

ORTZIAN CHRONICLES

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Published by Aaron T Knight/Create Space 2013

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Chapter One

Outlined against the night sky, then gone in less than a second, a blue ray of light had descended to earth. No one had noticed its arrival except for a graduate student from Berkeley working in the observatory on an electron camera used to map sectors of the universe. It hadn't really made much of an impression on him either, being only visible for a instant on the screen. Routinely he had taken a photograph of the phenomena.

Several miles from the observatory the ray of light, much diminished now from the resistance to earth's gravitational force, came to an abrupt halt in the freezer of a convenience store. A voice (translated here into English) complained,

"This is a cold planet, I'm freezing my butt off."

"I'll turn on the scanner and take a look."

In the reflected light of the machine the creature's countenance appeared to be glowing in a greenish light. If someone had been there to see it, they would have been able to make out a few of its facial features. It had enormous ears, small squinty eyes and two mouths. The rest of the face was in darkness.

The creature twiddled some dials, punched a button or two, then slid a thin sheet of some kind into a slot. Seeming to be satisfied with the adjustments, the creatures studied the screen. One said,

"We appear to be inside a freezer machine. I'd guess it's equipment to preserve things. So we need to blast out of here and learn what sort of planet we're stranded on."

They didn't do anything quaint like a countdown to blast off, instead, in a very casual way the creature moved a tiny knob. There was a blinding blue streak of something making another hole in the glass freezer top, then it was gone instantly. It was so noiseless that the store clerk barely took his eyes off the television screen to check out the slight tinkling of glass. A quick glance around the store revealed nothing out of order, so he resumed watching his TV program.

They skimmed low over the immediate area where they had crash landed. The buildings, houses and automobiles were foreign to them. Turning on their Celestial Educator they hoped it would be able to work out their position in this galaxy. In a few minutes information flowed from the Educator pinpointing their position in the Milky Way galaxy on a fragment orbiting an energy globe. The distance to their xxxyyyzzz galaxy was several thousand light years.

Moving up to a higher position over the West Coast they studied Los Angeles and its environs blazing with light. One of the creatures commented.

“It’s a huge fragment. We must be careful, it could be trouble for us.”

“Apparently this fragment is primitive, about two thousand years behind Ortz. There could be dangerous aborigines living here. We must find a safe place to hide from them.”

“Let’s explore this gathering center for a place to hide from the brutes.”

At a lower altitude they approached the LA area. Their attention was drawn to a narrow ribbon ablaze with lights extending from horizon to horizon. One remarked.

“This must be where the savages live in those bizarre metal carts that seem to move slowly sometimes. Look there. Some of the carts are turning off onto tributaries”

“We should examine the carts in the event they’re dangerous.”

Down at street level they cruised in front of a cart. The thing made a loud honking noise at them which they assumed was a roaring of the THING before it attacked them. They ascended quickly to escape from the metal machine. A creature remarked.

“That was close. The machine doesn’t seem to have the capacity to fly after us.”

“It is fortunate or we would probably have been eaten by the THING.

“Did you see those loathsome brutes inside the machine? Those large eyes, small ears and only one mouth. How disgusting.”

“I was particularly repulsed by the ugly forest growing out of the top of their skulls. We must leave here, it’s more dangerous than I thought it would be.”

“We need to explore other areas for a safe place to hide from the brutes and their machine monsters.”

The Ortizians flew away from the coast to explore inland possibilities for a safe place. Heading in an easterly direction they passed over a vast desert country. They flew over a mountain range and a gathering center came into view. It was quite different than the centers on the coastline. It was located in the middle of a desert with a dazzling light display of many colors.

Hovering over the gathering center with the brightly colored designs one of them observed.

“Most of this fragment seems to be barren land. Good for hiding but we need a one eyed monster.”

“Maybe the one we almost hit when we crashed is their only monster. Could be their leader.”

“We should explore this smaller gathering center before we decide on the wisest place considering our present predicament.”

This center had attracted them because it was so different from the others they had inspected. With all of the moving colored lights it reminded them of a weird fragment in the xxxyyyzzz galaxy. To avoid any chance of being discovered, they skimmed in low over the desert floor. They followed a highway leading them toward the gathering place.

They came upon a brightly lit sign depicting an ugly savage waving an appendage over his head. Their language educator translated the writing on the sign. It was guessed to mean “Welcome to Lost Wages”. Its meaning was lost on the Ortzians since they didn’t know what a “wage” was. Ascending to a level above the buildings they hovered over Las Vegas Boulevard looking down at the scene below them.

“This might be a gathering place for a species from another world, we must be alert for danger.”

“They have the same metal carts as the other gathering places.” one said looking down on the passage way between the buildings. “It’s amazing that the brutes live in those carts when there is open space around them.”

No one eyed monsters were found in Lost Wages. Hovering above the city they discussed the pros and cons of the sites they had visited. Their attention was focused on studying the area. A roaring sound came at them at a rapid rate and tossed their sphere around.

”Did you see the winged creature?” one asked. “This is a dangerous fragment with flying brutes and monsters.”

“Let’s go higher.”the other one replied.

At the new level they saw another flying creature approaching them. To avoid a collision with the brute they turned on a powerful laser beam to frighten the THING. Then they zipped out of its path and a blue streak appeared for an instant

as the sphere disappeared.

The traffic tower at McCarran Airport was suddenly busy as two approaching passenger planes veered away from their designated flight paths.

A traffic controller shouted into his radio.

“What the hell are you doing? Circle around and get back where you belong.”

“This is Flight 2603 we almost collided with a UFO. It came right at us then vanished in a blue streak of light.”

“Just get your aircraft down here.”

Flight 4009 then contacted the traffic controller and corroborated Flight 2603’s story with one of their own near collisions. When the two flights were on the ground the pilots were taken to the traffic control tower for an explanation of their wild flying. They were subjected to alcohol breathalizers and blood was taken for drug tests.

There was a conference of airline officials and airport executives with the pilots. They stuck to their story about UFOs attacking them. Bad move. The truth landed them in a mental hospital for further examination.

One alien said as they flew away from Lost Wages. "I believe our best place to hide is near the one eyed monster close to our crash site." he added "But not so near that we tic off the monster."

Berkeley's population increased by two that night as the creatures landed and found what seemed to be a safe haven. Although the newly arrived residents were bizarre, it wasn't the first time there had been strange beings and unusual happenings at Berkeley. Unknowingly, the creatures had made a bad choice since the university is alive with research scientists of many disciplines. If they were to be detected, chances were good Berkeley was the most likely place where it could happen.

Sam Slade, graduate student and aspiring astronomer, who had witnessed the momentary blue streak, was shocked awake by the barking of his dog. In short order the lab let out a yelp of pain followed by a whine. Sam rushed into the kitchen in time to see a black cat as big as a horse chasing his terrified dog out of the house. Before he had time to decide to run or fight, the apparition had vanished. He found his dog in a clump of bushes in the park across from the house where he rented a small apartment.

Sam tried to coax Gus, the lab, to return to the house but he had other ideas a lot safer than being beat up by a giant cat. He finally carried Gus in his arms and showed him the coast was clear. Warily the dog skulked into the house with its belly only a few inches from the floor and sought shelter under Sam's bed.

He was shaken by the fantastic sight of a humongous cat appearing, then vanishing right in

front of him. A practical joke? he thought to himself as he concentrated on bringing up possible suspects in his memory. A few people flickered across his mental screen but no one stood out. Coffee cup in hand, it was too late to go back to bed, he sat down in his personal, shabby looking, comfortable chair.

Before his posterior hit the cushion, a sharp pain streaked through him from below. Rubbing the injured area, he inspected the chair for a pin or some other sharp object. Nothing. Sam was jabbed again as he tried to lower himself on the cushion. "What the hell?" he yelled out staring at the old friend turned hostile. Cautiously he studied the cushion with his face so close his nose was almost touching the fabric.

A tiny glint of something had shown briefly on the right hand side of the cushion near the back of the chair. He put out his hand to search for a sharp object which earned him another pain, this time on

the palm of his hand. He had visitors who had recently landed in a convenience store freezer.

A thundering voice commanded Sam to freeze. He quickly obeyed, standing stiffly as if at attention in the military. He looked down his nose trying see where the command had come from. A brilliant flashing blue light rose from the chair and hovered inches from his frozen face.

The loud voice warned him to stay where he was and make no trouble. Sam really didn't need to be told to behave. Still hovering close to his face the voice of authority said,

"We are a race of giants from another galaxy and we need you to take us to the building where the one eyed monster dwells. No harm will come to you."

Sam was speechless and terrorized.

"I, I, don't know where you want me to lead you, SIR."

"Oh, so you have decided to defy me!"

"No, no! I don't understand what the one eyed monster is, and where I might find it. Believe me! I'll obey you, just give me a little more information so I can take you to the monster or whatever."

"It's only a mile from here to the round building where the monster dwells. Don't try to deny it! Take us there now!"

While this exchange was going on, Sam had been looking at the brilliant light. He was able to make out the shape emitting the light. It was a sphere about the size of a softball hardly housing any giants as the voice claimed. He got up his courage and grabbed the sphere thus blocking out the light.

Inside of it he could see two tiny figures about the size of grasshoppers. Another burning pain struck Sam's hand and he let go of the sphere.

"You're not giants! I can see you in the little ball. I don't mean to hurt you, please stop shooting me. Can we talk to each other instead of fighting?"

The bright lights were extinguished so Sam could see the sphere and the creatures inside talking to one another.

"This guy seems peaceful to me, why don't we try being friendly with him. Although it will be hard to stand being around something so ugly."

"Well, if we don't look directly at him, it might not be so bad. But it is ugly alright. I wonder what he does with just one mouth, isn't it awful?" said the other alien.

In a quiet manner, one of them said,

"We didn't choose to invade your planet bunchanockoo. Somehow we took the wrong electro magnetic highway. Then your energy globe's gravity pulled us into its orbit. The force was too strong to avoid and we crash landed on this fragment. My sensor indicates your one eyed monster owns a radio telescope. We can use it to contact our home planet for some help to get home. Now I'm sure you understand completely."

Sam understood nothing and he told them so. Questions began to tumble out of his mouth at a rapid rate which he couldn't control. Who are you? Where are you from? Am I hallucinating? How come you're so tiny? Could you really hurt me? He said this all so loudly the aliens' big ears were vibrating. They hit him in the arm with a laser like beam to shut him up and stop the painful sound waves. He was commanded to sit down.

"I am speaking to you in your language through a translating system in our language educator. We are from a micro galaxy containing millions of energy globes and a large number of fragments. Some of the pieces of rock sustain life forms of fascinating variety."

Sam replied, "We only recently learned of the existence of micro galaxies. It had been assumed the bright lights we were capturing came from stars, that is, energy globes, as you call them. There was too much unexplained activity to

support the star theory. So you're from a micro galaxy, it explains your tiny size in comparison to us here on Earth. I suppose you knew this, uh, fragment, is called Earth."

"No we didn't, and knowing it doesn't help us get out of here. Your fragment and energy globe are insignificant in the universe. In fact, Milky Way Galaxy is only a footnote in the directory of celestial bodies. Our only hope of going back home to Ortz is to send a distress signal using the radio telescope the monster has in its possession."

Sam finally caught on to their repeated reference to a one eyed monster when the alien said they needed a radio telescope. Of course! Positioned inside the planetarium the front part of the telescope protruded through the roof looking somewhat like a one eyed Cyclops.

"It won't be a problem taking you to the radio telescope. I work there for the university. I have a key to the doors. You can relax about the monster,

actually it's the end of the telescope visible from the outside of the building. Our planet doesn't have any monsters, but there are dangerous earthlings and wild animals. You're safe here with me though, the dangers are mainly restricted to certain areas of the earth."

Sam was becoming excited about his alien visitors. He would tell the world about them and sort of make it sound like his discovery, rather than the other way around. It might redeem him in scientific circles after his terrible blunder a year ago when he sounded the alarm about a pending collision with a huge meteor. The menacing projectile was revealed to be a stratospheric electricity disturbance that dissipated within 24 hours.

His reputation as a researcher was badly damaged. Now anything he reported was jokingly checked out to be certain Sam hadn't seen another "apparition". This solid evidence of the presence of

aliens on earth would not only repair his reputation, but give him worldwide credibility as a budding scientist!

As if they had read Sam's thoughts one of them remarked, "Our presence here must be kept a secret from your inhabitants to ward off any interference with our rescue plan. We will only have one chance in the near future to leave your planet. The next opportunity could be a thousand years from now as you measure time. I will explain this as simply as possible for you.

"We are a civilization about two thousand years ahead of your fragment in its evolution. Basically, there is no such thing as time and space, the universe just is. Those concepts are merely crude tools to measure what truly isn't. The universe is an all-encompassing energy engine constructed of electromagnetic fields which form a vast network of energy highways. Knowledge of how to use the energy system means you can traverse to anywhere

in the universe in a matter of minutes.”

"We were off traveling around with a group and SOMEONE," he paused and looked in the direction of his partner, "turned right instead of left. It was a mistake that pulled us into the gravity field of your energy globe.”

“In our efforts to leave your galaxy, we ended up crash landing on your Earth, which damaged our sphere. If we can contact our group in time, they could take a safe course to us. However, if the timing isn't precise, the energy highway we were traveling on will reverse itself.”

"I don't know the exact coordinates of the highway, so its impossible to know when another opportunity will come our way. Then we would be trapped on Earth. So now you understand why we must reach the radio telescope immediately!"

Sam understood their predicament and his mind was racing from one plan to another. In the end, only a direct route to the observatory made any

sense. But he had to hustle the aliens in without the security guards seeing them. He told the aliens what he proposed to do, but the problem was how to avoid being caught. In that case he said, security would be tightened up and their access to the radio telescope might become impossible.”

“We will go with you appearing to be humans.”
(he shuddered at the thought of looking that loathsome)

“How can you transform yourself?” Sam asked.

“We can take human form but only as a sort of,” he paused waiting for the transponder to give him a word, “What you would know, in a primitive form, as a hologram.”

“Our images will appear to be real to the last detail, and you can actually touch us. It is a one way illusion though, meaning we can't defend our images physically, my arm would go right through you.”

“You see there are 22 dimensions in the universe and this will be one you humans haven't discovered yet. Another thousand years or so I would suspect.” he said as he looked at Sam.

"It's a guess based on your physical appearance at the present time."

(He looked away from Sam)

Chapter Two

Sam took their transformed images to the observatory just after midnight. There had been some difficulty creating the human forms since the aliens were in strange territory. He told them they had their ears on backward, and the mouth was much too wide.

Their appearances were somewhat ordinary, but when he stepped back to check them out, he remarked, "There is one thing missing in your disguise as humans. You need hair on the top of your skulls. Even though many humans shave their heads these days, it would be better to look as natural as possible to avoid suspicion."

There was silence, then the aliens turned away from Sam and spoke in their Ortzian language. For the first time he heard their language and it was quite a surprise. There were moans, squeaks and

grunts punctuated at times with loud echoes like the sounds of undersea creatures communicating with one another. Sam guessed the loud reverberations were a part of their conversation conveying strong feelings.

He had guessed correctly. They were excitedly discussing wearing an atrocious forest of "hair" as the humans called it. Pros and cons were debated about making a terrible sacrifice and putting the hideous forest on their heads.

"I can't stand the idea of making myself more revolting than I already appear by wearing 'hair'. There must be a better way to get to the planetarium thing."

"This human was insistent on this disguise. He is a native of the fragment. Even though his appearance is revoltingly primitive, he seems to possess a surprising degree of intelligence."

They wrestled with a number of ideas of their own. Finally, they addressed Sam, trying to avoid

saying something insulting.

"Please excuse our long discussion, but we went over the limitations of converting to a human form. Wearing the hair thing seems to us to be too harsh. It might limit our alertness by covering up an area of our brains possessing great sensitivity. We can't put on the hair." he lied.

Sam was fairly certain the creature shuddered slightly when he mentioned hair. Do I appear to be ugly to these little guys? he thought to himself. He dismissed the idea as ridiculous. He knew women considered him to be attractive.

In the end, he decided they could be scientists with bald heads. He clothed them in long white lab coats so he could pass them off as astronomers from a foreign country. The guards had no idea of how foreign! He explained their time in LA was very limited and they wanted to see the fabulous observatory at the university.

Standing before the guard were two men in lab coats with completely bald pates. The guards knew Sam and waved him in while they drank coffee with their donut break. Moving swiftly, Sam took the aliens to the impressive control room of the observatory.

"This should work." one of them explained to Sam. "I'm sending a signal using the energy highways to our galaxy. It's a little tricky since I will have to do a bank shot off your energy globe to pick up momentum, then slide out of your Milky Way, make a slight right turn, and then aim directly for our galaxy. We will wait here to receive their answer."

Sam became anxious,

"We can't stay here! It will be morning in a few hours and this place will be filled with people!"

"You forget what I told you about energy highways. If the signal made contact, we will have an answer in five minutes at the outside."

Sam's mind reeled as it worked to grasp concepts two thousand years ahead of Earth.

It actually took 4 minutes and 23 seconds for the answering signal to reach Earth. The answer was a complex variety of sounds, trills, deep moans, tinkles and bell ringing. He had never heard anything remotely like it. In a few moments the human-like images were gone and the sphere rose out of his pocket.

"We don't need the images any more, you can just walk out and tell them the scientists left by another exit."

The human disguises were really being ditched quickly so they didn't have to look at more than one human form. The creatures carefully hid their disgust from Sam since they didn't want to hurt his feelings. The poor, misshapen, grotesque human!

Now there occurred an unforeseen encounter. Which should please you readers, otherwise this

story would be ending right here. Before Sam could exit the building Dr. Cyrus Globule Phd, MS, Rsvp, and Alpha Bagel, resident scientific genius, entered the room. He only slept two hours a day so showing up at one in the morning wasn't unusual for him.

"Aah, Sam," he chirped in his high, reedy voice, "Couldn't sleep either I see."

"I have a project to finish by this afternoon, and thinking about it kept me awake." he lied.

Dr. Globule smiled hideously at Sam. He wasn't blessed with good looks. His face was a contradiction. A short little forehead, tiny ears, big nose and thick lips set on a balloon of a head made up his countenance. When he talked and smiled his whole face joined in on the act so he appeared to be going through a terrible torture. His lips moved, the nose lowered to the upper lip; his enormous eyes widened and he looked terribly surprised. All of this was set down on a scrawny neck attached to

a short, skinny body.

Before Sam could escape, Dr. Globule had picked up, and was studying the picture he had taken of the blue blazing streak in the sky.

"How fascinating! he said, "Did you take this photo Sam?"

"Yes sir, shortly before I left the observatory for the day." he replied. "It showed up, and I kind of reflexively took the shot even though it didn't look important."

"On the contrary, it may be a unique phenomena. I have never seen this shape nor exactly this shade of blue. I will take it with me to study."

Chapter Three

At his apartment they sensed Sam's agitation.

"We accomplished our mission, but you are still nervous. What's troubling you?"

He explained to them that Dr. Globule was a genius, and he had seen the photo he had taken of their dive to Earth.

"He won't give up until he solves the mystery of what is causing the unique blue streak in the photo. If he should discover it is your sphere, he will announce it to the world."

They were quick to pick up on the implications of being discovered on Earth. It could stop the rescue from Ortz! Sam almost wished he hadn't told them when he witnessed their distress. He made an effort to play down the threat.

"Chances of Dr. Globule finding out about your space sphere and your landing are pretty remote.

We will stay here and wait for your friends to arrive. I will go back to work, while you stay in hiding."

His words did calm them somewhat. They still had doubts knowing how easily unplanned events can happen, like their accidental crash to Earth. They agreed with Sam's plan for the simple reason there wasn't any safer alternative.

Enter complication #2. Sam's girl friend arrives at his apartment and lets herself in with her own key to the door. An indication of how far their romance has progressed to this point. Mercedes came to Sam's apartment to relax and wait for her man to come home. The aliens didn't hear her because they were having an argument in their own language.

Mercedes was frightened by the other-world sounds. This might not be completely accurate, but one would recall the singing sounds of whales underwater with an overtone of a tenor and a

baritone singing a duet in an Italian opera. It was certainly bizarre.

The moans and groans continued as Mercedes, on the edge of hysteria, edged along the wall to check out Sam's TV and radio. They were turned off, so she tip-toed toward the exit. Mission accomplished, she yanked open the door and ran out into the street.

This uproar was finally heard by the aliens who jumped into their sphere and hid in Sam's chair. Unfortunately for them, Gus saw them and began to bark while backing away from the chair. He was headed toward the open door to high tail it, pardon the pun.

Sam missed all of the action, but his cell phone began ringing the minute Mercedes cleared the premises. "Thanks for the call. Where are you?"

"I just left your apartment to call you. Did you have a sound system installed? There's weird music at your place and I couldn't turn it off.

It made me nervous, so I left."

Sam immediately thought of the aliens as the cause of the strange sounds. It couldn't be anything else since she had tried his TV and radio. He was feverishly trying to come up with a reasonable explanation to give her. Got it! he thought.

"Since the sound was still on after you checked everything in the apartment, it must have been coming from my next door neighbor. I've had to complain to him several times about the loud music he plays."

"It sounded as if it was right here, Sam."

"The walls are pretty thin in the house since it is an old house partitioned off into small apartments. Stay there, I'm on my way home now."

By the time he had arrived the apartment was quiet. He led Mercedes into the place. Probably his visitors had heard her and went into hiding, Sam made an elaborate search of the apartment to reassure her, then said,

"I believe I was right about the noise coming from next door. I'll need to speak to them again."

"Well, if the weird sounds were in your neighbor's apartment they have strange tastes in music. There were moans of all kinds, then short intervals of opera music, or at least something sounding like singers. It was fantastic, almost as if the music was from another world."

Quickly, almost too quickly, Sam replied,

"It must have sounded weird because you were hearing it coming through a wall. I'll bet that's it. Ha ha."

"You wouldn't be so amused if you had been here," Mercedes replied, rather annoyed at his flippant attitude. He then announced they would have dinner out and relax a little.

Gus had returned cautiously when he saw Sam. However, when he tried to get Gus into the apartment the dog resisted the idea of being alone with the shadowy menace in his home. Ultimately,

Sam had to take the dog with him in the car where Gus curled up on the back seat, settled in gratefully, and went to sleep. Only Mercedes' refusal to sleep over at his apartment spoiled the evening. She hadn't forgotten her weird experience, and told him she couldn't relax there.

When Sam went to work at the observatory he found the place alive with media people surrounding Dr. Globule. He was holding up a greatly enlarged version of the photograph Sam had taken of the blue streak. There were magnified photos on the bottom of the picture showing a vague, but discernible sphere hidden in the blue flash of light.

Globule was giving an interview to the press about his discovery,

"In my considered opinion, there is no doubt we are looking at an alien craft. Its size is a puzzle, but we will find the answers here at Berkeley and keep you informed of our progress."

Sam slinked away from the crowd to enter the building where he took refuge at his desk to stay out of the excitement. He told himself there was nothing to worry about since there was no evidence to throw suspicion on him. With an effort, he concentrated on a project due to be completed by the end of the week.

He wondered how long his guests from another galaxy would have to remain with him while they awaited their rescue party from Ortz.

Chapter Four

Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong, at precisely the wrong moment. So goes one of Murphy's Laws of Life. What happened next made Sam a fervent believer in this sad, but true observation regarding the way things often go for us pitiful earth creatures. His theory about his safety from being suspected of having any knowledge of things like spheres and aliens turned out to be a fantasy in accordance with the law. Murphy would have laughed like hell if he had witnessed his law at work in Sam's life.

Dr. Globule began his investigation of the UFO sighting immediately. His team of scientists used their knowledge and sophisticated electronic devices to study the sphere in the photograph in many ways. The blue streak was interpolated, cross checked, observed and subjected to electronic

measurements in order to build a model projection of where the object had landed.

Triangulation work based on the proposed trajectory of the sphere took many days of some nifty mathematics to zero the search down from the entire universe to an area approximately 5 square miles in size. And this suspected crash site was within 2 miles of the observatory. Eager scientists, and students who were helping out looking for extra credit to pass science courses, began to scour the area. Globule had a carefully worked out grid assigning numbered territories to the assembled teams.

Sam had volunteered to be in a search group to keep suspicion away from himself. It was tedious and boring to pretend to be looking with the group knowing they were performing a meaningless task. That attitude turned out to be naive when three days into the search, Group #4 stumbled upon a clue. It was at the convenience store where the

aliens had crash landed into a food freezer. A hungry student volunteer who went to the freezer case to select a snack, noticed two breaks in the freezer glass.

The young clerk who had been present the night of the crash was on duty. A few questions prompted him to mention hearing several faint noises while he was on duty a few nights ago. He said it sounded like the tinkle of breaking glass, and there were now two holes in one of the freezers

Dr.Globule, with assistance from the police department, was able to confiscate the freezer for further analysis at the observatory. The owner of the store protested vehemently until he was offered an amount of money higher than the freezer's market price.

Sam remained calm enough, reasoning, so what if they had discovered the crash site? Globule and the rest of the scientists would still be as ignorant

as before since the aliens were living in his comfortable chair. Nothing he could think of would give them a clue to where they were now. He didn't fare well in the big cover-up though when Globule found blue “angel” dust, as he called it, as a residue in the freezer.

When Globuie passed an ultraviolet beam of light across the area, the angel dust lit up into a bright blue sparkle. Sam was close by and his clothes began to have a similar blue glow caused by contact with the alien sphere. The scientist’s huge head turned, and his large eyes regarded Sam quizzically.

“Did you contaminate the search site Sam? There are small particles on your clothing lighting up in an exact match to the color of the blue sparkle in the freezer. Are you hiding something from us? Do you know where the aliens are?”

“Aliens? What would I know about beings from outer space? There’s no proof there are any aliens

or a space ship. Only a theory. I know nothing about it.” Sam replied with his voice becoming higher and louder as he protested his innocence. His disclaimer had the opposite effect from the one he had tried to create. His obvious nervousness had shown through in his voice.

Eying him, Dr. Globule said, "You stay here with me Sam. I'm going to run a molecular analysis of the tiny granules in the freezer and on your clothes."

Several policemen were there in the lab and they moved over to block the door as they looked Sam over for something suspicious. It wasn't clear to him what they expected to find on his person. He sat down on a chair trying to appear to be calm and normal, although he wasn't sure what looking "normal" might entail.

At a long laboratory work table a dozen scientists were working with an array of

instruments for measuring and analyzing the blue granules. Up and down the table there were little sparkles appearing and disappearing as the scientists applied light to the material. It reminded Sam of the old nursery rhyme, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star" as he watched them work.

Several hours passed before all of the analysis processes had been completed. There was a meeting of the scientists using an office for privacy. He could hear the low murmuring of conversation emanating from the office. At times there was a loud protest from one of the scientists. After awhile, the conclusions from the various studies finally came together to produce an agreement satisfactory to all of the researchers.

Dr. Globule led the group back to the lab where the other members of the search groups waited to hear the findings. Even though Dr. Globule had the worst squeaky voice of the group, he had decided

to give the report. After all, it was kind of his research project from the analysis of the photograph of the blue streak. He read;

"We have come to a unanimous agreement about the nature of the strange dust particles discovered in the convenience store freezer. Its properties are foreign to our knowledge and understanding of the structure of matter. Our instruments and knowledge of matter in the conventional sense were of no use when we studied these particles." (He withheld the specific research results).

“When tests were applied to the particles, it simply made them disappear and then reappear again in another location. Electromagnetic tests produced a number of confusing results. Some approaches revealed a structure made up of only positively charged atoms, while the results of other tests showed a neutral state, that is, no electrical charge at all. Negatively charged atoms also appeared in places.”

"We have reached the obvious conclusion. It is matter which seems to have the capability to change its very nature of its own accord. We all agree it is a substance which can only have originated in an alien world beyond our understanding of the universe."

Things happened rapidly when Dr. Globule released the research report to the public. Science had something completely new to study which brought scientists from all over the world to Berkeley. A media blitz was obviously created giving the news peddlers exciting stuff to work with, massage, mold and exploit. There was a wide assortment of blue alien toys produced based strictly on the imaginations of the designers in an effort to make a fast buck off the publicity.

Sam became an object of speculation because of his repeated denial that he had no more information than anyone else. All he had done, he kept insisting, was take the photograph of a flash

of blue light as a matter of routine. No one believed him except for his family.

He was considered somewhat of a colorless and boring member of the family who was devoting his life to the study of the universe. This career path was regarded as something like wanting to live in some kind of fantasy world with weird people like himself. They were positive Sam had nothing to hide because he didn't have enough "nerve" to do anything else but follow the rules to the letter.

Chapter Five

Eventually he was taken into custody by the government for questioning since he might be withholding information potentially threatening to the security of the country. He was brought to a house in Berkeley used to detain people of interest to federal officials. No charges were brought against him since they weren't sure what he had done, if anything, to whom he had potentially done it to, and why he might, or might not have, withheld information vital to the security of the country.

At the apartment the aliens knew something was wrong when Mercedes arrived to feed Gus instead of Sam. Then when she moved into the place to take care of the dog they knew he must be in trouble. It was time to help him, but how? With their advanced technology they began to search for

Sam by interceding into the earth's communications. They learned about Dr. Globule's discovery of their presence on earth by analyzing the blue granules left in the freezer when their sphere had crashed.

The story about the photograph Sam had taken at the observatory and the blue dust found on his clothes was the clincher. Many people suspected him of shielding the aliens. They were closer to the truth than they would ever know. Finally, a short paragraph about Sam being taken into custody by a government agency provided the answer for the aliens regarding Sam's predicament.

The Ortzians were in a terrible state over their benefactor. They knew action was now necessary to protect Sam. In doing so, the Ortzians would be abandoning their safe place until the Ortz rescue party arrived. To date no information had been forthcoming from Ortz about the rescue date and plan.

First, they had to locate Sam, hoping it was near by since their sphere had lost some of its power capabilities in the crash landing. Lack of power was one of the main reasons for asking for a rescue from earth. Equally vital was finding the right electro magnetic highway from Ortz to earth for the rescuers. A miscalculation could mean they might never get back to their home galaxy.

They decided to use their Aroma Educator to locate Sam. This scientific device could detect a particular odor and pin point its origin from one hundred miles away from its location. One of them remarked as they set up their machine,

"Let's hope this is the solution, and we don't have to travel far to rescue Sam. Our energy source indicator is pretty low and a long trip could leave us without sufficient power to rendezvous with the rescue team."

"No use fretting over the obvious when we have already made up our minds to help Sam. Get the

Aroma Educator calibrated. Then we have to find a way to circumvent the noisy animal he keeps, so we can reach a piece of clothing for the Aroma Educator to sniff."

When they were ready the sphere was brought up to the level of the chair's cushion so they could survey the scene. As far as their safety in the chair was concerned, they didn't know Gus hadn't been within ten feet of it since he saw them the second time. Gus was grumpy about the situation because Sam's comfortable old chair was his favorite place to curl up for a snooze. Now and then, Gus would peer around the corner of the room and glare resentfully at the chair.

On this day, the lab was asleep on Sam's bed when the sphere floated upstairs to fetch a shirt for the Aroma Educator. Moving silently they entered Sam's closet and found a recently worn shirt lying in a heap on the floor. The sphere was lowered on to the shirt, a door slid open, and the Aroma

Educator's long snout sniffed the shirt thoroughly. Mission completed, the sphere rose and headed for the bedroom door. Unfortunately, a shirt sleeve had been caught in the door of the sphere, so it looked like an arm rising in the shirt.

This movement was detected by the dog's sleepy brain and one eye opened to check on things. There was an arm waving at him from the closet which brought Gus abruptly awake. The lab barked mightily while he backed up toward the open bedroom door.

Up came the sphere after it had shed the shirt sleeve and the apparition of the huge black cat growled at Gus. It was doubtful the dog's paws ever touched the stairs as he landed on the floor below. Upon landing, he spun around several times, his paws were spinning in a blur on the wood floor but Gus wasn't going anywhere. Then a back paw touched the wall giving him the needed leverage, and the dog bolted into the kitchen and out of his doggy door to freedom.

Mercedes drove up in time to witness Gus running across the lawn. She had stopped the car in his path and the lab leaped over the hood, landed, and kept on going. It would have been impossible for her to find Gus in the next twelve hours as he put miles between himself and the giant, dog eating black cat.

The house was now empty of Ortzians and dog. They didn't have far to travel to find Sam. He was in a house only five miles from his apartment. The Aroma Educator had performed perfectly to point the way to Sam. Outside the house the aliens studied the situation carefully as the day turned into early evening.

At the house where Sam was being detained, lights came on. It gave the Ortzian scanners a sharp picture of the interior. They spent some time moving their scanners around the house searching for Sam. In time, an agent went upstairs and came back escorting Sam to the dining room in plain

view for the aliens to see.

Now they had to work out the best way to contact Sam and then help him escape from the house. Dozens of ideas came and went. Some inspirations called for overt action with the aliens storming the house as lions, or tigers, monster snakes, giant lizards. These ideas were rejected because Sam might be injured or killed in the escape attempt while they would be safe in their hologram state. No, they would have to out-wit the government agents somehow.

Taking direct action in human disguise had its risks and problems. They had no knowledge of how these repulsive creatures lived and then there was the language problem. Although the Language Transponder was fairly accurate in translating the Ortzian language into English, there were some flaws. When they were in the sphere it was relatively easy for them to adjust the Transponder to aid it in delivering the proper words. In the

hologram-like state, it wouldn't be possible to make adjustments. They would have to risk being discovered in order to help Sam.

Keeping it simple, they decided to use the disguise Sam had worked out for them as scientists at the observatory. They would pose as doctors arriving at the house to examine him. One creature would contact Sam while the other one kept the agent guarding his room occupied.

Another problem for them was using a disguise as earthlings. To them humans were hideous to look at. It made it difficult to create a reasonable facsimile, They had to create the costumes while trying to avoid looking in a mirror as much as possible while checking their work. It resulted in a lot of guesswork because of the hurried glimpses to check their human disguise.

Chapter Six

Two men in white lab coats entered the house and approached the agent on duty at the front door.

"What is your business here gentlemen?" the agent inquired politely. He was trying to avoid staring at the strange pair. One of them was missing an ear, the other one had a huge nose with flaring nostrils and a drooping lower lip.

There was silence as the aliens waited a moment for the Transponder to give them the right words for a greeting.

"Hail!" said one alien, "The night is dark! It often is, isn't it?"

"What?" said the startled agent as his hand began to move to his gun concealed under his suit jacket. He was a big man and he towered over the aliens.

"What?" the alien repeated as he waited for more words, then continued on,

"We are doctors sent to operate on Sam Slade."

Before the agent could say anything, there was a rush of words from the Transponder. To keep up, the alien quickly blurted out.

"Not operate.--- Of course not! ---Examine, we need to examine Sam Slade---for God and country."

Things were becoming confused as the Transponder worked furiously to supply the right communications. It seemed to be overloaded as it groped for words. They knew a disaster was in the making and they hastily backpedaled toward the front door to escape.

The agent was still hesitant to draw his weapon since the bizarre white gowned men hadn't made any threatening movements. As they reached the front door, the alien with the large nose and huge lower lip turned toward the agent and contorted his lips trying to mimic a human smile. The result was a disdainful sneer.

Sneering, he bid farewell to the agent,

"Hail!----It was a lovely time!----Good morning!"

As soon as they were gone, the agent called his superior on his cell phone and told him about the strange encounter with the two men. His boss called several agents posted near the house and told them to intercept the suspects in white lab coats and bring them in for questioning.

By the time the agents were at the front steps of the house where the two suspects should have been, the aliens had shed their human forms. All that was left were two white lab coats lying on the sidewalk. This incident put the government on guard and the area was soon under tight security.

Their problem had just become worse. They spent a day constructing a new strategy for springing Sam from the feds. Some in-depth studies about humans was helpful, and they learned about their fears, ambitions and ideals,

most of which they considered peculiar.

Plan # 2 was a riskier approach, but they were relieved they didn't need to become ugly humans with their repulsive features for this plan. When they had posed as doctors it was difficult to ignore their own ugliness, it had been necessary for them to avoid looking at each other.

In the evening, they stationed themselves across the street from the government house to watch the agents. It appeared to be quiet over there so it was time to start their escape plan. An agent on the ground floor sitting in the dining room drinking a cup of coffee looked up from his newspaper because of some movement at one of the windows.

He went over to the window to check on what he had seen. When he opened the curtain a huge blood shot, golden eye was staring at him. The eye covered the entire window and the agent recoiled from it in terror. His yells were heard by everyone and they all rushed to the dining room.

As they were coming into the dining room, the agent who had witnessed the terrible apparition was backing up to make a quick exit. The agents stopped him from leaving the dining room while they spouted out a barrage of questions.

Terrified speechless, the agent pointed at the window with a trembling finger. Lining up their eyes with the pointed finger, they saw the golden eye looking in through the window. While they were staring, a huge purple eyelid descended over the eye, then it rose again. The 'thing' was either winking at them, or it was just opening and closing as any eye lid would do.

No one needed orders from anyone about their course of action. They all headed for the front door of the house. Opening the door might not have been such a good idea for now the rest of the gigantic dragon came into view. This was a fire spewing dragon, its mouth opened, and the gaping hole looked like the entrance to a tunnel.

It made a thundering roar while flames shot out between its impressive fangs. Fire engulfed them as they ran for cover. One courageous agent stopped and emptied a clip of bullets from his pistol which merely bounced off of the tough hide of the dragon.

All of the agents were now outside of the house. A huge snake resembling a deadly Bushmaster slithered through the entrance. Sam had been abandoned by the agents in the dining room. He couldn't run for he had on ankle shackles, besides he figured anything this bizarre was probably the work of the aliens. Anyway, he could only wait and see.

A huge snake's head peered around the doorway to the dining room and said to him,

"It is I, me. Run like hell Sam while we block, uh, hold the enemy, or opposers, or something."

"I can't run," he shouted over the roaring sound of the dragon outside. "My ankles are chained up."

"I'm only an apparition. No help to you. I have no force, uh, power at all."

"If you will prevent anyone from entering the house for five minutes, I will hide in the basement. Hopefully there is some tool down there I can use to get these shackles off."

Outside of the house there were deafening sounds as the alien "dragon" roared and spat flames. Mingled in with this racket was the sound of gunfire. Hiding behind trees and bushes the agents carried on their defensive actions. They were becoming progressively more fearful as they watched their bullets strike the dragon then bounce off harmlessly.

A police rescue squad and a fire truck arrived to aid the agents in battling the incredibly large reptile appearing to be an escapee from a Chinese New Year celebration. They all recognized the dragon from pictures of Chinese holidays. The hideous head was nearly three stories in height, its

body and tail stretched out for nearly a city block.

Now the dragon was being attacked by gunfire, riot control water cannons and tear gas. Screaming out at the blitz attack, the creature answered his attackers with thick plumes of fire from its mouth and nostrils. Everyone scrambled for safety fearing they would be reduced to toast by this fiery monster. Then a giant snake came into view from the front of the house slithering toward them with its huge tongue flitting out of its mouth.

It was enough exposure to monsters for these brave men. Within minutes the street was emptied as the official vehicles collected everybody for a rapid escape. Silence. Magically the monsters disappeared.

There wasn't any evidence they had ever existed. The fire from the dragon hadn't left any heat damage. There were no prints from the monster's feet anywhere. No smoke odors, since it was only an illusion created by the aliens.

Mission accomplished, they flew to Sam's home to wait for him.

Their diversion had created the needed time for him to escape from the house as the government men fought off the dragon attack. Federal agents from the house told skeptical enforcement officials about the terrible dragon and the giant snake.

A thorough investigation of the area was held where the alleged battle was supposed to have taken place. All of the information gathered from interviews with neighborhood residents was put together. Only the FBI agents, some policemen and a few firemen had seen the monsters. By the time reinforcements arrived the aliens had escaped in their sphere.

To compound the disbelief about their adventure by the officials, was the perfectly in-place scene the reinforcements saw when they arrived. No evidence of any fires, not even a scorch mark was to be found, and the agents were unharmed. Only

the spent bullets scattered all over the street were there to attest to a furious battle with a mirage or something. After being hospitalized and thoroughly examined, the agents were all declared to be healthy specimens and released.

Now came the fall-out from the bizarre account of a great battle which seemed to only exist in the minds of these men. There were sly jokes and pairs of glasses anonymously placed on their desks. It would take a considerable period of time for the incident to fade away.

There was one person who remained interested in the agents' account of monsters who mysteriously disappeared. Dr. Cyrus Globule was certain this was the work of the aliens he was tracking. He held sessions with the agents as a group, as well as singly, to gather a thorough knowledge of the attacks. The agents regained some of their self esteem when this renowned scientist took their ordeal seriously.

When he learned about Sam being detained for questioning by the agents and his subsequent escape, he was sure the aliens had something to do with the appearance of the monsters. Subsequently vanishing without any physical evidence could only be the invention of other-world creatures. He told the FBI about his suspicions from the first incident at the observatory to the clever illusions obviously created as a diversion so Sam could escape from their custody.

Dr. Glucose' theories convinced the FBI to establish a task force to apprehend Sam and capture the aliens. It would be overseen by the scientists armed with spectra scopes. They would be used to detect blue angel dust if they came across their location. The search was thoroughly planned out to begin at the observatory then continuing in tight circles which would become larger as the participants worked their way outward.

To disguise the nature of the operation from the press, it was named "Blue Angel".

Chapter Seven

Sam had collected the creatures at his apartment and immediately took off out of the area for San Francisco. He figured a large city was ideal for getting lost. It was a tedious drive to the Bay area. Anxiously looking for police cars, Sam's head swiveled around like a wooden puppet. He scanned the rear view mirrors, looked through all of the car windows and tried to steer the car all at the same time.

On a side street he gratefully got out of his car and stretched his body. He called Mercedes, who was clueless about the strange happenings at his apartment. She was upset when he reached her on the phone and told her he was in San Francisco.

"What the hell are you doing Sam?" she demanded to know, "Are you involved in something illegal?"

Your apartment is beyond weird. I don't buy your 'it's the neighbors making the noise' alibi. You are definitely in some kind of trouble aren't you?"

Silence on the other end of the line as he tried to come up with an explanation which would sound reasonable and sane.

"I'm not really in any trouble, I left Berkeley because of a misunderstanding with Dr. Globule. He has come to the erroneous conclusion I know something about aliens. He has a wild theory there are extraterrestrials on earth. Ha ha.

'I took a picture of a falling meteorite with an unusual color and Globule got all excited. It will all die down soon. My uncle, Tom Albright lives here in San Francisco so I'll be safe.'" (Sam didn't mention being taken into custody by the Feds to Mercedes).

"Is your uncle the astronomer they called 'Twisted Tommy' in the national news a few years ago?" she asked suspiciously.

Sam conceded his uncle was that Tom. She replied. "He's more than a little out of touch with reality from what I read about his weird theories, isn't he?"

"Tom isn't dangerous, Mercedes, just a scientist with his own conception of the universe."

"I don't understand you right now Sam. You have always been, well, a conservative guy. No wild ideas about living. The 'old you' is what I became attracted to. You made me feel secure with your predictable habits and routines. Nothing like my unpredictable, dysfunctional family."

she said wistfully.

He was startled by her description of him as a dull man without any spontaneity. Is that what I am to her? A mild mannered, studious scholar always the same every day? It was certainly not a flattering explanation of her attraction to him. In his own mind Sam thought of himself as a budding scientist doing exciting research.

Her remark gave Sam a better understanding of how others perceived him. His mind proceeded to roll out the names of his family and friends who had made sly amusing remarks about him and his dedication to science. Those careless jests had really been their true assessment of him. His three sisters and two brothers also made amusing remarks about him. He now realized they were all in agreement about him.

It was a bitter dose of reality for him. Some rebellious anger then grew inside of him for the first time in his life. He thought to himself, they can all go to the devil! I don't need to become a people-pleaser for them. It is THEY who need to change THEIR perspective of me!

Cautiously Sam approached his uncle's old residence. It was an estate cottage that had survived San Francisco's catastrophic earthquake at the turn of the century. The city had grown since then so now the cottage was surrounded by newer

houses constructed of wood. Tom's place stood out because it was constructed of stone. Dampness from the bay gave the structure a green patina of moss growing on the outside walls.

His uncle was still teaching astronomy at a small college in Marin county. But with the understanding he was to restrict his lectures to the universally accepted academic facts of astronomy. He understood his tenure with the college would immediately cease if there was any variation from the rules. Tom was considered to be a brilliant astronomer who, unfortunately, was obsessed with bizarre theories about the composition of the universe.

Tom's physical appearance did not fit any stereotype of an egg-headed scientist. He was easily six feet four inches tall, in fine physical condition, with black hair and a full mustache. His blue eyes crackled with alertness. When Sam entered the cottage he greeted him with a bear hug,

"Here's the man who will change the world of astronomy! You're a welcome sight Sam, I hope you plan to stay awhile."

His rough manner was familiar to Sam.

"I'm not sure how long I'll be here Tom. It depends on how things fall into place."

They sat down to have a beer or two,

"My friends at Berkeley told me what they knew about the big excitement and the search for aliens. You seem to be the star of the show by photographing a UFO, or something else of interest."

Sam felt relieved to be able to tell someone he could trust about all of his troubles. Knowing it was the right thing to do with a trusted colleague for a confidant, he told Tom about the aliens crashing to earth. He added they were with him.

Tom began to look around the room, but Sam stopped him and took the sphere out of his pocket.

"Meet several inhabitants of the planet Ortz from another galaxy." Turning to the sphere he said to the aliens, "This is a member of my family who can be trusted absolutely, I guarantee it."

Tom hadn't found many experiences in his life surprising, but the tiny sphere with aliens to match was a shock. Before he could say anything one of them spoke,

"Sam has been our protector here on earth due to an unfortunate crash landing brought on by a miscalculation by SOMEONE!" looking directly at the other alien. The accused alien appeared to stay calm while being obliquely accused of being at fault for their crash to earth.

Then Tom shocked Sam and the aliens by speaking with moans, shrieks and groans. They were delighted to hear him speaking their language. Immediately a conversation was underway full of the weird sounds and echoes which left Sam out of the group. He sat down and

listened in amazement to the noises filling the room. By now the creatures were out of their sphere and standing in front of Tom on the table.

Sam hadn't believed the scientific world when they had ridiculed his uncle as a crackpot and an idiot who should be in a mental hospital for his own safety. He was ruined by the accusations and laughter from the respected scientists. Tom was a strong minded man and he refused to recant his account of spending two years in outer space with aliens.

In Ortzian, they explained their dilemma to him and their need to remain out of sight until the rescue team arrived. Tom understood their anxiety about being discovered on earth. Anything might happen to detain them and they could lose their chance to go home.

"Now we have another problem. This earthling, Dr. Globule is a threat and he is searching for us. So we can't go back to the planetarium and use

their radio telescope to contact Ortz again. Our people may have already sent a message, but now we can't retrieve it."

Tom smiled at them, which terrorized the aliens. It was a twisting, distorting shape of the lips completely foreign to them and they weren't sure what to expect next. He stopped smiling,

"I can guess you aren't familiar with the physical appearance of humans. When I was in your galaxy, my physical shape was ugly to the inhabitants. They are three thousand years ahead of us in the course of evolution. Am I close to the truth?"

The aliens moaned and groaned an answer. Translated from Ortzian they were conceding he was on the right track. Luckily, Sam couldn't hear about how revolting his physical countenance was to the aliens. He was still wrestling with the unflattering description of himself Mercedes blurted out.

Tom led them to the rear of the old home where an elaborate set of equipment was set up.

"We can easily contact Ortz from here. This Educator for communications was given to me by the Palions who live in the Fasolahteedo galaxy, It is several light years away from Ortz. Fasolahteedo galaxy has many fragments using the language you speak on Ortz. But you could have come from another part of ZZYYYYYYZZ and I would still have understood you.

"This Educator is about a thousand years ahead of Ortz and contains 1,000 languages in use in the galaxy. I have many Palion friends I talk to all of the time. It was the Palions who found me working in the observatory at Berkeley. They invited me to be their guest for a few years; I, an aborigines to them, could learn something about the universe and its 22 dimensions. It was the most enlightening experience of my life and the Palions I worked with became my close friends."

Chapter Eight

Tom went to work on his Educator to contact Ortiz on the frequency provided by the aliens. Within a few minutes a response came in from one of their uncles. They took over the Educator from Tom to give the Ortizian uncle the new coordinates and their precarious situation since they had last communicated from Berkeley.

They asked the uncle about the plan to rescue them from Earth and how long it would take. Several minutes past without any response from Ortiz leaving the aliens in great distress. Their large ears began to tremble slightly.

An answer came in from the uncle on Ortiz after several more minutes. It could be categorized as a good/bad answer. Good news was the discovery of a direct energy highway into and out of the Milky Way. On the negative side, was a waiting time of

roughly four weeks from now. And the rescue had to be made precisely at 1682:001:225566.9 Universal Time. If that precise instant was somehow missed, how long until the next favorable time might be, was unknown. It was only possible to track energy highways within two Earth months of their occurrence.

Sam saw how the news from Ortz, whatever it was, upset them. Their ears were trembling, and they had changed color to a chalky white. Their appearance at the moment could only be from very bad news. It was the first time he had seen them this upset before. Seeking to reassure them, Tom said soothingly, "Great news, you will be returning to Ortz."

Instead of responding to Tom, the aliens entered their sphere. At the moment the aliens were sure there was no solution to surviving 30 days on Earth. One of them said,

"You know we can't impose ourselves on these kind brutes any longer. They can't possibly help us. I don't believe there is any way to replace the essentials we need for survival from this fragment's resources."

"I agree with you. Since it is a hopeless dilemma, we should leave here and hide somewhere until we expire."

"It's the only way."

Now they began to put things into order in their sphere readying it for take off. The two men watched their activity with surprise. It looked like they were leaving. Tom spoke.

"We assume from your activities in the sphere, you are planning to leave us. Why would you do that? Wasn't the news from Ortz favorable?"

"We're just tidying the sphere for the rescue."

one of them replied nervously.

"Might as well be ready." Came a weak sounding answer from the other alien who

appeared to be as agitated as his partner.

This was a startling change and it was unexpected. Sam asked them,

"What are you hiding from us? You don't need to take a month to clean up the sphere before your rescue. It looks to me as if you're planning to slip away. What's the change I don't know about?"

Again the aliens didn't answer Sam's question.

Returning to the sphere the aliens were silent for a considerable period of time. They were wrestling with the problem of finding a suitable reply. Only the truth would satisfy their two benefactors. They returned to Tom and Sam fervently hoping what they had to share with them wouldn't create an even bigger mess.

"We have a difficult situation with the rescue plan. Our chances of surviving for a month on earth until the departure date are almost impossible for two reasons. First, is the fuel problem, we will use up what energy we have left within the next 10

days, leaving us stranded here.

“When the rescue party arrives, our sphere has to be used to full capacity to reach the energy field they are using. Failure to attain full power would entrap the rescue party into our predicament and we would all perish. We don't have the elements here on Earth to produce sphere energy.

“Secondly, and of equal importance, is the food problem, we can't eat your food. It lacks the nourishment we need and it would be impossible to chew your food because of its huge bulk. On Ortz nourishment was reduced to a liquid form about one thousand years ago. We drink a formula containing all of the essentials to sustain life and it has a wonderful flavor we never tire of. We only have a 10 day supply of these two essential things.”

“Our plan is to find a secure place and wait for the inevitable. You have been so kind to us, we couldn't bear the idea of having you witness our deaths. It's too bad your dangerous risks to aid us

will be futile. Even though the end isn't what we had all hoped for, be proud of your attempts to help us."

Sam looked at Tom for his reaction to the terrible news. He respected his uncle for his many strengths, and now he was hoping he had a plan to overcome the obstacles. He considered his hope to be nearly ridiculous. How Tom could overcome such gigantic obstacles fit in the category of flying to the moon on a sky rocket. Yet, when he looked Tom's way, Sam recognized a look of determination to overcome a challenge clearly etched on his uncle's strong features.

Tom said to the aliens, "Nonsense! We haven't even begun to work on solutions to the so-called dilemma. Elements here on Earth to my knowledge are the same, or close to, those on Ortz. All I need is samples of your fuel and food to begin the process of breaking them down to their base molecular structure. Then we will translate the

answers to a search for similar compounds here on Earth. A process could then be invented to transform the Earth matter into Ortzian fuel and food."

Tom impressed them with his confidence that an answer could be found to make the fuel and food. He was given the samples. He disappeared into his laboratory. Sam and the aliens didn't see Tom for two days, he stayed isolated in his work area. When he emerged there was a triumphant smile on his weary face.

They now had to tell Tom that the impossible task was only in its first stages. They explained to him the fuel and the food were in a highly condensed state. So the biggest challenge now was to invent a method of finding and then condensing, earth materials into food and blue dust fuel. Tom was staggered by this announcement, but he kept his mind steady.

Naturally the food came first since the fuel would be of no use if they failed to produce the nourishment to keep them alive. A nearby health food store seemed to be a good beginning for finding the right ingredients. Tom had identified the sugars, acids and fats contained in the Ortzian diet. Sam was sent to the store with a list of vegetables and liquids needed to begin the search for a substitute diet.

Several days of non-stop experiments with combinations of foods didn't produce a reasonable match to the Ortzian food. Two days of taste-testing had been hard on the aliens' stomachs, especially some of the more bizarre combinations. Tom found it particularly difficult to find the proper ratio of sugars and acids.

This needed ratio led to trying combinations like, ice cream, brussel sprouts, spinach in a solution containing orange and lemon juice. Tom was becoming frantic because he was running out

of ideas. On Experiment #154 he mixed some stuff together. Tired and frustrated he recklessly poured in a pint of vodka.

He served up #154 for the aliens. By this time, after tasting all of those concoctions, they had learned to take tiny sips of the brew to avoid becoming nauseated. #154 was approached with reserve, not knowing what to expect this time. Tiny sips were taken, then it was held in their food mouth (one mouth was for eating, the other for speaking) and rolled around like a pickle tester. One was about to spit the latest brew into the waste bucket when the other one stopped him.

Ortzian groans, moans and shrieks were followed by sampling a larger portion. This time they drank it down. Tom and Sam became excited to witness a possible solution to their food problem. After a few more belts of #154, one of the aliens, slurring a bit, told them,

"I--we---hic--want more----number one fifty four."

Realizing it rhymed, he eeeeeeyaed a few times then passed out.

Sam made an observation,

"Alcohol appears to be a universal substance."

Chapter Nine

More research revealed that methane gas had a molecular structure close enough to the blue dust fuel to convert it into a workable substitute. Calculations worked out by the aliens revealed a conversion ratio of methane gas to blue dust of 100 to 1.

Sam became frustrated at this point and burst out, "Where in hell would we be able to find a mass supply of methane? It's not like we can call up a chemical company and order three railroad tank cars of methane gas. We're licked right now! It's impossible to collect that much methane without getting people's attention. Maybe the wrong ones like Dr. Globule."

"I have been working on this too," Tom replied, "I believe we can capture the needed methane gas from cows who emit a great amount while grazing."

Sam was becoming half crazed from this weird talk of using cow farts for fuel. He sarcastically commented, "Just how do you propose to collect the farts? Will we run around with cans and plead with the cows to rip a few for the aliens? What a fantastic, absolutely crazy idea."

"I have been working on this obstacle too." Tom replied, looking none too pleased with Sam's outburst. "By tomorrow morning, I should have the logistics of the methane gathering project worked out. Okay Sam?"

There was no reply, Sam had already left.

In the next two days, Sam was running all over the area collecting the items Tom said he needed. It was a collection of things so diverse, he had no idea what was being created. Finally done hustling supplies, Tom put him to work connecting hoses with junctions while he worked on some plastic items. By the evening of the second day, Tom stood in the middle of a vast spider web of rubber

hoses all connected together.

Looking pleased with his "whatever it was" Tom told the aliens and Sam what he planned to do with the strange looking contraption.

"I studied some reference books on cows with my focus on their eating habits, the digestive system and the elimination of gas per hour. Based on the average amount of gas emitted each hour in ratio to the blue dust fuel needed to power the sphere, I have worked out the volume of methane needed. My equipment can collect the methane from the cows and store it for us."

"I have hunted around Marin County for the perfect place to gather the methane gas. I found a cow feeding lot near a dairy hidden from view in a grove of trees. It is perfect cover for us. Using our hose network attached to an electric pump, the gas will be stored in a large compressor. Methane gas collection should be finished in two nights. There are five hundred head of cattle in the lots which will produce enough methane for our purpose."

Sam was listening to this incredible plan with his head swimming from what he was hearing. He blurted out, "But how are you going to actually collect the gas from the cows?"

Tom pointed to the pile of red plastic items he had been working on while he was connecting hoses. He went over and picked one up. It looked like a large plastic funnel that had been modified by cutting out a crescent shaped section.

"These funnels will be attached to the rear portion of the cow just below the tail and up tight to the anus. No gas will escape as it is pulled out by suction pumps into the hoses, and cow waste can pass under the funnels."

"Who will attach these things to the cow's ass?" asked an incredulous Sam.

"You and me," Tom replied. "I figure we can attach all of them in less than two hours. Then around 5 AM we return and quickly gather up our equipment before the workers arrive."

He wanted to run away but his sense of responsibility to Tom and the aliens stopped him. Sam had to be cajoled into wearing rubber gloves and a kerchief tied across his nose. Tom slapped a roll of tape into his hand and they set off for the cow pasture.

At the beginning of the job they were nervous and fumbling around while the cows became restless from the poking around their tails. Using leg clamps to hold the cows in place, and small flashlights to see their goal, the work was completed in a little over two hours. Tom was confident their time would be shorter the next night because of experience. The quiet electric motor and pump were turned on and the harvesting of methane gas on a colossal scale began.

Before the sun came up Sam and Tom returned to retrieve their equipment before the dairy employees rounded up the herd for milking. In an

old warehouse rented by Tom the tank of gas was set up for the aliens to process the methane gas into blue dust. It was nearly evening when the aliens said they had finished. One alien added that one more night of extracting methane from the herd of cows ought to be enough to fill their energy needs.

This time, Sam and Tom wore rubber fins on their feet to repel the cow waste they had encountered the night before. Another innovation, based upon experience, was the use of gas masks rather than handkerchiefs over their noses. They would be worn when going into an area hitherto unknown to man under the tails of the cows.

Chapter Ten

The following night, they reduced their time of attaching their hose contraptions by 30 minutes. Production was smoothly underway for the final gathering of methane gas. An hour before sunrise, they returned to dismantle their equipment and hoses from the cows. This time their luck wasn't so good. A pick up truck from the dairy turned a corner and headed for the herd.

Sam and Tom were illuminated by the truck headlights. The men in the truck were staring at these strange creatures wearing bizarre work clothes including faces covered by gas masks. In the dim, first-light of day, they looked like beings with enormous eyes and noses. Occupants of the truck were astonished when they spotted the hoses up cows' rear ends.

Then the two creatures looking like aliens from somewhere else, started awkwardly running with

their rubber fins still attached to their feet. Luckily, the strange sight transfixed the two dairy workers. They were rendered paralyzed with terror for a few minutes until the frogmen were out of sight.

Tom and Sam disappeared into the small patch of woods where their electric equipment was set up. They quickly loaded their truck with everything, except for the hoses still attached to the cows, and hit the road. There was no pursuit by the dairy hands. When the workers had regained their senses, they roared out of the feed lot in their truck. The truck left a thick cloud of dust in its wake. They were hell-bent on escaping from the space monsters.

By the time it was full daylight, there was a large group of men in the feed lot examining the strange cobweb of interlocking hoses and what looked like funnels with a piece cut out of them. Tom and Sam didn't have time to detach all of the funnels from under the tails of the cows. It was a

sight of which none of the group had ever witnessed. Standing behind a cow it appeared as if the devices had been inserted into the cows and hoses attached to them for some unknown purpose.

Ranking state police officer Eddy Winslow was leading the discussion about the situation.

"Have you ever had this kind of thing happen before on your farm?" he asked the farm owner, Ruben Porter.

"No Eddy, the only trouble I've had in my feed lots has been kids spooking the cows. No damage though, only a nuisance to my men. What in hell do you think those alien guys were sucking out of my cows?"

"I don't have any ideas about that, but the county vet will be out here soon to examine your herd. He'll probably have the answers for us. It's strange how healthy your cows appear to be."

Not wanting to cause a public panic, the description given of the two creatures by the dairy

hands was being kept secret. Anything this bizarre is bound to escape censorship, since one of the most difficult challenges to humankind is keeping a secret, secret. Within a week the story was announced to the world when a syndicated newspaper company printed the artist's drawing of the creatures.

Police nationwide had been notified to look for two men, or aliens, with webbed feet like a frog, bulging eyes and long noses with weird looking nostrils. Everyone involved really had no doubt they were searching for beings from outer space. The bulletin also stated no weapons of any kind were seen by the witnesses.

Porter's farm and neighboring farm lands, were combed for any additional evidence that might be around. Naturally, most of their looking was for space craft or flying saucers. They found nothing except for the hoses and funnel gadgets which had been removed by firemen wearing thick gloves and

protective gear. Porter's herd didn't seem to be affected by examinations of their hind quarters or by the hose removals.

Dr. Drury, the animal vet carefully examined the cows one by one and took samples of their saliva and waste materials. He took his samples with him for analysis at the state vet lab near by. Later he returned to Porter's farm to meet with local government officials and a bunch of anxious dairy farmers.

He told them about his examination of the herd and the samples he took from the cows. He saw nothing unusual about their health, they didn't display any symptoms of having any bovine diseases. But he said his final conclusion had to wait until the state finished lab tests on the samples he had taken. Dr. Drury estimated it would take two to three days before the state would be finished with their work.

Now the situation became tense when he was asked by the farmers about milk production while they waited for the lab results. A state agriculture agent had just arrived, much to Dr. Drury's relief. Now it would be the state agent who had to inform the farmers their milk had to be dumped every day pending an all clear from the state.

After getting the whole story from Dr. Drury, the state agent went into a detailed, civil service, double talking, stalling speech. He saved the bad news about their loss of revenue for last. He drove his car away from the area so quickly no one could ask any questions after the "dump the milk" part was announced.

Now the farmers descended on Dr. Drury again demanding to know how long the research would take, 12 hours? a day? longer? how much longer?. Drury silently cursed the sniveling little swine from the state for his cowardly retreat leaving him to face the angry mob.

"I'm not responsible for testing the cows, so I don't know any more than you do. Put the heat on the state agricultural department, it's their job to assist and support the dairy farmers."

It wasn't at all surprising, human nature being what it is, that the news about aliens with horribly disfigured faces spread at the speed of light or faster. Like a pebble dropped in a pond, the ripples of the disturbance quickly became nationally known without a single reporter being involved. The internet has greatly accelerated the speed of the news. Within two hours every country in the world was searching for aliens with huge eyes, long noses and webbed feet.

When Tom and Sam reached the warehouse, they hid their equipment in some large crates including the tank of methane gas.

"Damn shame, we were almost finished. Now we will have to wait and see what develops mainly based on the dairy hands' description of us in the

clothes and the gas masks. What conclusions the authorities will come to is hard to figure, since cows with hoses attached to their hind parts has to be a 'first' for everyone.”

One of the Ortzians spoke up,

“We think the methane you brought back should come close to producing enough blue dust for our wait on your planet. It would be best if we stay here at the warehouse and finish the conversion”

Chapter Eleven

Tom knew the discovery of the bizarre cow project, and the two dairy hands seeing them in their weird garb in the dim light, would bring on an all out hunt for them. Immediately search parties were organized, then sent out looking for the strange looking creatures an artist had drawn from the dairy hands' description. This picture of Sam and Tom in their weird costumes was posted all over the world. When they saw it on TV it was obvious no one would recognize them as the space monsters. There was a moment of silence, then they looked at each other and burst out laughing.

Armed forces were deployed on the ground, sea and air. An added threat Tom hadn't thought of was the arrival of Dr. Globule with his team of FBI agents now seasoned veterans in the search for blue dust.

Tom said to the aliens, "I think you should come with us for now, there will be an all-out hunt to find you. This old warehouse will certainly be searched, probably within the hour, we have to leave now."

Retreating to their sphere they talked over their need to complete the job and weighing it against Tom's warning. The boldest of the two won the argument. They came out and told Tom,

"We appreciate your concern for us Tom, but we are sure there is enough time to finish the conversion. If the tank is discovered and the methane gas is drained out, we will have to start all over again. Another effort with the cows would be much more difficult. It's the least risky of the options."

Tom and Sam didn't like their idea, but it was the best one for now. They reluctantly agreed to the plan.

A sort of wheezing, squeaky noise was emitted as the methane gas, under tremendous pressure, was transferred from the tank to the aliens' Molecular Moderator. Seated comfortably in their sphere they were eating and listening to music from Ortz while blue dust was accumulating in their storage space. For the first time since they had arrived on Earth things seemed to be going along smoothly.

Suddenly the doors of the warehouse swung open to voices of men arguing. Tony, the owner of the warehouse was angry about being ordered by the local police to drive 200 miles from his hometown to open the old building. He had been attempting to sell it for years. It was a nuisance.

"Why the hell didn't you just force the lock Marvin?"

"You know the law, we can't enter a building without legal consent." replied Marvin, the local policeman.

"That never stopped you guys before. When you suspected someone was storing drugs in this old shack several windows were broken by the police to get in. Of course you didn't find anything. I remember several other violations of citizens' homes but you know I don't need to remind you. Search away now that I'm here. What is the big deal?"

Marvin told Tony the aliens were believed to be in the local area and swore him to secrecy. He explained the town didn't know this information and they were trying to prevent a panic from erupting. He was shocked speechless. They slowly entered the dark warehouse led by Marvin holding a large official looking flashlight. He whispered.

"Where is the switch to turn on the lights?"

"The power is off Marvin, because I don't want to pay for a service I'm not using. Understand? I rented this joint through my real estate agent a few days ago and he told the guy he would have to pay

for the power if he wanted it. He said no, I guess he only needs it to store something."

Moving in further they rounded a corner where the storage tank and pump were set up. There was a terribly bad smell in the area.

The Ortzians had been alerted to their presence by the loud talk. To protect their precious methane gas they had transformed themselves into human form which was almost more than they could stand. At least they didn't have to look at each other disguised as repulsive humans. Unfortunately they had only found bathing suits to wear in the warehouse.

Stationed in a protective position in front of their precious tank of methane, they tried to look like normal men working in the area. It was quite a shock to the searchers to come around the corner and see two men wearing only bathing suits apparently working on something. Cautiously Marvin moved forward with his flashlight.

"Who are you men? And why for God's sake are you only wearing swim trunks? Is there some kind of orgy going on in here?"

There was silence as the creatures waited for the Language Transponder to translate their thoughts into English.

"-----Goodbye kind sirs. We are butchering--no, working on the tank here, it's sinking.---leaking."

It would have probably been a better tactic to use a monster to scare them away, but they were desperate to gather their fuel.

They gawked at the two men in tight swim suits. One of them had his nose upside down, the other had a mouth that stretched from ear to ear. For hair, they were wearing short clipped green grass. While the other people in the search group began to back pedal away from the weird looking men, Marvin screwed up his courage and reminded

himself he was a police officer. He stepped forward and pulled out his revolver and ordered,

"You are under arrest! Turn around and put your hands on the tank."

Moving nervously toward them, Marvin tripped on the tank valve jarring the connection loose. When the methane gas was released the squeaky, wheezing noise became much louder sounding like someone passing gas. Marvin was hit with a cloud of cow farts. Then the valve gave way completely and the building was quickly filled with the most rank, putrid odor of farts siphoned out of hundreds of cows. Blinking and coughing the group ran for the door, except Marvin who was determined to do his duty.

Now in a panic, the aliens turned to the only other defense available to them. Their "men" disguises disappeared and suddenly confronting Marvin was a ferocious looking Rhino pawing the floor, getting ready to charge the policeman.

Running out of courage rapidly, Marvin turned and ran for the door.

Reluctantly abandoning the tank, the Ortzians entered their sphere. No one noticed a tiny blue streak zipping out of the warehouse with two upset creatures who knew this incident would only intensify the search for them.

Chapter Twelve

At the warehouse the FBI team and Dr. Globule were searching every cranny looking for blue dust. One of the FBI agents hit pay dirt near the storage tank abandoned by the Ortzians. He yelled out.

"Here! here! My finder shows blue dust here by the tank! There is an awful odor in this area I think it is coming from the storage tank. Whew!"

Dr. Globule ran as fast as his spindly little legs would carry him to the tank. He switched on his finder which instantly showed a response to corroborate the FBI agent's discovery of blue dust in the area. Tony, the owner of the warehouse, was delighted to learn from his real estate agent that a famous scientist had rented it. Globule had a laboratory set up in the warehouse to work on their find. He was positive there was a reason for the aliens to be in an old warehouse with a foul

smelling storage tank.

Discovery of the blue dust was reported to the authorities. Events and other evidence began to give more credence to Globule's extraterrestrials theory. More scientific and police teams were formed to dig deeply into the presence of alien beings on the Pacific coast.

News of Dr. Globule's findings in the warehouse was upsetting to Tom and Sam. If they needed more methane gas, their task of gathering it would be very dangerous, if not impossible. Besides, their equipment was in the warehouse now rented out to Globule. Anyway, they were certain every dairy farm in the area would be guarded in an attempt to capture creatures or whatever it was siphoning methane gas out of cows.

In Washington DC government officials were informed of a possible invasion of earth by beings

from outer space. In a highly secret meeting at FBI headquarters the team of agents assigned to search for aliens gave a report on what they knew about the strange happenings at Berkeley. A senator on the national defense committee asked questions about the situation.

"You left out a description of these things. Fill us in on their appearance, please."

"We don't know what they look like, sir." replied the agent in charge of the search party working with Dr. Globule. "If the escape incident to free Sam Slade was done by them, then we must suppose they are giant beasts existing in more than one form."

"Yes, yes, I read the police report about the weird gun fight with invincible beasts impervious to weapons. There is no mention of where the creatures went after this Slade guy escaped. Where are we on the hunt for the college kid and the monsters?"

"Dr. Globule believes the cow incident involves them. His theory is the blue dust we have been finding, is a space ship fuel and they are processing methane gas to produce the blue dust. He thinks the aliens are around the area."

"Any absolute proof about the fuel thing?"

There was an awkward silence since the agent couldn't answer the question. It had been a frustrating meeting loaded with speculations, ifs, ands and maybes. The senator ran out of things to ask, and he concluded.

"I assume we haven't learned anything. We are still on square one in this whole weird deal."

He then ordered the Pentagon to begin a search of its own, using the bare bones information at hand.

The luckless FBI agent who had met with the senator was now tapped to appear before the Joint Chiefs of Staff with the same vague information as he had presented before. His report wasn't long, and in a way it raised more questions than it

answered. There was silence after the agent finished his report. No one had a single question for him because they didn't understand what he was talking about.

Aliens, monsters, cows being emptied of methane gas, mysterious blue dust was a bewildering array of the unknown. Information on what the creatures looked like was certainly bizarre, ranging from men resembling frogs to dragons and snakes. In addition, there were no clues to the size and shape of an alien ship, or saucer, or sphere or whatever.

Now things became quite lively at the Pentagon as each branch of the military presented their conclusions of why it was a job for the Navy, who countered by trying to slip it to the Air Force, etc.. Eventually, the other branches all ganged up on the Army because they operated on the ground. US Army armaments and troops began to move into California for the big hunt for creatures from outer

space. Apparently they were gigantic in size.

At the present time, the government was more afraid of the public finding out about the hunt for aliens than the creatures themselves. Elections could be lost if word got out about the search and the cow incident before they could answer questions with a modicum of truth.

Military leaders were in the same boat as the elected officials, if they made a blunder it could mean the end of their careers. Men from a wide variety of government branches were briefed and quietly sent into the field. They were to search everything in the Berkeley area down to the last blade of grass.

On the home front the county sheriff had held the line by claiming the excitement was no more than an investigation to find the teen age boys who had pulled a prank. Ruben Porter, the dairy farmer backed up the sheriff by telling stories about the stunts kids had pulled in the past to upset his cows.

Repeated over and over to the community and the media the explanations grew into being the truth. No one at this time could contradict them. The two dairy workers who claimed they had seen two aliens were quietly sent to San Diego, in the company of two deputies, for an extended vacation paid for by the county.

It was a bad move to blitz Berkeley with a swarm of federal government people who were none too polite as they searched houses without bothering to identify themselves. This idea was adopted on the theory of a surprise element if the creatures were hiding in the building. This way they would be unaware of a search. Boomeranging badly, there was gun play at some homes, fist fights, agents being clobbered with any number of household appliances.

In one home, three ladies grabbed the agent as he entered the house and tied him up. What they did to him next is almost too terrible to write

down. A red hot curling iron was shoved into a part of his anatomy where the maker of the appliance never dreamed it would go, nor was it to be used in that way. It wasn't a safety warning mentioned on the appliance tag..

There were so many conflicts and shootings the media took notice, smelling a big story. Under these circumstances, someone was bound to give away the secret. An FBI agent who had been awake almost every hour for two days blabbed out the truth about their search for aliens.

Dr. Globule was furious when the news of beings from outer space was broadcast around the world. Until now, the alien news had been limited to a sighting of a UFO being investigated at Berkeley. Here was exciting news that there was more than a sighting.

Globule's complaints to the FBI in DC were ineffective in stopping the invasion of Berkeley by federal workers. They failed to understand any

traces of aliens around Berkeley would be lost because of the high handed methods being used in the search. Once a juggernaut begins to move, it's impossible to stop or to even slow its momentum. A tent city sprung up from San Francisco to the suburbs of LA. People were there to

1. actually capture an alien,
2. or get a look at one,
3. or possibly shoot one.

Around Ruben Porter's dairy farm a similar invasion was brewing. There was no way for the sheriff or the farmer to stop it. The sheriff doubted he would be re-elected now that his lies to the county voters were revealed. Porter the farmer, finally chucked it all in, being a private sort of man. Dealing with thousands of people trampling around in his feed lots made his life intolerable.

A hustler saw a quick buck to be made out of the alien craze and he bought Porter's farm at a premium price. He then sold Porter's dairy herd to

a nearby farmer who didn't believe anything had been done to injure the animals. A mini theme park was created for tourists complete with a space museum displaying some of the hose connections and paraphernalia clamped on the cows' hind parts.

Now, Paris is a fine place to be at this time of year, or so Porter writes on his postcards to his friends back home.

Chapter Thirteen

Tom and Sam became alarmed as the search kept becoming larger in scope. They had to leave the Berkeley area immediately to avoid being arrested, if they were, the Ortzians would have to cope on their own. Tom explained the peril to them in their own language in squeaks, moans, and screams.

Here is an English translation of the meeting.

"This search for you guys has become a national matter. Within a day or two the state of California will be bulging with soldiers turning over every rock in the state looking for you. We must leave here tonight. What is the situation with your fuel supply?"

"We have close to two thirds of our fuel capacity which will be adequate if there are no emergencies to meet. Too much soaring and

creating diversions to defend ourselves could leave us without enough fuel to meet the sphere coming from Ortz."

"I have a plan." Tom said. "No one, at least to my knowledge, ties me in to your presence in Berkeley. I will remain here and monitor the search for you, and watch for messages from Ortz. Sam, you will go with them to hide at NASA headquarters at Cape Canaveral Florida. I think it would be one of the last places on earth they would look for aliens."

Sam took a flight to Florida, while the aliens zipped there in their sphere in seconds. At a agreed upon location near the beach at Cape Canaveral they waited for Sam. They needed a place to stay. Sam rented a car, looked at the ads for house rentals, and drove around the area.

A small bungalow was for rent out near the NASA rocket launching site. The launching silo looked enormous viewed up close and there was a

rocket on the pad being readied for a launch into space. One of the aliens asked Sam,

"Whopping----hugeantic,-----no-BIG---- monsters, chummy?--- no, harmless?"

Sam had become accustomed to interpreting the bizarre attempts of their Language Transponder to translate Ortzian to English.

"Those aren't monsters," Sam replied, "The bigger tower on the right anchors the space rocket until it is launched and the smaller one is the missile."

"What is---racket--rocket for?"

Sam was confused by the question, they should know it was a fuel propelled rocket.

"I thought you would recognize the rocket."

"No thing on Ortz---contains---waste?"

"It is a space rocket with a jet engine full of fuel to blast the missile into space. Millions of pounds of thrust are needed for the rocket to overcome the gravitational pull of the Earth. The

rocket becomes weightless in space and orbits around the planet."

"Why?"

What Sam thought would be a simple explanation was becoming mired down in a lack of understanding. It was difficult to comprehend why the rocket would be a strange vehicle to the aliens. He decided he must explain Earth's communication system to them. "The rocket will carry a communications station into space then release it to orbit around the planet and relay radio wave signals down to Earth."

"Oh."

"It operates like your sphere does, to propel you."

"How?"

He was becoming very frustrated by their lack of comprehension regarding the space rocket's operation.

"Like your sphere propels you with the blue dust, the rocket will be ignited and great fire will push the rocket up into the sky."

"Ricket---no, rocket-- on fire?"

"Yes"

He could hear their moans, groans, hums and shrieks coming from their sphere as they talked it over. Suddenly, piercing sounds assaulted Sam's ears coming from the sphere, it kept becoming louder. Finally he had to stop the car and get out to protect his hearing from damage. The high pitched sound stopped, but then it came back even louder. Eventually it slowly died out.

Sam cautiously climbed back into the car.

"What are you alarmed about?"

"No sweat----was pow wowing---no---discussing racket--rocket. It's fun---no, funniest idea ever- fire on can!" Yeeeeeay! Yooooo hoooo! Hoo-hooooooo!

Laughing the Ortzian way finally stopped.

"Sorry---no hurt you?"

"Well, no, I guess I should have realized your civilization has a two thousand year evolution edge on us. So many things here must be hilarious to you." Sam replied, but there was a slight tone of irritation in his voice. He added, "You naturally seem a bit strange to me. I've wonder why you have very large ears and tiny eyes."

"To hear---value no---plus no --- more important to us--seeing not as good-- no---reliable as hearing. So much --lying on Ortz long time--believe no one----made ears like antenna---ears turn color ----mood-- aah, feelings--- if lying, ears of liar go black---blue, okay---yellow, upset--red, angry, ----green, you----envy jealous --- white,--fear. Can't hide lies or state of being. See?"

Sam listened, then decided Ortzians had a better idea about living in their society than his planet."

"When big can go on fire? Like to see. Yeeeeeeay."

Chapter Fourteen

Tom joined them in Florida with only 15 days left until the rescue sphere would arrive from Ortz. He told them about the insanity in California resulting from the big alien hunt.

"Berkeley and the surrounding area is a pitiful sight. So many people, the army, FBI agents, California state troopers and unauthorized personnel who slipped through the area blockade, have searched the same places over and over. All of the shrubs and small trees were ripped up, many homes have been nearly demolished in the search.

"It now looks like a bombed out area in a war zone. Oh yeah, a bunch of drunks forced their way into the observatory with the bright idea of using the radio telescope to look for the aliens. In the fight with the police and soldiers, our telescope was wrecked when the drunks reached the top end, their weight brought everything down."

Sam was upset to hear about the observatory he had worked in for two years. Now what? he thought to himself, where will I find a university to complete my masters degree in astronomy? He fervently wished the aliens had hidden out somewhere else other than his favorite chair. It was a sentiment which would have had more vehemence to it several weeks ago, but he had to admit the aliens were likeable.

Tom was not the bearer of great news. Dr. Globule assembled a large group of scientists to study the presence of aliens and how to find them. When Tom arrived home in San Francisco there were a number of phone messages for him since he rarely used his cell phone. He liked privacy.

Most of the messages were from Dr. Globule asking him to join the team hunting for the aliens. He gladly accepted, now he would be on the inside to watch the research on aliens. To know the progress of the finest scientists in the world

working together to find them with technology, was vital for Tom. It wasn't long before a method to detect their presence was created by the team. A complex study of the base elements present in the blue dust provided the answer.

The blue dust contained most of the Earth's elements, with one important exception, it was a molecule capable of changing its magnetic polarization as well as disappearing. Cautious experiments with the X-atom revealed a third magnetic particle believed to contain the power of 100 atom bombs. They had discovered the source of the aliens ability to travel great distances.

When Tom was allowed to study the findings, he understood they only discovered half of the reason for long journeys in space. Of course, they had no way of knowing the 22 dimensions of the universe and the electromagnetic highways used to traverse vast distances in minutes. These highways were all interconnected and convoluted like the

small intestine, so it wasn't necessary to travel the entire length. It was possible to cut across from one highway to the other in a direct line to their destination.

Learning the composition of blue dust particles led to the development of a device to detect the X-atom contained only in the alien fuel. When the X-atom was present anywhere within 200 miles, the detector would sense it and give triangular coordinates to the location of the X-atom. There was no way to hide from the device. Dr. Globule was ecstatic to be the scientist heading up the team to find the first aliens on Earth. He was certain the detector would find them anywhere on the planet. Nobel prizes danced in his enormous, round head.

Tom reluctantly told the aliens his terrible news. "Globule will have those devices all over the world in a few days and I must try to think of a place with the best odds of escaping detection.

I'll go to work on creating a jamming device to prevent detection, or at least try for something to garble the signal system. We'll stay here for now it's as good, or better, than any other place."

Chapter Fifteen

Two days after Tom's arrival in Florida there would be a launching of a space rocket from NASA's launching pad. Cape Canaveral became a lively area when people from all over the country came to watch the space launch from the beach. It afforded a clear view of the launch site and the rocket. Sam and Tom took another route to watch the launch since the aliens came along for the event. It was a precaution he had taken since there might be X-Atom detectors around NASA

When the rocket came into view, the creatures began to make the high pitched noises Sam now knew was hysterical laughter. Tom had jumped at the piercing sounds. Sam explained to him they were laughing at the ridiculous big can and the bizarre idea of setting it on fire. They parked the car among other interested observers to wait for the big show.

They watched the elevator alongside the rocket carry the astronauts up to the space compartment. Suddenly there was a whirring noise above them getting louder as it began to hover over Tom's car. They stepped out of the car and looked up to see a small drone craft above them.

An electronic voice came from the drone,

"This is NASA military guards over your heads. Please step away from the vehicle."

They did as they were told as four military vehicles arrived to surround their car. An army officer came up to them with a weapon in his hand,

"Freeze! Don't move! We are here to take the extraterrestrials we know are in your vehicle into custody." He grasped the door handle.

He was almost knocked flat by the alien's sphere when they launched to avoid capture. By now the area was surrounded with helicopters and drones hemming the aliens into a circle. Using their superior speed capability the aliens streaked

out of the circle only to find jet fighter aircraft above them. "We can't get out of this trap, not enough room to maneuver. Have any ideas?"

"Only one."

The sphere left a blue streak of energy as it shot forward on a course straight for the launch site. It seemed to disappear somewhere around the rocket. All of the military craft flew past the launch pad heading for the ocean.

Then came the countdown for the launch, 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1 Blast off! The engine ignited in a cloud of smoke and bright flames began spewing out. It lifted slowly off the pad in the first few seconds, then it climbed faster as the gantry holding it to the launch building fell away. Faster and faster the missile gained altitude as it accelerated to its escape velocity from earth's gravity into outer space and to the orbit point.

Soon the space craft was weightless, and the astronauts set themselves free from their safety

harnesses. Floating about, they went to work checking the rocket for any problems. One of them reached a rear corner and to his amazement he was looking down at the aliens' sphere. With a reflexive response he grabbed for the tiny object but only caught air.

They flew up to the space craft controls and loudly announced, "We are Ortzians from another galaxy. Open the hatch you use to move around outside of the rocket. Do it now!"

Three astronauts were staring at the small sphere. To them it looked more like a toy than a space craft. They began to laugh at the audacity of these tiny guys in the sphere to order them around.

"You guys don't look like you're in any position to demand anything. Surrender now so you don't get hurt." Then he chuckled. and reached for the toy. Bad move. They hit him in the arm with a mild laser beam. It burned like hell and he jumped back with a yelp.

"We are from a civilization two thousand years ahead of you aborigines. We could easily blow this rocket up with a more powerful laser beam, then leave here in our sphere. We would prefer to be allowed to exit your craft peacefully. What will it be?"

Miraculously the Language Transponder had it together, so they sounded calm instead of blundering around with the words. It helped their cause.

Only one word was in the astronaut's vocabulary at this moment, "Yes."

When the exit hatch was opened, the sphere moved away so quickly, only a blue streak was visible. Then it was gone.

Mission Control had been frantically trying to reach the space craft while the stand off with the aliens was going on. They finally made contact and were immediately having mixed emotions. Naturally, they were relieved everything was fine

on the mission, but when they heard the excited nonsense about aliens, that was a different matter.

Things could have become very confused, but Dr. Globule had arrived at NASA in response to the drone discovery of the aliens. He listened to the mission control staff explain the astronaut's strange story about extraterrestrials aboard the space craft who had escaped in a little rocket thing.

Dr. Globule now had mixed emotions, his X Atom detector worked, and his theory about the size of the aliens was correct, they were from a micro galaxy, On the other hand, they had escaped again to Lord knows where. He must now blanket the earth with his X Atom detector devices to catch the elusive little bastards.

News of the invention of the detector also created mixed emotions in DC. First the good news, the Army was relieved to be free of the responsibility of finding the creatures, the Joint

Chiefs of Staff could report there was now a method to detect their presence and the Committee on National Defense was delighted to report to congress on the progress they had made.

On the downside, when these committees were asked how many aliens they had captured, they all had to report none to date. When asked in what vicinity the aliens were now, we have no idea, was not what congress wanted to hear.

When congress received a report on the alien activity in Florida it changed their view. Now they became willing to issue as many small drones as necessary to find them. The Army has 7000 drones of various sizes and shapes, so supplying Dr. Globule wasn't a problem. He obviously wasn't down for the count yet, his drive for a Nobel prize was still fiercely burning in his breast.

Chapter Sixteen

At the moment they were orbiting the earth at a distance of one hundred miles. The height gave them an excellent view of the planet below them. They were trying to plan their next move, and they were worried,

"Those American earthlings have developed a method of locating us. I don't think it's safe to return to Sam and Tom. They talked us into agreeing to let them help us, but it has become too dangerous for our benefactors now."

"Yes, I agree." replied the other one, "Let's keep orbiting around the planet and start searching for a likely country to hide in. You keep looking out while I go on their quaint information system they erroneously call an internet. They are an isolated fragment, an internet system covers at least three galaxies."

A day of orbiting had eliminated several continents because the logistics of each one seemed to be too complicated. It now came down to somewhere in Europe or South America as areas with promise for a hiding place. One small dot in the North Sea kept getting their attention because it was so green it almost glowed even from one hundred miles out in space. Also a smaller country might be a place their pursuers might overlook. They decided on the small island for two reasons, its size, and it was their favorite color, green.

They had no directional guidelines, so they descended to the southern area of Ireland. Its mountains and heavy tree cover seemed like a good spot to land for a reconnoitering trip. One alien had researched this country for its history which was almost impossible to understand because of a two thousand year evolution gap between the two planets.

Customs of the population were more bewildering. They looked at pictures of the female of the species hopping around on one leg while a man held a bladder-like piece of animal in a head lock and used a tube to inflate it. His cheeks swelled up, then deflated rapidly, giving the impression that blowing it up required great effort. Terrible squealing noises emanated from the bladder.

Another terrifying spectacle was looking at the males running on a field kicking someone's head around. Barbaric! What sort of giants lived here? They talked it over then decided a place this savage, where they mutilated heads and hopped around on one leg was probably a good move. They were sure giants from other countries like America would shun this primitive land.

It was a great sacrifice. but they really had no choice but to move around as (shudder) ugly humans. They were careful to try to copy the

costumes worn by these brutes so they could be as inconspicuous as possible. After studying pictures of this area of Earth they designed costumes they were sure would make them blend right in with the savages.

Here again was their problem of appearing as humans. Trying to emulate a specimen without looking too closely at what they were doing was a difficult feat. It was unfortunate that they had landed on a primitive planet where the aborigines were so hideous to them.

So, in the small town of Inforfree, the Irish were startled to see two men in odd clothes walking around. They wore kilts of some Scots clan, bare legs encased in Wellingtons (although it was one of the miracle days in Ireland when it wasn't raining) carrying walking sticks and what looked like coon skin, or some other animal skin, caps on their heads.

There was an improvement in fashioning the features on their faces, but some things still needed work. Eyebrows were under the eyes instead of over them making them look like men who were very ill, and might die at any moment. Then, there was a contradiction to the death look caused by a too wide smiley mouth stretching from ear to ear. So the visual effect was looking at two men who were smiling at death.

They were startled when a Garda (Irish policeman in Gaelic, in English it is pronounced Gardee, which will be used in this story, since it is my book) strolled up to them and politely inquired if they were lost (God knows from where) he thought to himself.. The Language Transponder took this time to go into a fit trying to match up words, so one alien said to the policeman,

"Tidings of joy----no--- hello, dog catcher."

It was hardly a promising opening remark to an officer of the law and this one was no

exception. "What did you call me?"

"Dog---no no-flea catcher-- maybe."

In no time at all the aliens were being escorted down to the Gardee station in the town. They were being taken in partly due to the rude insult revealing hostility toward authority, but also to check up to see if they were wanted anywhere. Looking at them, the officer thought to himself who would want them?.

Having seated them in his office, the Gardee officer turned on his computer to begin a search on line for any clues to the weird looking men. All set, he turned around to ask for their names, but they were gone. He ran out of the station looking for the pair, no one in sight. He shrugged, no sense looking for them, he thought, didn't look dangerous anyway, just a pair of gob shites.

Returning to the sphere they critiqued their disguises, and forced themselves to look closely in a mirror. They did their best to place the eyebrows

over the eyes and shorten the mouth. They were reasonably sure of the clothes though, they did change the kilt into a different tartan. Venturing out they decided to enter some place to avoid too much exposure on the street.

They stepped inside a pub and hoped the Language Transponder was fixed again. Cautiously they approached the bar looking at the large array of bottles on the shelves. On Ortz only one bottle was needed for their sustenance, so this was a puzzler. What did they do with all of these bottles? They wondered.

O'Leary, the bar man, studied the strangers. Those two are nearly the weirdest people I've ever seen in 30 years working in a pub, he thought to himself, they look like they're from another planet. (O'Leary didn't know he was looking at Ortzians).

"What can I do for ya?" he asked them,

"You wouldn't happen to have some Pantzianian juice?"

"No, sorry, we're fresh out of it. How's about a pint? Maybe a Guinness?" he asked solicitously.

The aliens retreated into a corner to talk it over.

"We can't just run away. It's necessary to learn what we can about these brutes."

"Should we risk having a Guinness? Whatever it is."

"I suppose we have to do something,"

Conversation over, they went back to the bar and waited to give O'Leary their order.

He was busy serving pints to some town regulars and gossiping with them as he worked.

"Ah now, Ryan will snap out of it. He'll score big in the next tournament round against Galway. You'll see."

"Care to wager 5 Euro on it O'Leary?"

"What'll you have Sean?" O'Leary asked him.

"A pint of Guinness, and I take it there's no bet."

The bar man moved over to the creatures,

"Have you lads decided?"

"We want the Guinea hens."

"Would that be Guinesses you're askin for?"

"Yes, those."

O'leary went to draw two pints, thinking, they don't seem to be dangerous, but you never know. I'll keep a close eye out. He served the pints and the aliens handed him a credit card they had taken from Sam's belongings. They knew it was earth money by watching Sam pay for something when they were disguised as humans. They cautiously took a sip of the beer, they liked the taste, and began to drink it.

One alien set down his pint and said,

"Did you notice the flavor of this Guinness has a faint but familiar tang to it? We have something like it in our food sustenance."

"Yes, I wondered about that. In the history of our food there is a reference to an ancient ingredient. About a thousand years ago there was a savage who landed on Ortz.

"Now I know why the Guinness name is familiar. This brute was called O'Connor and he claimed to be a salesman for what he called a "brewery." He left some samples. They analyzed the ingredients and added it to our sustenance recipe for its exotic taste. He sold us the Guinness recipe for a lot of our white stones he called 'diamonds'. This O'Connor brute then left Ortz to visit another fragment in our galaxy."

"Shall we have another one?"

"Of course."

And that is how the Inforfree Incident began. It probably wouldn't have occurred if the aliens hadn't been hungry. They found Guinness was similar to their sustenance food, so they began to drink more of it. They weren't aware the beer had an alcohol "kick" to it far in excess to the Guinness additive in their sustenance food.

Several hours later, the aliens were mingling with the regulars who had now imbibed to the

point the strangers no longer looked bizarre to them. There was a great deal of laughter, and at first the aliens were mimicking the sounds the brutes were making. Apparently the aliens were extraordinarily hungry for sustenance and using the Guinness as a substitute for food. The credit card was being whipped out so often it was almost a blur,

Certain human behaviors can cause the doors to our inhibitions to be opened and let out the wild spirits meant to be kept in check. One of those human activities is the excessive imbibing of alcohol which can bring on the most startling behaviors in people. Employees tell off the boss, girls standing on tables and stripping to the buff, loud talking, loud singing, laughter at damned near anything etc. Alcohol is a spirit which needs to be drunk with responsibility and staying alert to the dangers awaiting the imbibers who drink with wild abandon.

Two Ortzians ended up on thin ice, considering the danger they were in from many would-be captors. They reached a state of happy abandon via drinking too much. By now, it was early morning of the next day and the atmosphere in the pub had changed drastically. Laughing the human way was becoming difficult as the Guinness drinking effect took over.

Someone told a joke the aliens didn't understand, but they laughed anyway with the crowd, but this time their sounds of mirth were Ortzian. It was like a high pitched siren, "yeeeaay,yoohoohoo,hoooooyeeay,hoohooyaaa."

It was so strange and ear shattering the patrons of the pub almost sobered up. The joke wasn't that funny and the Ortzians didn't understand it anyway.

Their hysterical outburst was out of line with a joke only deserving of a polite chuckle. Now carried away with alcohol, the aliens were unable

to stop their siren-like guffawing. It emptied the crowd in the pub out onto the street protecting their ears with their hands.

They were becoming frightened of the eerie sounds coming from the two weird looking men. It was particularly strange given their eyebrows were so high up on their foreheads (over-compensation) and they had mouths so small, they were frozen in an "O" expression. Thus the aliens now looked perpetually shocked as opposed to the earlier impending death look.

O'Leary called the Gardee station for help, yelling into the phone with great urgency in his voice. The officers responded quickly expecting to see either a brawl or a fire at the pub. The officer who had taken the ridiculous looking pair into the station earlier, wondered if they were the cause of the disturbance at the Swine's Head Pub.

Inside the pub the aliens had stopped laughing and looked around to find the place empty. They

staggered to the door and stepped out to blinding spot lights and an officer speaking into a microphone,

"You men! Stay where you are! We are arresting you for causing a public disturbance!"

The aliens obeyed the command. They began to sober up quickly as they realized they were in serious trouble. One alien said to the other,

"You know we can't be caught, what do we do?"

"We'll have to scare them. Let's do it now!"

One of the officers was approaching them to take them into custody when he was suddenly face to face with two elephants. He froze in his tracks looking up at two bull elephants with their ears flared out and trumpeting loudly in a rage.

The elephants lowered their heads pointing their threatening tusks at the Gardee. Then they charged toward the crowd, their large ears flapping as they ran, and trumpeting loudly. People were yelling, screaming and running faster than they ever

thought they could, away from the terrifying beasts.

Great clouds of dust rose up on the street from the charging bulls, so now they could only be heard, not seen. Several brave Gardee managed to grab guns from their cruiser and when the elephants became partially visible, they began shooting at them. It didn't seem to have any effect on the charging animals, so the Gardee took off in their squad cars to save themselves.

Several minutes later the street was miraculously empty except for the elephants. Cautiously, the huge heads of the bulls swung around checking the street for antagonists. But most assuredly, there wasn't an Inforfree resident within a mile of the pub. Satisfied they had successfully scared the hell out of the crowd from the pub, they dropped the elephant illusion, returning to human form.

They ran out of the area to their sphere hidden in a nearby tree. Sitting atop the sphere was a crow who was either trying to hatch it or steal it. Not for long, they turned themselves into large hawks and charged the crow. After flinging itself into the air to escape, the crow flew away making loud cawing noises. Probably protesting over the rude treatment from a couple of bullying hawks.

And so began the great elephant hunt, a first in Ireland, but probably not the strangest occurrence in its history. Word spread quickly in the country about the threatening incident outside the Swine's Head Pub. It takes no imagination at all to guess at the reaction of many people who heard about it, Especially when they heard the wild elephants were charging near a pub at 3 AM. Comments broke out around the country such as, were the elephants pink?, did they talk to you? etc.

Many people descended on Inforfree out of curiosity, others to hunt the elephants. Gardee from

neighboring towns came to help their brother officers in this crisis. By the end of the week, Inforfree couldn't hold any more visitors. O'Leary almost developed bursitis drawing pints at a record speed.

They couldn't find any trace of elephants ever being in the town, there were no hoof prints, no droppings (which would have been very conspicuous given the size of the pachyderms the Gardee described). Nothing. If the elephants had actually been there, they were the neatest animals in the world.

Suspicious grew about the Inforfree Incident, as either a hoax to promote business, or at least call attention to the tiny hamlet. Within a week's time all was nearly back to normal in Inforfree, well, almost. Those who had been witnesses to the charge of the elephants would never forget it.

Their recent experiences with curious outsiders taught them it was prudent to only speak among themselves about what they saw that night.

Chapter Seventeen

To date, nothing had been successful for the aliens now hidden away in a woods near Blarney Castle. Discussions of long duration hadn't produced any action plan. One said,

"I think we'll have to meet with the leader of this barbaric country and ask for protection from the Americans hunting us. Dr. Globule is not going to stop his search. If this country will grant asylum until we can leave the planet, our problem would be solved."

"I don't know, on the surface they seem to be kind people." one alien replied

"Don't forget their game of kicking human heads, and the weird hopping people." cautioned the other alien

"There is one comforting thought though about these Irish people. That is the visit to Ortz many years ago by the Guinness salesman who sold us the

wonderful formula for what they call a pint."

"And don't forget, they like to sing."

Except for having to scare birds away from their hiding place in the hollow of a tree and shooing squirrels, it was safe. They went to work on a plan to learn about the leader of the country and where he lived. They definitely wouldn't return to Inforfree to ask questions. This time they would study the costumes Irish people commonly wore, knowing now what they wore to Inforfree was conspicuous.

They found one uniform worn by a number of men in Ireland, it seemed to be the perfect costume to wear without being noticed. Making the ultimate sacrifice for their mission, they actually looked at each other to be sure the costumes were accurate in every detail. It wasn't too difficult, since it was all black except for a white collar worn around the neck. They were delighted with the hat worn with the costume so they didn't have to wear, ugh, hair.

They chose a location on the west coast of Ireland called King's Cross. It was chosen because the name suggested the leader of Ireland might be found at the site. When they arrived at the location for Kings Cross, something appeared to be wrong. All there was at the site was an extremely old pub. They were fascinated with the exterior's grass roof. Stepping inside there was a dirt floor, an old fireplace, a dog sleeping near by it and a sagging wooden bar.

Two men were sitting at a table near the fire in deep conversation, they didn't look up to see who had entered the pub. At the bar sat one man on a stool with a pint glass in front of him nearly empty of beer. The bar man was rather old but cheerful,

"Good mornin' Fathers. In for a pint are you? What is your pleasure? Maybe a Guinness?" he asked them politely.

The aliens declined, the Inforfree episode, the ensuing hangover and the need to escape the

Gardee were enough. One of the aliens spoke up to ask about finding the Irish leader, it took awhile for the Language Transponder to respond. It was working to find the right words,

"Who do you listen to?" is what came out.

The bar man was confused by the question and guessed at the proper answer,

"That would be Gay Burnie." he replied.

"Where can we find him?"

"Well, on the radio, of course."

he answered cautiously.

"Where is this Radio place?"

"In Dublin." the bar man replied, not sure of himself.

They thanked the bar man, but before they could exit the pub, the man at the bar asked the priests for a pint, "If ya have some Christian charity in yer harts, would ya stand a man a pint?"

Not wanting to start any trouble, one alien gave the credit card to the bar man and ordered a pint

for the man. Fresh pint in hand, he raised the glass and toasted them,

"Bless you, Fathers. I'll be making it to Mass this week, I swear to ya."

They reached the city in seconds in their sphere. Dublin looked to be a challenge for the aliens. A large city has all sorts of traps they could encounter. An impressive looking white building was in front of them.

"This is probably the Radio place where we will find their leader, Gay Burnie." one alien commented. "We are properly dressed now so I think it is safe to go in and request a meeting with their leader."

They left the sphere in a tree and headed up the long walk to the entrance of Dublin's Customs House. There was a uniformed guard at the door which made them edgy. He said to them as they approached,

"Good afternoon Fathers, how can I help you?"

"We -----desire, no----want ---to see Gay Burnie,"

"This is not the right place to find him." the guard replied, "You need to go to the RTE Radio studios."

When they heard 'radio" it had to be the place they wanted.

"Hello-----no thanks." one alien replied after the guard gave them directions for the RTE location. The guard watched them walk away wondering what was wrong with the two priests.

Now they were getting somewhere, the creatures thought as they ambled down the street. People passing by them bowed their heads in a gesture of respect for the men of the cloth. The aliens bowed their heads in return, whereas the people passing by them only had to bow their heads one time, they were dutifully nodding to all of the faithful.

Their necks began to ache and stiffen up from all of the head bowing. In desperation they ducked into an alleyway to escape the strange human bowing ritual. Looking like escaped convicts, the aliens slithered and ducked back to the sphere to rest up.

They blissfully lounged in the sphere enjoying the peace. "Do you suppose we could go to the Radio in our sphere? We wouldn't have to (shudder) change our disguise as loathsome humans. What do you think?"

"Great idea! Then we would have the sphere with us to escape quickly if something happened."

"Two problems need to be worked out. One is getting into the Radio without being discovered. Secondly their leader, Gay Burnie. might be upset when he sees two Ortzians standing before him.?"

"I think we can take a chance with Gay Burnie. Anyone who is strong enough to lead these uncivilized savages certainly can stand looking at a

couple of aliens."

Good point," the other alien replied, "Let's do our grooming now, then we'll take our sphere and investigate the Radio."

A fragrant blue mist filled the sphere and the aliens used delicate looking brushes to clean their large ears and the rest of their bodies. Then they used an instrument to clean their two mouths. They had been horrified when they saw that the aborigines only had one mouth. It meant they spoke and ate with the same mouth! How disgusting!

Ortzians had a mouth for taking in nourishment, and the other mouth was for communicating sounds. It was a beautiful organ with soft velvety ridges in it for capturing the complex acoustic sounds. There were groans, screeches. gentle moans and high whistles in their language. Human voices sounded like a machine gun to their large ears.

Sam and Tom were alright as crude animals, but
it would be good to be back on Ortz,

Chapter Eighteen

Now refreshed, their ears were a glowing blue color which meant things were good for them. Seconds later they were quietly circling the building looking for an entrance where they could slip into the Radio without being seen. At the rear of the building was a large utility door with people coming and going with boxes and some carrying cleaning equipment. It was easy to time the approach of a man pushing a cleaning cart full of janitorial supplies to their silent entrance into the Radio.

They flitted around the building corridors using the Language Transponder to "read" the words on doors and signs. Some purists reading this story, if by some miracle there IS someone actually looking at this book, might rebel at this juncture. Because the aliens just happened to be in the RTE studios at

the exact time and day the leader they were seeking was broadcasting his music show. The story now goes on with the loyal readers, purists will never know what they have missed!

There it was, a sign next to the door stated Gay Burnie was on the air. He must be giving a speech to his people they guessed. It wasn't a grand palace or mansion as they had imagined the Radio would be. It was cluttered up with machines and Gay Burnie was wearing head phones while sitting at a plain desk. Humility was a good virtue for a leader they thought.

, After a cautious examination of the hallway they pushed on the door with the sphere, and it opened. Gay turned his head to see who had invaded his studio, but there was no one around but himself. He turned back to the work at hand which at the moment was telling the audience he would play a 1925 original record of Fang and the Alligators playing, "Swamp Water Blues". Fang himself on the trumpet.

Music playing, Gay was looking on the desk for a letter from a fan to read to the audience at the next break. In the meantime there was a signal a listener was calling in a song request. Gay took the call and chatted briefly with the listener who was requesting that he play, "Beat me daddy and I'll hit you back."

After the song was ended, he read the letter from a fan saying even though she was 110 years old, she listened to every show, God bless you, Ronan. Should have read it first, he thought to himself, then quickly changed the subject to----- he looked up to see the tiny aliens with their large ears and two mouths standing on the desk in front of him.

The engineer in the sound booth was frantically trying to get his attention to get on with the show. Veteran trooper that he was, while staring, Gay announced the next tune, "I've been down so long it looks like up to me blues"

played by the Twelfth Street and Vine Loafers.

Hoping the Language Transponder was working properly, which it wasn't, one of the aliens said to Gay, "Alarm me---no, not scared you---maybe. Erin go up your bra.""

Gay sort of understood the "thing" was trying to assure him they wouldn't harm him.. Why warn me? he thought to himself, what could these two runts do to me? He put out his hand cautiously toward the aliens. Seeing the giant hand. the aliens thought Gay was going to attack them. They hit his hand with a laser beam causing a sharp pain to run up his arm, "waaaawooo" he exclaimed, wishing he hadn't thought they were harmless.

Before he could try to communicate with the aliens, his song ended. Backing away from his desk, Gay announced a break for the latest weather forecast. It came on,

"It is raining in most of the area, and where it is now clear, it will rain."

Forecast over, Gay took a call from a listener keeping his voice at the trademark velvety cool tone. But never taking his eyes off his weird visitors who weren't moving around. The aliens were patiently waiting for the leader to finish his speeches to his people. Gay put on another song, this time it was Bootblack Jack and his four Heels playing "Going the wrong way down a one way street ramble"

While they continued to wait for Gay, the aliens had to endure the loud jazz music which made their ears tremble. What they hadn't noticed was Gay's left hand behind his back waving wildly to get the attention of the sound engineer. The man in the sound booth saw Gay's hand wiggling, but he couldn't see the aliens from that distance because of their tiny size. So he waved back at Gay thinking he was just horsing around.

Finally the show "from hell" was over, Gay was exhausted from trying to keep everything normal

while looking at alien beings. One of the them tried again, "We know (miraculously the Language Transponder was working as it was supposed to) you are Gay Burnie. We have come to you for help since you are the leader of Ireland."

Gay was thinking, well, they aren't too far off from the truth. "Why do you think I'm the leader of this country?" he asked warily, hoping they would refrain from zapping him.

"A man in the Kings Crossing pub told us."

He knew the rural pub. He could just imagine what sort of inhabitant of the establishment would have told the aliens he was their leader.

"Although there were some reasons for the man to tell you I was the leader of Ireland, the information was slightly inaccurate. Maybe I can be of help, gentlemen, what do you need from our country?"

The aliens decided to trust Gay and told him the whole story of their plight. They added that there was a world wide search led by Dr. Globule in America. They were asking the country to grant them asylum until they could leave the planet. At the end of their story, Gay agreed to try to help.

Gay got busy making some calls to officials he knew who might be able to help the Ortzians. Not much luck on the first call. The man on the other end of the line began to laugh, then he asked Gay what pub he was calling from. And his crazy talk about beings from outer space didn't fool him, ha ha.. Several calls later, he was still being heckled by friends over his obvious practical joke which they clearly saw through.

Finally he got lucky, this friend was talking to him from a pub where he had been imbibing for several hours. Gay's call made perfect sense to him, and of course he would help him.

Three Gardee vehicles pulled up to the entrance of the RTE studios. Gay, carrying a small package was driven to his friend's house. The Gardee then parked a discreet distance from Duffy's house so they wouldn't alarm the neighborhood. He arrived home an hour later carrying some bottles in a sack. Duffy was thinking Gay was ready to have some fun, him, and his buddies from another world called Ortz.

Instead, Gay looked quite serious and he went around closing the drapes in every room. Duffy was puzzled, "What are you up to Gay? Are these aliens, as you call them, wanted men from some other country? I can't go along with anything like that."

It was time for the truth. He brought the two Ortzians and their sphere out into the open. Sobering up quickly, Duffy stared in astonishment at the tiny figures walking out of the sphere. They had learned a sign of friendliness on this fragment

was a waving of the arms, so the aliens waved wildly at Duffy. Gay steadied Duffy by holding his arm, "You aren't seeing little men courtesy of the Old Horse Pub, these Ortzians are real." he said to Duffy/

One of the aliens used the Language Transponder which was acting up again,

"Friends we are-----Ortz one hell of a haul--please."

Duffy's mouth moved several times but no words were forthcoming, he just looked like a lunatic. Only Gay's grip on his arm prevented him from jumping out of the nearest window.

oothingly Gay told him, "They came to me for help. They need our protection until rescuers arrive from Ortz."

His explanation of the situation caused a collision of realities in Duffy's mind, beings from outer space, but the little farts won't hurt us. It was a dichotomy beyond his wildest thoughts and he

began to laugh hysterically. Gay was forced to slap his friend in the face to stop the hysteria. Then diplomatically, he poured Duffy a glass of whiskey.

In the meantime, the aliens had retreated to their sphere and readied a larger laser weapon in case the mad man charged them. When he settled down, Gay explained the terrible plight the Ortzians were in from a number of forces in America trying to capture them.

Duffy was a politician in the party presently in the majority in Ireland so he had some clout. Gay asked him to talk to the president about granting asylum to the tiny beings until they could leave for home.

Duffy paced up and down. His forehead was wrinkled in thought, being bald, the furrows of skin went all the way to the back of his head. He was weighing the situation trying to decide what was the best move in this weird situation. There

was the diplomatic relationship with America to be considered, the reaction of the president to the request, and what might happen to his own political career.

Gay calmly watched him pace, for in his lifetime he had encountered strange people and situations nearly as outrageous as the current crisis. Then Duffy walked into the adjacent room and dialed the president on his cell phone. Gay watched his mouth moving rapidly as he talked to the president. He gesticulated to put emphasis on something he had said to the president. Being on the other end of a telephone connection he couldn't see the gestures.

Duffy stopped talking and listened, nodding his head a few times. He finished the call, returned to the other room, and said to Gay,

"He doesn't like any of it one bit, Gay. Until he decides what the best answer is to this delicate situation, he asked us to stay here with the aliens for now."

Chapter Nineteen

Sam and Tom hadn't seen the Ortzians since the disaster at Cape Canaveral. The incident in the space capsule involving them was being treated as top secret. To make public a story of extraterrestrials taking over a space vehicle then disappearing into space could cause a world wide panic.

People were already edgy about the stories they had heard about the commotion around the Berkeley area hunting for aliens. There was a widespread rumor the monsters were sucking the insides out of cows (naturally the story was embellished somewhat as it was passed along).

Tom had been able to glean some of the wild story the three astronauts had told because of his status as a space consultant for NASA. According to his source the aliens had been in the space craft

when it lifted off the launch pad at Cape Canaveral. The rest was a little vague, but it was rumored they escaped into space.

Days went by without any sightings of beings from outer space. Sam did discover they were in Ireland when he received his credit card bill with charges from various places in Ireland. It could only be the Ortzians who had the card, it had gone missing the day of the space launch.

Dr. Globule's intensive search in America with small drones was causing trouble around the country. Citizens strongly resented the snooping little drones popping in and out of sight on their patterns searching for signs of X atoms. They also caused a noise nuisance at night as they circled around while people were trying to sleep.

A new American sport was born out of the annoyance. Riflemen began to shoot them down all over the country while the authorities tried to find the culprits. Globule was furious about

interruptions to his relentless quest to capture the aliens. He demanded drone replacements and more efforts to stop the sharpshooters. He was basically ignored by the FBI and local authorities who were busy with other things. Besides, maybe the extraterrestrials got tired of being hunted and went home.

Tom's contacts with fellow astronomers in countries around the world was a valuable tool for helping the Ortzians. Jeremy Shanahan, an Irish astronomer, was one of the few men of science who took Tom's story seriously about living in another world with beings thousands of years ahead of earthlings.

He contacted his Irish friend for help. He told Shanahan about encountering the Ortzians and his efforts to protect them from Dr. Glucose. He had evidence that they may be in Ireland and had he heard of any particularly strange stories lately?

Shanahan remembered the uproar in Inforfree about wild elephants no one could find. But the residents who were there still insisted it happened. After hearing the story, Tom told him it had to be the aliens. He explained their ability to do a highly advanced hologram of just about anything.

He concluded his call by saying to Jeremy,

"I'm coming over there with my nephew, Sam Slade, to find them before some ego maniac like Dr. Globule captures them. Then it will become a big show with scientists jostling one another for media attention, and the aliens' chance to go home will be lost."

"These little guys will surely wither away and die in a primitive world without the security of home. Electro magnetic highways in space are dynamic, so there can be a reversal of direction for thousands of years, so it's now, or possibly never for them."

"I'm on it right now Tom. I will get a search team together. We'll cover the whole of Ireland, if

they are here, I think we can find them."

In one day Jeremy had his friends dispatched to assigned areas of the country. Jeremy covered Inforfree looking for clues about the aliens' whereabouts. Naturally he met O'Leary in the Swine's Head Pub where all of the action had taken place. Jeremy didn't tell the bar man about his purpose for being in the town. He didn't need to, any stranger showing up these days was there to satisfy their curiosity about a bizarre event.

Wild elephants loose in an Irish village fit the description of bizarre very neatly. Fully aware of "how to take the ball on the bounce", O'Leary was now the resident expert on the Inforfree Incident, and the pub business was booming. He wouldn't begin to tell you anything until two pints, or two whiskeys, had been paid for along with a generous stipend.

Jeremy wisely entered the pub as soon as the door was unbolted to let in customers. When the

required two pints had been paid for, and a grand tip left conspicuously on the bar, O'Leary began his monologue. He concluded his spiel with personal observations about the event and the two weirdly dressed strangers who disappeared when the elephants showed up to terrorize the village.

It was simple for Jeremy to understand these were the Ortzians as described by Tom. He ordered a third pint, "Was there no sign of the strangers after the elephants disappeared?"

"Not a hair. Now my guess is, those two strange mates owned those elephants. They were trained like dogs, to protect them when they blew a silent whistle. I'm positive they were circus blokes on their way to join a carnival somewhere. So they hid the elephants in some trees, and came into the pub to quench their thirst for a pint or two."

"I'll bet you're right," Jeremy replied, "Did they ask for directions or anything? It could be a clue to where they were going with their elephants."

"Now that's an interesting question. The Gardee asked me that, but in all the fuss going on the last few days, I never really gave it much thought. I was happy to have me pub in one piece without any big elephant holes in it. I was busy that night, but one of them asked about a leader or something, but I was too busy to answer him."

It had called for a fifth pint to complete his intelligence mission at the Swine's Head Pub. When he left O'Leary he was drunk but he had found out a clue about the Otrtzian's possible destination. He staggered to his car, managed to insert his key into the ignition admirably on the fourth try, and roared off down the road to Dublin. After spending several hours sobering up at home, he called Tom to tell him about his clue and what it probably meant. This call was taken by Tom on an airline flight now half way to Dublin.

There was trouble in the city. The aliens had left Duffy's house in their sphere by smashing

through a window. They had listened in to Duffy's phone call to the president, then heard him tell Gay about holding them in the house. Entrapment! They were now nestling on a limb of an oak tree near the house trying to decide their next move. It so happened that the president of Ireland when informed of the aliens presence in Dublin, was handed a hot potato.

America had sent out a formal request to every government on the planet to take the aliens into protective custody until the FBI arrived to bring them back. A note was added to this document to the effect, after all, they landed in America so they claimed territorial rights for the aliens.

The super power had spoken. Who was going to question the request (more like a demand) from the United States? Certainly not the president of Ireland, he would get them out of his country immediately. In contrast to the quiet way Gay brought the aliens to the house, the president

arrived with a Gardee escort in his limousine.

As he and two aides walked quickly to Duffy's front door, the Gardee spread out around the house and grounds. This was not what Gay had expected. He was unaware of the American manifesto requesting all of the nations to turn the aliens over to the FBI if they were in their country.

He didn't remain ignorant for long. When the president came into the room, he immediately told them of the jam he was in, now that the aliens were in Dublin. He ordered Duffy to turn them over to the Gardee, who then had to tell the president the aliens had escaped. Questions about their possible location elicited a long series of "I don't know's".

Gay wasn't going to give up without arguing the case for the beings from outer space. After all, no listener had ever gotten the upper hand in his many years of radio broadcasting. He always dispatched them eloquently with elegant speech which would always defeat any argument a listener might use,

and make them like it. Now was the time to use his great powers of persuasion.

He stuck his hands in his pockets as a gesture of appearing relaxed and cool. Gay was looking commanding with his perfect grooming, his white silver hair neatly combed and a slight smile of amusement on his lips. In contrast, the president had left his residence in a hurry. Right now one wing of his white shirt stuck straight out, his tie was askew and he had wild light in his eyes.

Gay then spoke out in a cool tone of voice,

"While we do have a bit of a situation here, I think we need to talk about the aliens before we act. Ireland has a long history of being bullied by other countries. We have felt the heavy heel of conquerors on our necks. Now, we have two tiny Ortzians coming to us asking for protection from the powerful hand of America. Albeit, she is one of our staunchest allies, but are we to just acquiesce to their demand as if we were their subjects?"

“I think not. At the moment our country is flat broke, but that hasn't prevented us from letting people in to our country who are as broke as we are. No, freedom is a sacred word in Ireland. I say we extend the same privilege of asylum to the extraterrestrials as we do for humans.”

Gay sat down after he had finished his argument for reason and a higher ideal of justice. Then he waited for an outpouring of enthusiasm for his patriotic stand and a host of volunteers to come forward to help his cause.

The president stared at him with the wild look still in his eyes. He shouted out to the Gardee captain, "Find those little bastards right away! Then lock them up in prison with a 24 hour guard on them to watch for any sneaky alien tricks. Then notify the FBI in America we have the little farts in custody!"

So much for cool heads of reason.

This time the Ortzians weren't prepared for an attack. Members of the special squad were well trained and thorough. Spotting them up in the oak tree they gestured silently to one another about the plan of attack. A vehicle was pushed silently under the tree and a ladder was raised along the trunk of the tree. A trooper swiftly ascended the ladder and cast a steel mesh net over the sphere. It was quickly brought down and placed in a steel box. No chance to flee and the sphere was rendered powerless in the thick steel prison.

A tiny vent for air was the only opening in the steel prison. No room was left in there to do anything, not even a hologram could be used because of the thick steel walls. It was the first time in all of their encounters with earthlings they were caught inside the sphere. They had no space to put up a defense, in here, even their lasers were of no use.

At least they weren't left in the dark, the sphere glowed brightly. They looked at each other out of their tiny eyes, their large ears were trembling and they had turned the yellow color denoting a state of fear. At the moment, being two thousand years more advanced was of no help to them.

Chapter Twenty

Secrets are hard to keep secret. No matter the solemn pledges to keep the secret, secret. Some people will violate their promise even when doing so might have consequences of a horrible nature. The natives of Ireland make up a nation with great sensitivity to individual freedom and justice. This ideal was for anyone being strangled or trodden down by any authorities, including the Irish government. Pubs have a communications system much faster and more accurate than the lowly, clumsy internet will ever be

Now the Gardee involved in the capture and the imprisonment of the two tiny visitors from another world, visited their local pubs for a pint or two after their shift was over. Except for a few lackeys in the Gardee who would do anything their superiors ordered them to do, and then some, the

majority of the police officers were uncomfortable about arresting two tiny Ortzians. It was impossible for them not tell their friends in their favorite pubs about the aliens and their capture.

Adding to their discontentment was jailing them in the infamous Kilmainham prison for security reasons. The prison was first built in the seventeenth century, then in the 1920's. a more modern prison was added on to the original jail. It had been closed in the 1930's, so the aliens were the only prisoners in the correctional institution. The newer section was a complex jail made of steel and designed to be able to observe every prisoner in his cell from any angle. Only the back wall was closed. It reminds one of two stories of menagerie cages.

It had a history from its beginning, when it was constructed by the British, of mistreatment, no heat in the oldest section, and executions by firing squad. Members of the Irish Citizens Army

involved in the Easter Rising of 1916 had been imprisoned there, some were executed at the prison. So it was a powerful double whammy, so to speak, about individual freedom and imprisonment for no apparent reason. This combination fueled what was about to happen in Ireland.

Talk in the pubs that night was pretty much the same in all of them. Something like this,

"You're jokin' me."

"Holdin' them without bail are they?"

"How big did you say these Martians are?"

"Some treatment for visitors to our land."

"Somethin' must be done for them little guys."

"In a steel box? What kind of treatment is that?"

"Turnin' them over to the American police?"

"Feckin' hell." Etc.

By 4 AM of the following morning, every citizen in Ireland knew about the mistreatment of the visitors who had done them no harm.

Enter the men qualified to organize a protest movement, the IRA. They decided the most effective way to get the aliens out of prison, and into safe hands, was to recruit ordinary citizens for the overt actions. People with no record with the Gardee or the government. Feelers went out to the Dublin pubs for contact with Gardee members whose sympathies were on the side of the little men. An inside job was definitely in order for freeing the aliens.

Nearly overnight secret meetings were being held in various places around the city to discuss the IRA plan of action. It was a brilliant plan that no one could argue with. It was non violent, but it required precise timing by the people who would carry out the prison escape.

Maximum security measures had been instituted at Killmainem while the government nervously waited for the arrival of the American FBI agents to take away their problem. There were policemen

at the front entrance and several interior security gates leading to the second floor where the Ortzians were imprisoned. They were in a cell in a corner where four more Gardee stood watch. Outside of the prison were squad cars at every strategic street junction.

They learned the Ortzians had their own food supply and the sphere contained all of their needs, so it was a simple matter to guard these prisoners. An essential element of the security routine was opening the steel box every hour to be certain the aliens were still in their custody. Only Tom and Sam knew anything about the Ortzians and what they could accomplish, given the chance.

A bust-out was planned for 6 PM when there was a change of shift and the next squad took over. In the incoming squad were two policemen who were assigned to be in the cell with the aliens. It was their responsibility to perform the hourly inspections of the Ortzians.

At the time of the changing of personnel, the Gardee in charge of the isolation cell who were departing, had to open the steel box to prove to the incoming men the aliens were there. At 6 PM this evening the shift change in the cell had a slightly different routine.

This time the departing men opened the steel box for the shift coming in, but, they picked up the sphere and one of them put it in his uniform tunic.. Its size was only slightly larger than a softball so it was easy to conceal. Then an officer in the new shift slipped an object out of his uniform jacket with the same shape as the aliens' sphere. It was glowing like the aliens' space craft. It was placed in the steel box and the lid was closed.

Upstairs above the Boar's Hind Leg Pub, the alien's sphere was set down on a table in the middle of the room. In order to keep everything low key, only the two Gardee who took the aliens out of the prison and several members of the IRA

were present with the fugitive Ortzians.

Inside the sphere the alien's looked out to see who they were dealing with now. One of the Gardee said to them,

"You're among friends here, come out, so we can meet you. We apologize to you for the rotten treatment you've received in Ireland. Please believe me when I tell you, Irish people are friendly and quick to anger over unfair treatment."

Thinking it over they finally decided to trust these earthlings since they had freed them from prison. Stepping out of their sphere rather cautiously, they saw the hideous faces of the Irishmen with the ugly grimace on their faces they had learned was known as a smile. Tom had explained to them it was called a smile and it meant the person was feeling happy. One alien used the Language Transponder to communicate,

"We thank you for taking us from the jail. Now we will leave you so you won't be in a fix."

"It might be wiser to let us hide you so we can help with a plan to leave Ireland safely." said an IRA member, "Right now, there is a country alert out for you guys, it's too risky to move around."

It seemed to be good advice to the Ortzians after all of the attempts to capture them. Besides, they decided, they desperately needed help to stay hidden until the rendezvous for their journey home..

Sam and Tom landed at Dublin airport in the middle of all of the excitement over the extraterrestrials. Jeremy Shanahan was there to meet them and he insisted they stay at his home. He was a widower living in a comfortable house with three bedrooms. At times he had thought about selling the place and moving into a condo, but his fondness for privacy and roominess won every time.

On the trip into Dublin, Jeremy told them the latest developments about the Ortzians. He was

well connected in his native city and he learned about the capture of the aliens by the government. It was hard to have to tell them about the isolation imposed on them pending the arrival of the American FBI.

They were upset about the cruel treatment by the government. Jeremy told them it was a difficult diplomatic problem, since he found out America had sent out a manifesto claiming sovereign rights over the aliens. This meant if the Irish government honored the manifesto, they were honor-bound to take orders from America.

Tom told Jeremy about Dr. Globule's obsession to capture them for glory in the scientific world and his considerable political clout to get help from Washington. He was sure Globule himself would be flying into Ireland soon to claim them. They had to move fast to find the aliens and get them out somehow. At this juncture they were not aware the Ortzians were gone from the prison. No

one except for the few Gardee involved knew they were gone. The mock-up sphere in the steel box fooled the guards for two days.

Chapter Twenty One

Now the lid was off regarding beings from outer space landing on Earth. Americans knew the whole story about the Ortzians being somewhere in Ireland. They had also learned their visitors from outer space were only three inches tall. Most people were outraged when they found out the tiny aliens were imprisoned in an Irish jail on orders from the American government! Bullying little guys far from home, any home, no matter where it was located, was too much to bear!

It plunged America and Ireland into a fierce debate in the newspapers, on the internet, RTE Radio, and in government circles as to the course of action to be taken. Most favored leaving them on their own and stop interfering. They were probably trying to get home, and it was obvious to them the little guys were not in Ireland to start a

war. This was the most favored solution, it required no effort on the part of anyone, and it didn't call for anymore interference by the two governments.

Irish sentiment was clearly on the side of the aliens, but the government and the president of Ireland wouldn't yield to public pressure. There was the diplomatic problem to think of in the form of the American manifesto, so they had to wait for further orders. Everyone hoped they could find the aliens quickly and get them out of Ireland.

Another reason they wanted the ordeal to end was the mood of the Irish citizens which kept getting hotter and hotter about the government's defiance. Leave the little guys alone right now! Taking no action had the potential to topple the party presently in the majority.

However, an American group did arrive in Ireland headed up by Dr. Globule. The president of Ireland immediately spoke to the nation telling

them it was no longer their problem. An American team of experts was in the country to find the aliens. He was quick to add; the American government leaders had assured him the Ortzians wouldn't be harmed while in their custody.

That would have been a fine idea but this promise was given to the Irish government by Dr. Globule who could be lying to them. His obsession to claim the discovery of the first aliens to visit earth might cause him to take any action churning around in his brain.

Highly positioned Irish officials were relieved to have the responsibility for the Ortzians shifted to someone else. The Americans now had the task of finding and capturing the Ortzians. They were given carte blanche to ask for help from anyone they needed, any equipment, or transportation vehicles could be commandeered. In other words, we don't care what you have to do, just get the damned Ortzians out of Ireland!

Desperation is often the cause of errors in judgment. In their haste to settle the problem, they failed to look into the chaos Dr. Globule had caused in Berkeley (the town was still struggling to clear the streets so traffic could move). Irish officials were completely unprepared for the onslaught of hundreds of small drones equipped to detect the X- atom which guaranteed they would find the Ortzians.

Now, the FBI went into action organizing Irish Army soldiers to man vehicles to be dispatched all over the country with the X-atom detection equipment. Every major traffic roundabout was to be covered by the army. A complex communications network was set up at the RTE Radio station without so much as a "please" from Dr. Globule.

In less than a day, the Irish people looked up to see the black painted drone aircraft. They were about the size of a basketball and hovered over

their heads. Sometimes one of them would zoom down near to someone and examine them closely, then swoop up swiftly to its original position. All over Ireland there was an invasion of the irritating drones and Irish Army soldiers at major intersections stopping motorists to scan the cars for the presence of the X-Atom.

Long lines of cars began to form at the major highway intersections, called, "roundabouts". This brought on a mass protest from the public. Government offices around the country were inundated with complaints. Basically, there were three types, threats to shoot the bleedin' things out of the air, or how long would these damned things be spying on us? and protests about the long lines of traffic at the roundabouts. One man claimed he left for work on Monday and finally arrived on Wednesday. This claim was discounted by the officials as a gross misrepresentation of the real truth.

These complainants didn't receive any solace, instead they were told it is against the law to destroy government property, so don't do it. As for how long the drones would be flying around, couldn't be determined, since the aliens needed to be captured. No one could predict when that might be. These responses were so unsatisfactory, groups began to march in the streets and flood all means of communication with complaints.

The president of Ireland made an appeal for cooperation on television, although he didn't really expect much improvement would be forthcoming. He was correct, his talk was basically disregarded by the public. Intensity of the expressed threats were stronger, or milder, in direct ratio as to how many drones were in one's neighborhood.

Presently, the aliens were in hiding in an IRA "safe house". They had already been moved four times since their escape from prison and their future didn't look very promising to them.

Their ears were orange most of the time graphically expressing their feelings of fear and anger (yellow for fear and red for anger). They wondered how long it would be to either be captured by Dr. Globule's team, or arrested while attempting to leave Ireland?

Chapter Twenty Two

Jeremy Shanahan was a native of Dublin. He was valuable to Tom and Sam since he knew people all over the city. They had worked out a rough outline of actions they could take to keep the Ortzians from being captured.

To keep the Ortzians free, they would need a large network of volunteers all over Ireland. They would help them disrupt the organized search for the aliens. Jeremy made some inquiries concerning the whereabouts of the aliens with people he was certain had information.

After stopping at five places asking questions and getting nothing but innocent stares, he was approached near his car. A voice from an alley near his vehicle told him

"Hey mate, drive to Trinity College and park your car on the northwest corner of the campus. You will be picked up."

Jeremy followed the instructions.. At the campus he sat in his car waiting for the contact to happen. Ten minutes went by with no action, only streams of cars coming and going on the street. Then a garbage truck restricted his view of the street while the men retrieved large cans of garbage set down by the curb for pick up.

He really became annoyed because he was blocked from seeing at all. A worker holding a disposal can was staring at him through the car window. He made a gesture with his hand meaning, Jeremy should come with him. He followed the worker to the truck where they joined another man who held out a large jacket for Jeremy to wear. Now he looked like the garbage truck workers. Dressed in the coat and wearing a cap he was led to the truck cab and got in.

The driver only nodded his head in recognition. The crew continued the garbage collecting work to the end of the street. Finished, the truck picked up

speed and left the area. Jeremy was taken to the safe house to meet the aliens. He was very excited to meet beings from another world. Even though Tom had described them in great detail, still, the sight of the small aliens was startling. Nothing on earth was anything like them, He came up close to the sphere.

"I'm a friend of Tom and Sam who are here in Dublin and anxious to see you. Your friends here will move you to a more convenient place tomorrow so you can have a meeting."

When their Transponder had translated Jeremy's message, the aliens were relieved to hear their friends from America were here in Ireland, Their next place of hiding was quite a surprise. They were returned to the RTE station headquarters and deposited in a small office belonging to Gay Burnie. Tom and Sam were there to greet them at the office. Their ears turned color from orange to a bright glowing blue when they saw their

benefactors. Gay Burnie was also there in his office.

Tom became serious after some general talk.

"I received another message from Ortz to report some terrible news. The electromagnetic highway that brought you to earth has changed its direction. So the route the rescue team was planning to use has been lost. They are working to find another highway. Chances of finding such an alternative are almost impossible."

It was like a death sentence to hear they were possibly stranded on earth for good. One of them replied, (This was in the Ortzian language. So it was full of moans, groans, shrieks and whistles. Here is the translation).

"Tom, we thank you for your help. Is there anything we can create here to get back to Ortz?"

"Sorry, we aren't as advanced as you Ortzians are, but I will try to find a solution. Our main focus now is to prevent Dr. Globule or some other group from capturing you again. We are fortunate to be

in Ireland, public sentiment is definitely on your side here. Now we need to do some careful planning, weighing our strengths and weaknesses to avoid the electronic dragnet Globule has devised."

A core group of people was formed to work out suggestions and to assign responsibility for all aspects of their plan. Tom, Sam and Jeremy would be the communications team to disseminate information and give orders.

Gay Burnie was an important part of their plan since he could move around freely in the RTE building. It gave him access to Globule's center where the team operated and flew drones around the country. He would report on activities at Globule's communications base and send out warnings if things changed. An urgent situation called for Gay to broadcast the signal by playing "Ain't Misbehavin'" on his radio show.

Then he would be contacted by Tom to acknowledge his warning had been received.

So, the Great Irish Conspiracy was created to thwart efforts by the authorities to capture the Ortzians. There were trusted agents and safe sanctuaries in every geographical section of Ireland. Now Dr. Globule and his agents would have to be lucky, or resourceful to capture the Ortzians..

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Chapter Twenty Three

Around Ireland, the lack of regard for the public's anger over the "spy in the sky" nuisance by the government led to overt actions to rid themselves of the "spies". It was truly amazing for a country dedicated to peace and brotherly love to have such an arsenal of firearms.

The first drone to take a dive was hit over O'Connell Street in Dublin by a rocket triggered from a hand held launcher. There was a great shower of electrical bursts as it exploded, then the remains of the drone drifted down to the street in small pieces. Cheers, whistles and profanities indicated the crowd was thrilled to see the American gadget, Spy in the Sky, take a hit.

As if the incident was a starting signal, reports began to come in from all over the country about destroyed drones, and damaged ones, falling to

earth. Globule went into action to stop the attacks on his snoopers fleet. He commanded all members of his team and the Irish Army to take preventive action at major concentrations of drones. It was an exciting event, people trying to destroy drones while Dr. Globule frantically tried to have the operators controlling them at RTE Radio recall them back to Dublin.

A competition began (naturally) when Galway announced their city at last count had destroyed 12 drones. Limerick reported 14 drones, counting the ones brought down by their fishing boats. Dublin immediately objected to the 'at sea' kills since their city didn't have the same advantage of a clear shot at the drones from the sea. They did however report 10 drones down.

Eventually through the night a betting pool was created. The smell of money brought more players into the game. Garda in every county in Ireland was undermanned and unprepared to arrest a whole

army of men with weapons. In a short time, jails were filled with shooters. After a joint conference, the nation's police force agreed to "Disturbing the Peace" as a proper arrest charge against the offenders. An additional charge of "Destruction of Public Property" was dismissed as unreasonable, since the Americans owned the damned things.

Final count of downed drones was 293 out of a fleet of 1000 spies in the sky. A respectable ratio of successes given the inferior weapons the Irish had available for the job. Two drones were reported to have been brought down with a bow and arrow launched by a national champion archer by the name of Mary O'Connor, a Dublin resident.

A group of friends had rallied around Mary's call for help to attack the drones. One man owned a hot air balloon which he used to bring Mary close to the drones. It took a number of tries to find the vulnerable spot on the drone. She found it where the X-Atom detector's nose stuck out.

Considering the conditions she was working under, a thousand feet up in a hot air balloon, her feat was miraculous. She had to deal with the vagaries of the wind, a slight drizzle and a moving target, The country couldn't offend America, of course, by openly celebrating Mary's brave contribution to her country. Instead a large medal for bravery was cast and passed from hand to hand until it reached Mary. Her brave feat was all over the internet anyway.

Winner of the betting pool was a citizen from the King's Cross area of western Ireland named Paddy O'Toole, having picked Galway to win by a 2 drone margin. Paddy didn't know it, and wouldn't have cared if he did, had previously been the recipient of a free pint from the aliens when they were disguised as priests. Now with some Euros in his pocket, he no longer had to beg for a pint, nor make empty promises about attendance at Mass.

All of this fuss and aggravation caused by the drones was not ignored by the US State Department. Within two days of the Big Shoot Out, the American ambassador to Ireland was overwhelmed with communications from the State Department. Working through the night he finished a meticulous, detailed history of the alien search headed up by Dr. Globule.

This report sparked more E-mails from Washington, but so far no specific order from the Secretary of State as to the course he should take with the Irish government. The American ambassador wished he was working anywhere but the Emerald Isle at the moment. To bring home to the reader how trapped he felt, his wife later reported he had sent an E-mail to DC stating even a post in the Mid East would be okay with him.

An E-mail finally arrived from the Secretary of State himself ordering the ambassador to stop the drone campaign at once. He was also ordered to

have the drones packed up and sent back to America. It was a move to prevent Globule, the mad scientist, from disobeying the ban on drones.

Lastly, he was to feel out the attitude of the Irish government over the drone disaster, and ask if they were amenable to a ground search. The ambassador was instructed to assure the Irish president the search would be conducted in unmarked cars. No longer would any Irish military or police forces be involved in the project.

On the US side, Globule almost went mad when told the drones were to be removed from Ireland. The FBI agents had tranquilizer guns and one of them shot the scientist in the ass. He dropped before he could utter another word. Quietly and efficiently the agents organized the new program for finding the beings from outer space.

On the Irish side, the government officials were ecstatic to have their crisis solved for them. They agreed to the ground search. Immediately Irish

citizens were informed their government had never failed them. They declared the hated drones were being shipped back to America after a fierce battle with the American ambassador. The American ambassador didn't care what the president of Ireland said about him as long as things were back to normal.

Chapter Twenty Four

Now the aliens were faced with a new threat because of the intensive ground search to be launched. This search procedure was, in its own way, more dangerous. It would be impossible to spot unmarket cars as opposed to drones in the sky. A new counter-plan was created to thwart the searchers. Only a mobile force could keep the aliens safe by moving them around the country and hidden in various locations to elude the agents.

In addition, Tom planned to "seed" the country with blue dust containing the detectable X-Atom in a pattern around Ireland. While the agents picked up the signal of the X-Atom at one location, the aliens would be traveling in the opposite direction.

For example, when blue dust was detected in Dublin, the Ortziens would be taken to Galway. Everyone congratulated Tom on his brilliant plan,

but he wondered how long the deception could be maintained. There was only so much blue dust he could use from the aliens' supply, or they would be powerless to leave earth, if the time came.

Gay Burnie and a few of his friends were to be the communications base for the new operation. Certain words were to be used as a code for what was being reported to them by volunteers around the country. One of the Dublin men raced pigeons and their wireless radio was up in his pigeon loft. He would relay a message to one of Gay's cohorts rather than directly to him at the RTE station.

Code words were, of course. weather terms. Cloudy always meant be careful an agent is close to you. Light rain off the northern coast meant the southern half of Ireland had a number of agents in the vicinity, fair skies meant no danger, etc..

Gay Burnie received the messages and he had his own code words to use on his radio show. For example,

"This is a request from, blank, living in Limerick asking me to play, Muscrat Ramble." Translated it meant in Limerick there are a number of agents' cars in the area. Ramble meant move the aliens out of there. etc..

Gay seemed to relish his role of master spy. Looking at the neatly dressed man with smoothly combed silver hair, one of his friends commented to him, "You know Gay, I'm surprised you are so pleased to be part of a secret ring. Frankly, your appearance doesn't seem to fit the role of a spy defying the government."

Gay looked at him with an amused smile on his lips, "If you knew even the half of it Jimmy," he replied, "You would then discover there are depths within me that would shock you."

Then he threw his head back and laughed heartily, "Ha, ha, ha, ha." Jimmy stared at his friend in shock. Now Gay was chuckling in a low tone without any mirth in it.

Tom's seeding of false clues was working well so far. There was a frantic scramble around Ireland whenever an X-Atom was detected in some remote spot. There was one close brush with an agent on a rural road one day. He passed the car the aliens were riding in and received a powerful signal of a concentration of X-Atoms. The agent was delighted to finally get a strong signal. It could only mean the aliens were in the car he had just passed going in the opposite direction.

He slammed on the brakes, made a U turn and chased after the car. He had a Garda unmarked vehicle so he had a blue light to turn on and a wailing siren signaling the car to stop. It was a rural twisting road with sharp curves every quarter mile or so. After a chase covering about two miles, the agent caught up, he pulled in front of it.

Gun in hand, he ordered the occupants to step out with their hands clasped behind their heads. The three men complied with the agent's request

looking innocent and bewildered. One of them said to the agent, "Wha' the hell are you stoppin' us for? We was drivin' by the rules of the road."

"I'm not with the Gardee, I'm an FBI agent on assignment to find the two aliens here in Ireland."

"Do ya think one of us has'em in his pocket?"

The other two laughed at his remark. Without another word, the agent applied the detector to every part of the car. No signs of X-Atoms. Without a word to the men, he got into his car and drove away. During the chase, they had slowed the car down in one of the curves and the aliens took off in their sphere. It was a close call.

They had set the sphere on "Hover" after they had escaped from the car of their Irish protectors. At the moment there was no place to go. One alien said, "We can't play this hiding game forever, we must think of another place to stay where we can wait until Tom and his scientist friends find a solution, if they can. These Irish aborigines are so

kind to us, but, I'm afraid hiding us will become dangerous for them. I can't bear the idea of causing them harm.”

"We need to have a talk with Tom about the problem, he might have some ideas."

Tom received the aliens' request to meet him as soon as possible. It was rather awkward having to answer their call from the pigeon loft, but he persevered. With a pigeon perched on the top of his head, and one on his shoulder, he contacted the aliens. "Are you all right?" he asked in the Ortzian language of moans, grunts and whistles which scared off the pigeons roosting on him up in the bird loft. Thankfully they flew away.

"We're safe Tom. We had a close call today near Ashford Castle, but we were able to use our sphere to escape. This incident is what prompted us to call you. We are concerned for the men who have been so generous with their help. We wondered if it might be better to find another place

to hide. Especially under the circumstances of our situation which could last for a long time. Luck only stretches so far."

Tom was bearing a large burden in the situation. He was trying to keep the aliens safe while working with other scientists to find a way to get them home. He said to them,

"I'm working on something quite special right now. If you would be willing to stay in Ireland another week I will probably have an answer for you by then. I don't want to get into details, doing so would only raise your hopes, and if I fail, the disappointment would be much worse."

In the sphere the aliens were discussing Tom's request to stay in Ireland. "So far it's been Tom who has been effective in saving our lives." one said, "I think we should trust him."

"It really is the only solution," the other alien agreed.

Tom added some other information he had found out which strengthened his argument to stay in Ireland. "Dr. Globule has been in Washington and the government has agreed to provide 24 hour surveillance over Ireland with jet aircraft. Your sphere would show up on their X-atom detectors and apparently they have orders to attack if you try to leave Ireland. So the question has been answered for you, courtesy of Globule. You must stay where you are."

There was one thing more Tom didn't know, it was the military satellites orbiting in space with new instructions and X-Atom detectors. If the Ortzians were to try to escape in their sphere into space, it was to be destroyed by super powerful lasers. Sometimes when a problem becomes too elusive and all attempts to solve it fail, the egos of the pursuers are damaged. Such was the case with Dr. Globule.

His over sized sense of self was hurting from the repeated failures to capture the Ortzians. It finally culminated in the irrational thought to vaporize the aliens as a last pathetic attempt to win something.

Chapter Twenty Five

Dr. Globule hadn't abandoned his goal. When he arrived back in America, he had used his influence with the government to create a new Project Aliens. FBI agent in charge, Joe Thompson, held a meeting with his team regarding their mission to bring in the Ortzians,

"What I tell you now is Top Secret. We are being relieved from this assignment. The army is taking over command of Project Aliens. Research on drones by the military has created them in all kinds of shapes and sizes. More than likely the new plan will use some of the recently designed drones. I'm sure you men aren't too disappointed to be off the project."

A compromise with the Irish government granted permission for a small contingent of American soldiers to come into the country to

operate drones. These machines were disguised as hawks complete with mechanized wings emulating its flying motion. A secret demonstration was held for the president of Ireland to allay his fears of another drone debacle. They were impressive in flight. It was doubtful anyone on the ground would know they were watching a mechanical bird.

Gay Burnie learned about the secret mission, and the hawk drones from Lord knows who. Surprisingly, his connections in the world were more than they would seem for a radio personality. Performing as a radio broadcaster now began to appear to be a small part of his real activities.

Here was a new threat to the aliens Gay was certain no one knew about. They could easily fall into a trap if they were ignorant of the danger. This new crisis called for him to send an emergency message over the radio by playing "Ain't Misbehavin'" to alert the members of the Great Irish Conspiracy. It was a warning to take extreme

measures of reconnaissance and to meet with one of Gay's friends who would be able to tell them about the new challenge.

On the air, Gay Burnie played a few blues standards then played a rendition of "Ain't Misbehavin'" recorded by the Stompin' House Five. But he didn't receive any signal from his friend that he had received the alert. Gay played another version of the song, this time the singer was Betty, belt'em out, Brannigan.

This recording didn't elicit a response either. Gay was becoming desperate because the aliens had to be alerted to the new danger, So, heaving a sigh, he told his listeners it would be interesting to play Ain't Misbehavin' again to compare the arrangements of the song by the different bands. This time it was Bang Cosby singing and backed up by Bob Bang and his Bobcats.

The phone calls started flooding in from listeners when the latest rendition began to play, These were mainly rude comments and complaints along the lines of, "do your research at home Gay", "I never liked that song Gay so cut it out" "have you lost your mind Gay?," "keep it up Gay and I'LL be misbehavin' in your studio" .

Still no response, but risking his reputation, not to mention his job, Gay gave it another try.

"This amusing experiment has brought in some interesting calls from listeners who have expressed a wide variety of responses to my experiment. And here is 'Ain't Misbehavin'" played by the Icelandic Symphony orchestra accompanying the great soprano, Maria Linguini."

The engineer in the sound booth was waving at Gay and shrugging his shoulder elaborately as if to say, "what the hell is wrong with you?"

As the latest recording was almost at an end, Gay was relieved to receive the awaited call on his

private line from his contact, acknowledging his "Ain't Misbehavin" signal. By now, the switchboard was overloaded with calls from his loyal, and not so loyal listeners. He was a veteran broadcaster who knew what to do to maintain control of his show. He played the blues number, "St. James Infirmary" slowly pumped out by Fats Brown and the New Orleans Shufflin' Blues Club.

Gay was forced to tell his contact quickly about the birds. Unfortunately in his haste, he forgot to tell him they were disguised as hawks. When he realized this vital information was missing from his message, he immediately sent another message out about the hawks. His contact didn't receive this important information about hawk-drones until near midnight.

Chapter Twenty Six

It was the following day before everyone knew about the new generation of drones disguised as birds. Since word about hawks didn't come soon enough, an attack on every species of birds commenced all over Ireland.. By the nightfall of that day, there wasn't a bird in sight anywhere, When the bullets began to whizz by the birds it was time to scam and hide out. Fishing boats around the island suddenly played host to hundreds of indignant sea gulls. some with a few feathers missing from near-misses.

By the next day the Great Irish Conspiracy members knew the drones were disguised as hawks. This time the shooters knew what the drones looked like. It was easy to know if it was a drone, when hit, the machine began to give out electric sparks on its dive to earth. Once more, the

president of Ireland was in trouble with the citizens. Worse now. He had broken his promise to them about no more interventions by the Americans in their country.

Now the Great Irish Conspiracy had plenty of experience with invading drones, so they were more effective. Teams of shooters were organized around Ireland to make quick work of the mechanical birds soaring above their heads.

When they found out about the drone shooting spree, the Americans tried frantically to recall their hawks. But it was too late to save the drones, only one limped in for a crash landing with sparks shooting out of its beak. Galway again won the pool created to bet on who would drop the most hawk-drones. They eked out a one hawk margin over Dublin amidst some controversy. since they claimed the drone landing with sparks shooting out of its beak was their "kill".

All of the action in Dublin hadn't gone unnoticed. The media on both sides of the Atlantic were having a great time reporting all of the antics. Everything from the now strained relations with Ireland caused by the alien search, to the indignation of the Irish over the bullying tactics of the Americans made great news copy.

In Washington DC, a fact-finding conference was convened to gather information from people who were in charge of the efforts to capture the aliens. Dr. Globule and his team of scientists were there, also FBI agents and army personnel who had been involved in the project. None of these people could agree on anything concerning the aliens.

Globule became the self-appointed expert on the aliens, doggedly sticking to his own opinions about them. He explained to the panel that the X-Atom component of alien fuel was their only clue to finding the aliens.

Thus unknowingly, he had opened the door to discuss the search projects and their disastrous results.

Two major points were made by one senator about the strain the searches caused in their relations with Ireland, and, the millions of dollars spent on the projects. There was no argument against the cold facts of the cost to the taxpayers and the nation's reputation also took a hit. He concluded his speech by saying,

"We don't have any evidence these little dwarfs are threatening anything on earth. There will be no more efforts to search for Martians or whatever. We look the fools to the world. After all of this money we have spent, we still don't know where they are."

"This 'witch hunt' is over. Congress is passing a resolution as we speak to recall the jet aircraft flying over Ireland, and return all government personnel to other duties. Dr. Globule, although we

admire your zeal for finding aliens, no branch of government is to be involved any longer with your project. If there is any equipment in your possession belonging to the army, please return it."

In Ireland a great victory party was held around the country for the members of the Great Irish Conspiracy. Crisis. It was over. Everyone forgot about the uproar over aliens as they went about their daily lives as usual. The president of Ireland and his staunch supporters hoped the memory of their complicity and cooperation with America to find the aliens would soon fade from the minds of the voters. There was a flicker of hope about being re-elected next year.

ay Burnie's role in protecting the aliens was glorified and many stories were told about his cool head in the face of danger. Even though he knew the stories were somewhat blown up to the level of a dangerous spy story; Gay only weakly protested.

He told his admirers his role had been a tiny bit exaggerated. Of course, his muted protestations were interpreted to be the modesty of a great hero.

Chapter Twenty Seven

Returning to his home in San Francisco, Tom went back to work in his laboratory. He spent many hours with the aliens asking about their advanced scientific knowledge hoping to find a way to get them home to Ortz. Sam listened to them moaning, grunting and shrieking without any idea about what they were discussing.

Dr. Globule had also returned, however, he didn't work on his scientific projects. He was busy contacting wealthy people he knew to raise money for a privately funded search. His dream of receiving a Nobel prize for making contact with the aliens still danced in his head as brightly as ever. He had gained some knowledge about them and several new approaches had occurred to him. These ideas were radical to the point of making "thinking out of the box" seem like an infant's

quaint game.

Sam returned to his apartment in Berkeley since he was no longer suspected of helping the aliens. Over Dr. Globule's objections, he was allowed to continue his studies for a masters degree in Astronomy. His research assignments brought him back to the same room where it all began. Many times during their wild adventures he fervently wished he had never taken the photograph of the blue streak in the sky.

Mercedes cautiously came back into his life. So did Gus, but only after thoroughly sniffing the apartment for giant cats. Satisfied, Gus gratefully curled up in Sam's chair for a snooze. Things were a bit awkward at first with Mercedes, but her confidence in him came back when he had returned to his predictable daily routine. He sort of missed the excitement, but not enough to wish it were still happening. Wisely, he never spoke to Mercedes about his adventures in Ireland. He knew

talk about the Ortzians needed to be avoided, or she might leave him again.

He played a vital role for Tom. In the laboratory, Sam could observe Globule at work on another search project. The doctor went away from time to time and brought back boxes of equipment. He was unable to gain access to Globule's work area since it was armed with a sophisticated intruder alarm system. Sam never got a look at anything the doctor was doing behind the locked door.

Strangers, at least people unknown to Sam, shuttled in and out of the doctor's work area. Sometimes they brought things in, at other times stuff was taken out. Always the objects moving in and out were carefully covered to thwart the curious. He hadn't been too alarmed at the beginning of the mystery project, but when Globule began to arrive at work with a smile on his face he began to worry.

He spoke to Tom daily about Globule's activities, and he too became uneasy when he learned the doctor was actually smiling. He must be making good progress on whatever he's developing, he thought to himself, I must find out what to expect when the project is finished. Tom's own work was beginning to progress as he learned how to use some of the universe' 22 dimensions. The aliens were a great help to him on scientific knowledge not yet known on earth.

It had become a sad world for the aliens. At the present time, there wasn't much hope for them. They had been working with Tom trying to find another escape route home to Ortz. Their research work was frustrating. A solution would be tantalizingly close, but some factor blocked them every time.

Tom was looking worn out from the long hours spent every day in his laboratory working on complicated dimension concepts. His knowledge

of the universe was taking giant steps even though the problem of sending the Ortzians home hadn't been solved. So close, he thought to himself, I can feel it! There is an answer, but what do I need to find to put the last factor in place to solve the problem?

For the aliens there was at least the solace of communicating with Ortz every day with Tom's advanced Communications Responder given to him by the Palions. It was a sort of double edged sword though, on the one hand the aliens could speak to their families on Ortz, on the other hand, there was the specter of being stranded on earth for the rest of their lives.

A phone call came in to Tom from Sam in Berkeley, he was excited

"Now Dr. Globule is laughing! He and some other scientists are celebrating about something. It seems like big trouble when Globule is actually a happy man. Be alert Tom and watch the aliens

closely, it's anyone's guess what this mad man has invented to catch them!"

Except for informing the aliens about the new threat, whatever it was,, Tom couldn't do any more for the stranded Ortzians.

Globule and his colleagues had discovered how to transform the element being used to detect the presence of X-Atoms into an electromagnetic force. Its magnetism was calibrated for X-atoms only. When hooked up to super electric current, it was capable of revealing the location of X-atoms to Berkeley from anywhere on earth

Seated in front of the large control panel hooked up to a huge black machine atop the planetarium, Globule hit a button on the panel. It drew so much power the lights went out in Berkeley. He eased up on the juice and the lights came back on before there was a big commotion in the town. Up above, the huge machine began to glow and pulsate, as the doctor began to turn a

control knob. Slowly his huge magnet started rotating above the planetarium roof.

A group of scientists was gathered behind Globule, their faces glowing green from the lights on the control panel. Globule's face glowed the brightest green as he turned knobs on the panel with his large nose almost touching it. He was watching a number of indicators designed to measure the miles covered by the magnet, the direction and the power of the electro waves.

Unfortunately for the aliens Tom's home in San Francisco was fairly close to Berkeley. The super magnet scored a bulls eye on Tom's house on the first pass. Needles came alive on the control panel as the magnet reported the distance to the X-atoms and the strength of the signal. It was so strong it could only be the Ortzians and their sphere. A triangulation print out report revealed the exact location of the signal. Globule almost fainted from the excitement of the discovery.

Wasting no time, the scientists quickly made up a convoy of cars headed for San Francisco. On the way, Globule alerted the FBI in the city to meet them at Tom's address. He was certain the aliens were being hidden by Tom Albright. He knew the house, having been a guest there several times.

It was now 4 AM. When they were gathered together Globule insisted on a surprise visit to the house arguing that the aliens were difficult to catch. One of the FBI agents who had been on one of Globule's special search teams readily agreed with him. When the house had been surrounded and everyone was in place, an FBI agent picked the lock on Tom's front door. Sliding stealthily into the house, Globule found Tom asleep at his desk and the aliens snoozing in their sphere. It was quick and easy to jam the small sphere into a steel box lined with lead and leave the premises.

Chapter Twenty Eight

A ray of sunshine crept across Tom's face at 6 AM where he sat slumped over his desk with his head resting on a book for a pillow. The sunlight and a sharp pain caused by his awkward sleeping position, brought him abruptly awake. He looked around the room. Something was out of place he thought vaguely.

He became fully conscious when he realized the aliens and their sphere were gone! Using his Communications Transponder he tried to reach the aliens. Numerous attempts failed to elicit a response. His next move was a call to Sam in Berkeley for information. He explained,

“The aliens aren't here at my place! I'm hoping you'll say they are there with you.”

“No contact with them for two days!”

“I stupidly worked for over twelve hours last night and fell asleep at my desk. Oh man, maybe

Dr. Globule snatched them somehow.” He said it with a feeling of dread rising up inside of him.

“It's almost a no-brainer Globule is involved in their disappearance.” Sam replied. "The Ortzians wouldn't leave your place voluntarily, I don't like to think about the consequences either. Can you think of anything we can do to find them?"

“I'll contact my friends, the Palions for help. It's possible they can find them with their super powers. Their society is 3000 years ahead of earth's evolution. If it doesn't work, we will have to try get some information from one of the scientists at Berkeley who works with Globule. Maybe someone there knows where that zealot has stashed them."

Contacting the Palions was no problem for Tom, it was now a question of whether his friends could help him find the aliens. Sam sat patiently while Tom's palavering with the Palions went on. They used the same language as the Ortzians, so

the air was filled with the now familiar sounds of moans, groans, shrieks and whistles.

Tom contacted Sam. "Our friends won't be able to help us immediately. There has been a major reversal of connecting electromagnetic highways going on in their galaxy. Until it is over, they are blocked in. There is no way to predict how long the upheaval will go on. They say some major reversals are as short as two days, but there have been some lasting two months."

"Two months! Sam exclaimed, "By then Globule might have cut them up for a study of their bodies. We can't wait more than a few days. I'll guess he will parade them around DC, then have a big gathering of scientists to show them off to his colleagues."

"Afterwards, he will probably begin his scientific research on their bodies as any researcher would do to understand their anatomy." Tom softly replied. "I have one of the X-Atom detectors

they were using in Ireland during the search. Maybe we can figure out where Globule is hiding them.”

Using the process of elimination, they worked to find the places Globule might hide them. They contacted one of Globule's associates at Berkeley but he said the doctor had been gone for several days. Berkeley was definitely ruled out. A number of other locations were also taken off the list for various reasons.

They contacted Jeremy in Ireland to organize a search over there with the X-atom detectors. Jeremy had a detector which was somehow or other left behind by the Americans, somehow or other, that is.

Ireland and Washington DC seemed to be the most logical places knowing how Dr. Globule operated from years of working with him on astronomy projects. A call came into Tom several days later from Jeremy in Ireland to report no sign

of the aliens. Next stop in their search was DC on a hunch Globule was staging some sort of dramatic unveiling of the first known beings from outer space landing on earth. That is, if Globule had captured them.

Tom knew the city fairly well from his work for the government on space projects. They covered the city by car starting near the city line and crisscrossing the circular streets that keep narrowing in circumference as they near the capitol. Around four in the afternoon, they had reached the capitol building without any blinking signal.

"It looks like we guessed wrong Sam," Tom remarked. "Might as well have dinner, get some sleep and fly back to San Francisco in the morning."

Sam glumly agreed, with a nod of his head.

" Okay, we're almost through looking anyway,"

Their last round was the Capitol Mall leading up to the capitol building. On one end was the Lincoln Memorial, and at the other end of the long narrow mall, was the Washington Memorial tower standing majestically on a hill. They wound around the streets near the mall. Their long search of the city would end at the Washington Monument, then they would have to call it quits.

On the road below the monument hill the detector suddenly came to life with a siren like sound. Only the presence of X-atoms would set the alarm off. There wasn't any other object near them except the towering memorial. Parking the car, they climbed up the hill to the memorial entrance where security guards were on duty.

The guards moved together to bar them from entering the monument. One of them said courteously, "Sorry gentlemen. The memorial is temporarily closed to the public, we expect it to be reopened in a day or two."

They were stymied. It was impossible to expect the guards to understand their search for aliens using a blinking black box.

"Oh, that's too bad, we were hoping to see the monument before heading home to California."

He turned around and walked away.

Getting back into their car Tom told Sam,

"No doubt the aliens are being held inside the Washington Memorial and it would take an executive order to close it to the public. So Globule has probably been to the White House with the aliens, then suggested for security the monument could be used.

"I'd guess the president and Globule will make a joint announcement about the capture of the Ortzians. He made a shrewd move to enlist the cooperation of the president so he could receive a maximum amount of worldwide publicity."

"What are we going to do? We can't force our way into the monument unless a prison sentence

seems like a good idea." Sam replied caustically.

They wanted to avoid bringing attention to themselves, so they drove to the Willard Hotel for the night. Tomorrow they would be rested and surely they would find a way to free the Ortzians

Chapter Twenty Nine

At 7 AM the earth around the capitol area began to tremble violently. Everyone assumed it was an earthquake since they had experienced one a few years ago in the DC area. It wasn't an earthquake, it was a gigantic object descending next to the Washington Monument. No telltale flames were shooting from it like a rocket engine. Its exterior was a dazzling, glittering, silver color and a little larger in circumference than the monument, and a bit taller.

Alarms went off around the city. Police and army security personnel scrambled to meet the crisis at the monument. It was quickly surrounded by vehicles bearing people who had no idea what to do. Standing outside of their cars they gazed at the huge dazzling object towering over them.

One policeman went temporarily irrational, using his bull horn he commanded.

"You have 30 seconds to vacate this government property or we will arrest everyone inside of your rocket." Then added as an after thought. "Or whatever you are."

His partner gaped at him, and so did the others who really didn't want to be here just now. He slowly lowered the bull horn, as his mind returned to normal. Now he fervently hoped they weren't angry. The bull horn was snatched from his hand by his partner and smashed on the ground with his foot.

There was no response to the threat, in fact, all was still in the area. Everyone near the "thing" were frozen in place staring at the dazzling sight. They looked like a still life photograph standing there not moving a muscle. A booming voice emanated from the object causing them to flinch and shuffle backward away from IT.

"Release Thomas Albright to us immediately! Please. We are in a hurry, get him over here!"

Tom and Sam had rushed over to the monument as soon as IT landed. They were on the edge of the gawking crowd. Tom responded by speaking to them in their language. He began to moan, groan, shriek and whistle. For those readers who haven't bothered to learn the Ortzian language, and don't speak Ortzian, here is a translation.

"You guys always were show offs, but this is a little much don't you think? Dazzling big rocket looking thing instead of the beer can you always travel in."

People near Tom moved away from him in shock at the sound of the eerie noises he was making. They thought he might be having some kind of seizure. It was a reflex action to avoid getting involved with him. IT spoke again.

"You have no imagination Tom. This show isn't for you anyway, it's meant to scare the hell out of

the people. Then we can demand the release of the Ortzians to us."

Tom thought this was the perfect moment, created by the Palions, to grab the aliens out of the memorial and get away. He turned to Sam.

"If you didn't guess, these guys are my friends from Palion. We're going to spring the aliens from the monument, then get out of here. Stay with me Sam." Next, he groaned and moaned to the Palions

"The Ortzians are in this tower next to you. I'm going to get them now while you hold off the police."

"Okeeee dokeee Tom."

Again, the ground began to tremble violently knocking people off balance. It continued until Tom emerged from the monument empty handed. Globule again! he thought to himself. Most likely he moved them into the White House last night to have them ready for his big show. He told the Palions what he suspected, and who Globule was.

"If they are in the place where our leader lives, the white house over there, we need to pull off another bluff. I need two of you to come out standing about twenty feet tall and do an imitation of a scary creature. Then go over there and order the release of the Ortzians. It should work."

It was quiet again as the quaking ground became still. Then a huge entrance was opened in the space ship. Two giant figures slowly emerged from within and advanced toward the crowd. About twenty feet tall, their heads were very long and conical. Their four long, narrow eyes, blazing red, roamed around inspecting the crowd. Most of the crowd ran off in their very first marathon, not stopping for anything. A few brave soldiers and policemen held their ground.

One of the Palions said to them,

"Our only reason for coming here is to bring the two Ortzians home. No need to be afraid. We believe they are in the custody of Dr. Globule,

who, by universal law is holding them against their will. A serious offense. I am sure you have similar laws here."

The bull horn guy nodded his head so violently he almost fell over.

"Take us to the house over there, and we will collect our friends and leave your fragment."

Dr. Globule was one sick guy, for he refused to release the Ortzians even in the face of a terrifying spectacle of a glittering space ship and two giant aliens. Tom came onto the White House lawn to confer with the Palions.

"What in hell is wrong with this doctor? With all of this scary stuff he still won't give in."

a Palion commented.

"You would have to get to know him to understand. We are going to need the help of the president. Something colossal has to be threatened in order to convince him and the rest of the world the Ortzians must be released to us or their will be

consequences."

Groans, moans, shrieks and whistles galore went on for a few minutes. Something must have been agreed upon, they turned to Tom and told him the plan.

"Do you think the stunt will work?"

"It should even rattle Globule."

The giant Palions then repeated their demand.

"Dr, Globule please honor our request, we aren't here for any reason other than freeing the Ortzians."

On the balcony Globule stood defiantly with his gigantic round head, spindly body and legs. He looked like a dwarf standing next to the president. He too had apparently failed to persuade Globule to release the Ortzians.

"You don't scare me!" Globule screamed out, "I know the Ortzians created a big illusion before in Berkeley. It was only smoke. Let's see your show. No deal!"

The Palions looked at Tom who only shrugged. One said. "We warned you doctor."

It was a sunny morning in DC, but slowly the light in the sky began to become dimmer even though there wasn't a cloud in sight. Darkness accelerated suddenly and they were standing in nighttime with a bright full moon up in the sky to the east. It was terrifying.

"We can continue Dr. Globule, what will it be?"

"Never!" he shouted back at the Palions.

Chapter Thirty

A giant round head of a boy wearing a baseball cap appeared next to the moon. The head was considerably bigger than the earth's satellite. Moving in closer, his gigantic mouth opened showing white teeth. Now the moon was half way into his mouth and it looked like he was going to bite a big chunk out of it!

"Either release the Ortzians, or the boy eats the moon!" warned one of the giant Palions in a commanding voice. It didn't look like an illusion to the world, their moon was about to disappear into the mouth of a hungry boy. There was a pause before the boy's mouth began to completely engulf the moon.

Now the president had huge diplomatic problems. Iran accused the US of taking THEIR moon, North Korea sent up skyrocketes in protest,

none landed in South Korea though. And so on and so on. Within an hour, the US was persona non grata everywhere in the world, and on the brink of being at war with the entire planet.

Threats came in with the diplomatic calls like, "he bites the moon and we bite you." Italy threatened to stop shipping olive oil, France said no more goose livers, Germany warned it would stop exporting luxury cars, even tiny Luxemborg said it would never bank another cent for Americans.

World collapse was imminent. The eastern sky was filled up with boy and moon waiting for an answer. Rushing out of the Oval office, the president ran up to the balcony where Globule was standing. He clapped his hand over the doctor's mouth. The scientist was shackled and taken away from the White House before he could utter anymore inflammatory remarks to anger the aliens.

Guards in the White House found the Ortzians in their sphere in a steel box near the Oval office. It was delivered to the Palions immediately without another word being spoken, which was strange in itself considering it was a politician's residence. The president's action on the balcony to shut up Globule was seen by the crowd. They took the cue to keep quiet and leave the aliens alone. Maybe the creatures would bring back the sunshine and leave peacefully.

One of the Palions picked up the box and freed the Ortzians. They were taken to the huge rocket and the door closed. The hungry boy's face retreated from the moon, he stuck out his huge tongue, and disappeared. Everyone was blinded when the sky was instantly sunny again.

Sam was petrified with fear when he was hustled into the Palion space ship for a ride back to Berkeley. He soon got over it though as he disembarked at Tom's home in ten seconds.

Besides he was becoming familiar with the unfamiliar.

He was shocked to see the Palions in their natural state. They were about five feet tall and three feet wide. He spoke softly to Tom not wanting the Palions to hear him when he asked his question,

"These Palions are quite a surprise Tom, they were twenty feet tall a few minutes ago. Now they look like fire plugs. What's the deal?"

"They are environmentally perfect for their fragment. Their heads are flat and the ears look like round amplifiers because the gravity on Palion is three times stronger than earth's gravitational force. On their planet you would weigh 600 pounds. Flat heads are certainly understandable when you have such a powerful pull downward.

"Their ears are extremely large in order to hear each other talk. Heavy gravity causes the atmosphere to be rather thick, so sound doesn't

project well. In fact, if I were speaking to you on Palion and you were more than ten feet away from me, my words wouldn't reach you. Gravity would pull them down to the ground, and you can actually hear the words crashing on impact."

Sam merely nodded, not daring to risk speaking because he might burst out laughing at these ridiculous creatures

Tom had assumed the problem of getting the stranded Ortzians home had been solved since the Palions had arrived on earth. Then the Palions explained to him they had jumped on the first electromagnetic highway available to rescue the Ortzians without considering how they would get back home. Perfect. Three thousand years ahead of us and still making bone headed decisions.

There was a cacophony of moans, groans, shrieks and whistles in Tom's house that night. Then he showed the Palions one of his approaches to the problem of space travel back to Ortz. He had

to admit it was pretty radical since he had combined two universal dimensions which had never been done before.

Many shrieks and whistles later, the missing factor had been worked out. Now the aliens could get the hell away from primitive earth and back to civilization in a real galaxy. What they had created was a shortcut to a prevailing electromagnetic highway moving toward ZZYYYYYYZZ galaxy, then on to Ortz.

It was definitely a bizarre idea. They would make a bank shot off the moon to reach Mars where they would bounce off the fragment, then turn left when they reached the correct electromagnetic highway. In a way, the Ortzians felt guilty, because they wouldn't be bringing any photographs home with them of Tom and Sam. They didn't want to scare anyone with horror pictures.

On the day of the take off the aliens wanted to thank their protectors. Using their Language Transponder which unfortunately was misbehaving again, one alien said,

“You’re out----no thanks----hello--goodbye.”

Well, we all know what they meant.

Two weeks later Sam, who was delighted to be back to his normal life, decided to call his uncle. When the phone had rung sufficient times to activate the message unit at Tom's house he heard:

"This can only be you calling Sam. I am still a lunatic in the eyes of my peers, even though they witnessed beings from outer space. I decided to go back with the Palions for good. It's more comfortable for me there. Keep up the good work Sam and---there were a few Ortzian groans and moans, then he laughed.

Dr. Globule for his part in causing a big mess for the US was lent by the university to a government scientific project. It was a project in Antarctica studying the migration patterns of the blue whale. That is, if he can find some.