black stripes. This is abt those incredible winged acrobats who put the Millenium Falcon & the ti fiters to shame. This is abt hummingbirds.

I put in a feeder last fall, & after I had concluded that I had got the nectar wrong or something, Butch arrived. There were others, but I didnt know it at first. If Butch wasnt the alpha male, s/he sure acted like one, monopolizing the feeder for minutes at a time, eons no dout, in hbird time, thus the name, Butch. B held sway for some time, driving off any who came close, until he was so full he had to lumber off to a nearby tree & burp for a while. One time he made two or three abortive launches & didnt make it until he gave himself a jet-assisted takeoff.

But one day he met his match in Murray the Maneuverable. There are 4 holes in the feeder, & Butch was contentedly slurping away at 3 oclock, when Murray zoomed in at 9 & got himself a drink bfor B cd get his beak out of the hole. Such an outrage was not to be borne. B went for M like rowrbazzle, but M easily escaped & B returnd to guard the feeder in dead earnest. He was full, but he was damd if that upstart was going to get any of HIS nectar!

But M was too smart for him. He appeared out of nowhere to lite on the TV antenna near the feeder. Butch of course went for him & M simultaneously went for the feeder with B in too hot pursuit for M to get even a sip. He went away & thot up a new strategy.

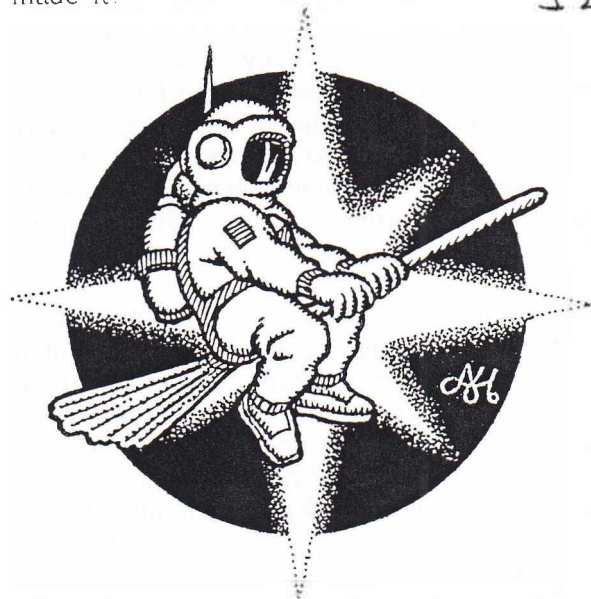
When he came back, he went str8 for the hole opposite to Butch. This time, instead of retreating to the forest when B charged, he simply ducked *under* the feeder. (cont. on page 8)

TRIP (cont from p 5)

flat stretch just bfor Jenner was above water. Go for it! Only one worry left. Btwn Jenner & Ft Ross, abt 1000' above the ocean, just past where the Meyers grade goes even higher, theres a place that is continually sliding. Even in summer, CalTrans is always working on it. We toiled up the switchbax as darkness began closing in. With bated breath we approachd the Meyers Grade turnoff.

Oh good. There was no detour sign out. I bit my lip & we went on. In the fading lite & the thrashing rain, we approached the slide area. One lone CalTrans man with his front loader was frantically grabbing dirt and rox from the uphill side, wheeling around & depositing it on the downhill side. There were no flagmen, no Prepare to Stop signs, nothing but this lonely guy, doing his best to keep the road open. But it was a losing battle. We cd see that the road was crackd & abt 4" lowr on the downhill side. We stopt & waited.

Finally he peered thru the dimmess, stopt his rig & motiond us thru. I went rowrbazzle bfor he cd change his mind. I lookt in my mirror as we went round the next bend & he was putting out sawhorses closing the road. The rest of the way was a breeze. A very strong breeze, but we made it. Ω



MAILING COMMENTS #189

JUPITER JUMP 19

Mark Manning

(Did Mark make it over all those barrels? Or was that what he said to his horse during the steeplechase?) Nice job of writing starting off. I nominated you for both Hugo and Faan awards. The academic chain letter was totally hilarious. It not only roffled me, but had me thoroly omsosted. Not only that, but I learnd a new word, "micturition," wch hardly happens any more. Learning a new word, I mean. I'm happy to report that micturition still occurs, perhaps a little oftener than Id like, since the radiation.

And you managed to capture the HGWells style very nicely, & furthermore, still stay fannish. It wdvbn all too easy to topple over on the sercon side.

ct GMC: "*I bet Art Widner can tell you more about* (Spelling Reform 1), *if he wants to.*" Of course, he wd like to tell GM or any other captive audience much more abt it than they want to know, but maybe he cant. I have a feeling that this is a Teddy-come-lately group, from their rather pompous title. Are there plans for "Spelling Reform 2...n"? Spelling reform proposals come & go like the tides, & I dont pay much attention unless they come up with something new & different, either in fonetik methods or strategies to get their plan accepted. The inertia to overcome is enormous. Is like trying to get a loco-motive startd on greasy rails.

My token efforts in this direction amount to a fart in a tornado. But I assure you (or rather others who are unaware of what I am doing) that it is not mere whimsy, nor yet an affectation modeled after "Ackermanese," wch I am sometimes accused of. So go ahead, Saps, ask me if you dare, & Ill reprint "Shortype" from a fiftyyearold YHOS.

The similarity btwn the b & the h in your italic font led me at first to read your quote of GM as "*Only real difference between a rat and a squirrel is the busby tail.*" I gaspt, thinking you were accusing our honorable FM of some kind of hanky-panky or being just plain nuts. I place no credence in such rumors,as Tucker wd say.

ct Tackett: "...there is no monkey-AIDS." I get *Science News* & dont recall reading that particular article, but even if that tissue sample was mislabelled, it doesnt prove that that there is no monkey-AIDS, any more than a sample not mislabelled wd prove that people first got AIDS from eating monkey meat. In the first place, they wd have to eat it raw, which seems unlikely, even in tribal cultures. At least two ways are more likely: getting bitten by a "pet" monkey, or bestiality. I also vaguely recall that the theory of syphilis being brot to the Americas by Spanish shepherders, supposedly among Columbus's sailors, has been discounted. Im disappointd, bcoz the theory lent credence to all those shepherder jokes. Then theres the matter of manatees being mistaken for mermaids. That mustvbn one hardup drunken sailor who made that oneup. But dont hoot at it too quickly. Ive known some lowlifes in the army & road gangs, whose buddies all agreed that "Yeah, he'd do it with a snake, if he cd get hold of its ears."

I agree about *SeaQuest*. Even Roy Scheider has been bad-mouthing it. I gave up on it after 2 or 3 episodes. It was hard to believe that it wdnt get better, since it had no place to go but up. Why didnt they get Buz or Gordon to write some decent scripts for them? But nooo--thats not the Hollywood way. If it aint working, dumb it down some more or throw in more SFX.

ct Briggs: "*The very mention of an unexplained "secularism" sends them ballistic!*" I ran into this when I was going to school at LA State in the 50s. There were a couple of Arab muslims in one class, one of whom seemed to be a nice, friendly guy, an Iranian, as I remember. I thot we were getting to be friends, & I was a little proud of myself for overcoming my prejudices & beginning to know this person as another human being like myself. One day there was a discussion of the intransigence of some public figure in refusing to moderate a clearly ridiculous position. When asked my opinion, I said, "It looks like Mohamet will have to go to the mountain."

At smoke break we had grown accustomed to critiquing the prof, the subject, or whatever, & generally having a

good mini bull session, so I asked him for his views on the topic. I was surprisd when he ignord the sally & said in his flat, unemotional tones, smiling as if he were discussing the price of mung beans on the Chicago Futures Market, "You are lucky that you are in your own country."

I was blindsided. Say what? Bewilderd. I askd, "Suppose I were in your country?" I felt a chill as he replied in the same level tone, still smiling, "We wd beat you."

I knew him well enuf to know that he wasnt applying American idiom to a friendly contest of some sort, but that he & his buddy wd kick the living shit out of me if they got half a chance.

But why? What did I do? What did I say? After much anguishd questioning & strain on his mask of politeness, I gatherd that I had committed something like blasphemy.

I had assumed that the parable of Mohamet learning humility from Allah was a universal, something like Noah & the Ark, but apparently it was not in his lexicon, & so he assumed that I had said something like "Jesus Christ is the world's greatest asshole" to a Waco wacko. Nothing I cd say wd change that. It was time to go back to class, & we never spoke again. Who was wrong? To this day, I dont know, bcoz Ive never met a rational muslim that I cd ask abt it.

On "Tundra Wind," I have occasion to go thru Monte Rio on my way to shop or keep medical appointments in Santa Rosa (the major city north of the Bay) or to visit the Glen Ellen Gang. Just bfor a Fapa collation last year, I sent TW a copy of *Quaro* & an invitation to ride with me to Benicia (home of OE Goldberg) & get acquaintd with NBay fen. I receivd no reply or acknowledgement. One time I stopt in Monte Rio (a resortown not much bigger than Gualala) & checkt the fone bk. No Winds. Tundra, Monsoon, Chinook or otherwise. There it stands.

IRS tomoro & leave for Corflu next day. Usual tiresome apologies to all & especially GM, who spent 1½ pp replying to me. Hope to see some of u in Los' Wages.

Ω

Dogfight - cont. from p.6

came up where B had been, grabd a sip & disappeard, str8 up.

Poor Butch. The life of an alpha male is hard. Murray finally tired him out to the point where he wd tolerate M feeding at the opposite hole while B was getting his. When B was done he wd make a half-hearted pass at M, wch was easily avoided, then **B** wd flap like a pelican compared to the speedy M.

If this wasnt bad enuf, The Red Baron met an even worse defeat. TRB, alias Butch, is not only a ruby throat, but a whole ruby head. When I first saw him, it was rainy weather, & his head appeard plain black, but later, at sunset, when the angle of sun was just rite, he came roaring up to the feeder, turnd just as he perchd, & his whole head seemed to burst into day-glo, iridescent, scarlet flame. It took my breath away.

When I got back, I noticed that the feeder was about empty, & B was ascending & hovering at the little supplemental cup on top, something like the restaurant on top of Seattle's Space Needle. He seemed to hesitate, so I moved up to the window & peerd closer. Aha! The Yellow Baron, a large striped hornet, was there, practically bathing in the stuff, since the small cup didnt have holes like the large one. Butch startd to move in, but Mr Yellow Jacket wd have none of it. He came up right in the Red Barons face & said, "Buzz off, Big Guy. This is MY turf now." How did he know that hbirds wernt equipt with real beaks but a proboscis & a long tongue, thus unable to deal with insects? Butch was reluctant to back down, so TYB made a run at him & there was the most amazing face-off.

TRB said "I can hover all day if I have to." TYB said, "So can I, pal. & besides, Ive got a stinger in my tail."

The Red Baron buzzed off. Ω