

THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF
NACK NEROY
FROM STAR SYSTEM SUN

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Chapter 1

Negative Entity Force

1.1

Nack Neroy, from Star System Sun located in the Third Galaxy of Sentra Major, knew only a little of the mysterious Negative Entity Force in the universe at large. Having much similarity with the Algebraic Equations of Blackboards, the Negative Entity Force existed from way back (a very long time ago) and had the magical power of cancellation within the ultimate axiomatic structure of things. Let's say, by way of an obtuse example, that an innocent equation... $X^2 + 4 = 0$, for instance... was floating between two planetary systems. The Negative Entity Force, by the insertion of a mere $-X^2$ and -4 to the left side of the equation, could bring about the instantaneous dissolution of the equation... $0 = 0$!!

Nack Neroy, master of Mental Deliberations, wondered where his own negative entity (a "*-NackNeroy*" ?) existed and what would indeed happen if he were ever to meet up with this negative version of himself. Poof!? $0 = 0$??

So off into space he traveled, beyond the vistas of Beta Maximus and out past

the Zones of Twilight into deepest, darkest Space, until even the lights of the stars began to fade to vanishing points of light. Nack Neroy began to see himself as the last man in the sky.

1.2

Having traveled for some lengthy yet undeterminable amount of time (I believe it was a Tuesday or Wednesday in Star System Sun calendrical readout) Nack Neroy figured that in all likelihood he must be lost.

"Hmm...I suppose I should check the fibbometer to see exactly where or where not I might be."

Pushing two buttons, one colored blue, the other purple, Nack activated the fibbometer, an ancient instrument that sometimes told the truth, and sometimes not.

-You are traveling past the deep recesses of
time and space-

"Well that's good to know", Nack thought to himself. "So exactly how do I get out of this fix?" He again pushed the two buttons.

-To succeed is to travail. To work is to learn-

"Odd, sounds like something out of a fortune cookie. I guess I'm in kind of a jam."

The tiny spaceship carrying Nack Neroy and the fibbometer continued drifting somewhere and at some point in time through the abyss of space. That much we know. Exactly how he arrived at his final destination is difficult to pin down at this point.

Zagrophobe in Star System Nus was certainly looking lovely this time of year.

1.3

"What I need is something to go on", said Nack.

"What you have here is a potential problem", said a voice seemingly from nowhere.

Nack turned around and found himself face to face with a mighty big tree.

"So what it is that you seem to be doing here at this particular junction of time and space", said the voice seemingly from nowhere..."So what it is that you seem to be wanting to extricate yourself from that into which you are indubitably stuck."

Nack glanced down at his feet. Actually, his feet were not exactly visible at this time, seeing (or not seeing - as was presently the case with Nack) as how they were now imbedded in the ground.

"What the...?!" expressed Nack with some discernable amount of dismay.

"Well for what this seems to be the case of you seem to be coming into treehood, i.e. I think you are growing rapidly into a plant,

whatever kind that may - or may not - be I am unable to say with a great deal of assuredly - or assuredness - whichever word that is supposed to be..."

"Just what is this guy talking about," Nack quickly began asking himself, "and what the heck am I doing talking to a tree while my feet are stuck in the ground."

Nack figured he better consult the fibbometer while time still permitted.

"...but it seems for a fact certain that humanity is rapidly leaving said form of you to said form of tree-dom..."

While this drone of babble continued Nack pushed the small blue and purple buttons of the fibbometer.

- The day dawns, the sun breaks above the clouds over the horizon. We are, and life is all that it is cracked up to be. -

"That's not what I want", thought Nack.

"Unless of course you were might be thinking of perhaps I think someday it might rain just where you're standing..."

The treetalk continued in all it's nonsense-ness, and Nack knew he had to try the fibbometer again.

- Watch the skies, watch the earth, feel the beat, mama -

Nack looked around, and there it was...a shovel!...leaning right up against the tree doing all the talking. A lucky find, to say the least.

Nack dug himself out of this jam and said a rapid goodbye to the talk of the tree.

"It's been real", said Nack.

"Well too bad you couldn't have waited for to grown into the situation a little longer..."

Nack didn't wait for the end of the sentence...off he went searching for his negative identity.

The skies over Zagrophobe were a lovely blue this time of the day.

Poof! Something vanished while Nack stood there thinking.

1.4

Space is a wonderful place to be, floating amidst the vast eternity. You see, at this time Nack had no spaceship or planet to cling onto. He was there, with no reference points around him. He just suspended.

- Gimme a break, superstar -

Nack hated it when the fibbometer got annoyed. I mean, after all, its job was to give assistance when needed. He pushed the blue and purple buttons one more time.

- Sweetheart, I don't know you from Adam -

Nack started to panic. He pushed wildly at the two buttons on the fibbometer.

- Hey man, get off my back -

The nothingness swirled around him.

A bird flew by, crossing over Nack's right shoulder.

"A bird?!", Nack thought to himself.

"May I ask what you are doing here", asked the bird quite demandingly.

"Well, I..."

"I mean, really!" continued the bird, "I can't even fly anywhere anymore without always running into somebody or something always mucking up the air space. Did you ever think of the consternation you were causing around here.

First you, then the pigeons...it's just disgraceful. I've a mind to write my congress-bird."

"I'm really very sorry, I only meant to dig my feet out of the ground just a couple of minutes ago", Nack was trying desperately to explain himself to the indignant bird.

"Well it seems as though you're lacking in any sort of consideration for anybody else in this world. I'm on my way to the cockatoo's tree for a party, and I better not be late or else you'll be in for some very large bit of dismay. If it hadn't been for you getting in my way, why, I'd almost be there by now. And now I'll be late and probably be very unpopular with everybody there. You don't happen to know when the sun last passed overhead, do you?"

"Sun? We're out here in the middle of nothing."

"Sir, you are really not making any sense whatsoever. I'm going to be on my way...and I trust we shall not meet again. I cannot stand these time delays."

"But where are you going?", Nack couldn't figure this out.

"I told you...to the cockatoo's for a party. And you better not ask again because I have not the time to answer you. Nothing you say is making the least bit of sense to me."

"Then I wish you would go", thought Nack to himself.

"What was that!"

"Oh nothing, be on your way, if you have to."

A bright yellow sun began to pass overhead. The bird suddenly vanished...then so did the sun. Nack, unfortunately, remained alone, not even with any stars to stare away at longingly.

Chapter 2

- Planet Earth

2.1

The surf crashed soothingly onto the sand beneath the beach house of Nack's cousin Milton. Milton had just arrived back from the grocery store - he had gone to pick up some cereal - and was at this particular moment thinking to himself what a lovely day it was indeed. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, to worry about.

Cousin Milton lived in southern California, drove a sporty car, and owned a surf board. He was happy and lived oblivious of his cousin Nack. Of course Nack was born a couple or three centuries in the future from Milton. But stranger things have happened...

The VW 777 ultra-modern spaceship owned by Nack made a sizeable dent in Milton's picturesque beach front property. Milton was just sitting down to enjoy a bowl of his favorite breakfast cereal when he noticed the strange space vehicle sticking out of the sand. The spoon dropped straight from his mouth into the cereal and splashed milk onto his tie-dye shirt. Nack's cousin Milton was new to spaceships.

- Wh__ _u _ish u__n - _r, ___s_n _ack i_ ju__

_s f__ -

What was that? Did somebody just say something? Milton looked around, but nobody was there, not even the salesman that always bugged him on Saturdays.

- Wh__ _u _ish u__n - _r, ___s_n _ack i_ ju__
_s f__ -

There the voice was again, garbled but clear. Was it coming from that thing sticking out of the sand? Milton thought it might be saying:

"When you fish upon a car, just in back you really are"

But that didn't make any sense at all. He'd have to go down and see what the deal was with that strange thing sticking out of the sand. It looked a little bit like a an old VW but with fins. There was a steam rising up from the sand. Milton put his ear up against a darkened window partially exposed out of the beach. The voice spoke again.

- When you wish upon a star, Cousin Nack
is just as far -

Milton brushed the sand aside and tapped on the tinted window. Nothing. He put his face up against the glass (which actually was Supra-Cast Polymar, guaranteed at speeds up to 50 Lightyears per hour), but all he saw was his own reflection. He rapped again with the knuckles of his right hand and stared at the tinted glare of his own face.

"Hmm..I must be hearing things." He backed off and turned around to head back up to the bungalow when the mechanical voice spoke again.

- Nack is Nada, stuck in No-Time The Big One hit the delete key on Cousin Nack Milt must re-configure Escape Sequence. Milt must Un-Delete. -

"What?" Milton was confounded. "Who are you? Where are you? And what are you talking about? Who is Nack Nada?"

- Another time, another place, just the same, you got it, Ace. Milton and Nack, Nack and Milton, Cousins from afar. -

Milton stepped back. How'd this thing know his name? And who was Nack? "'Cousin's from afar'"? What was that supposed to mean? Milton retreated to his beach bungalow, sat at the kitchen table and stared out at the ocean. The tide was coming in, and some of the waves washed up against the side of the spacecraft jutting up out of the sand. Milt's gaze shifted to the counter top next to the coffee machine and he noticed a book that he hadn't put there. He picked it up.

"Travels With Nack Neroy, An Annotated History. Vol XVII - Milton and Nack, They Go Way Back".

2.2

Milton read from page 1 of Vol XVII of the annotated history of "Travels With Nack Neroy":

"Nack and Milton, a proposed family tree. Milton's father's brother Zed married Emily and begat Sternwalter who had 4 children of which Peggy met Andrew and begat Chauncey and Fitz, the Boy Wonder. Fitz pioneered the travels of Universe 1A in the time of Randolph, then ruler of Sector 44B. Fitz intermarried with AAAAXZ of Asteroid 7 in Planetary System 1881 in a charming wedding ceremony and had 10 offspring, each of whom ended up living on a different planet. MaryBell, offspring #7, was discontented with life in Planetary System 1881, and headed toward Universe 3, one of the new universes that were at the time being opened for settlement. MaryBell met Flebula in Universe 3 and had one child, Nickaby Nackster, who became one of the first explorers of Black Hole Travel, which heralded in the boom in Universe exploration and discovery. One of Nickaby's children, Nack, tried to follow in his father's footsteps as a famous explorer of Universes.

Things were going fairly well for Nack until he ran into the Negative Indentity Element."

2.3

- Step inside And take a ride -

Milton wished that thing would stop talking. He'd been sitting there staring out the window for at least an hour, not having any idea whatsoever about what to do, and that spaceship sticking up out of the sand wouldn't shut up. It kept saying things like

"Come on down. You, Milton J. Prufrock, are our Grand Prize Winner. Sooo...What do you think is behind Door Number 1?

"What'll it be Miltster, we can put you behind the driver's seat of this lovely new model with all the modern conveniences. I mean, we're talking touchless programmability and ZigZag multidirectional booster rockets. You have just got to see this fine roadster. 3 Cheers for the Red, White, and Blue, Miltster."

Man, this thing did not make any sense. Milton walked to the side door of his bungalow. As he stepped out onto the wooden landing, something fell with a chunk in front of him. A key ring with two keys lay at his feet. One was labeled "IG" and the other "TR".

Milton yelled down at the voice in the spaceship, "These wouldn't have anything to do with you, would they?" Milton waited for a response, but the only sound he heard was the breaking of the surf.

He tried again. "Hey! You down there. What are these keys for?" Again, same response...silence.

"Well here, you can have them back," he said in disgust. Milton threw the keys at the spaceship and stormed back into his beach house.

Hanging from the middle of the ceiling in his living room was a sign painted in bright day-glo colors.

SPECIAL DEAL FOR MILTONS YOU
DRIVE, WE FLY SEE THE WONDERS
OF THE UNIVERSE AT NO EXPENSE

...and there were the keys again, dangling from the center of the sign.

2.4

Milton yanked the keys off of the sign hanging from his kitchen ceiling and ran outside. He stood with his feet in the sand, staring at the strange object sticking out of the sand. He held the two keys clenched in his right hand.

"All right...you want me to use the keys? How do I open the door?"

No answer. He shrugged his shoulders and picked one of the keys, the one labeled TR. Maybe he could locate a keyhole on this thing that looked like a vehicle from outer space.

Milton walked around the ship once. He had no clue. He tapped the side of the space ship he figured could be the door side, and suddenly the key began humming with a small vibration, like when your reservation at a restaurant is ready. Milton held the key closer to the ship, skimming it along the surface. The vibrations increased, and the side of the spaceship began to glow a faint red.

"Hey, Mr. Voice, am I getting warm?" cried out Milton.

Milton laid the key directly onto the surface, and the side moved. He stepped back, and a door opened.

Milton cautiously poked his head inside. Dimly lit by green, red, and blue instrumentation lights, he recognized what could be the dashboard of a car. And was that a steering wheel? Coming out of this supposed dashboard was a small circular wheel, maybe six inches in diameter. On the right of the wheel was a reddish orange glowing circular spot with the two letters 'IG' lit in green above it.

"This seems like a match to me," said Milton. He slipped his 'IG' key into the slot in the middle of the IG circle.

The door behind him slid shut.

"Uh oh.", thought Milton.

The mechanical voice began speaking again.

- Let's get the show on the road. My name's Fibo, and we're about to take a bit of a spin. Make yourself comfortable -

"Fibo? Short for Fibonacci?" Milton wondered outloud. The ship jerked, and Milton tumbled into the seat in front of the steering wheel. The vehicle was lifting itself out of the sand, and Milton had no idea of the adventure in which he was about to partake. In a moment the spaceship had risen from the surface of the beach and without hesitation was zooming along the California coastline. Shortly it was over the Pacific, then it had cleared Hawaii. And just like that, the ship was flying over parts of Australia. Before Milton would have a chance to recite even the

Gettysburg Address, the spaceship had exited the earth's atmosphere.

Several panels lit up in front of Milton. 4-Universe Drive showed four universes on the dashboard at one time. Black Hole Display (BHD display board) indicated the black holes suitable for travel as well as those, marked in red, that hadn't been okayed for visiting. A Mapping Of The Universes Chart (MUC chart) was on top of the dashboard. Milton checked the BHD display board. In Universe 104B there were two black holes travel-worthy and one that was not. Milt had no idea what would happen if he went inside either type of Black Hole. But apparently he was about to find out. The MUC chart showed a trail, most probably the route he was headed, that would lead him through several of the Holes.

This turned out to be a wild ride for Milton, as he was thrust through tumbling gyrations on his way across Universes, in and out of Black Holes.

At one point during the journey, he and the ship spun and twisted sideways and every which way. This particular Universe was labeled 331/3 on the MUC chart. The spaceship looked like a pretzel. When Milt pointed his arm straight out, it curved under, over, sideways, or down, depending on which direction he was pointing.

Inside another alternative universe, the clocks on the ship, along with Milton's own wristwatch, all ran different times, even backwards.

This was extremely perplexing to poor Milton, and he had exactly no idea of what was happening to him.

Eventually, though, in a Universe labeled 354 FUM, the spaceship carrying Milton found Nack Neroy.

Chapter 3

Nack and Reciprocation

3.1

Nack Neroy's white face bobbed up and down and in and out of what seemed to be black liquid. He was enclosed in something that looked like a glass cube. He was mouthing the words to a phrase, but no sound escaped the translucent enclosure. His face and front part of his body stuck up against one of the sides. The clear cube looked to be revolving and rotating around in random motions. As Milton approached in the SpaceRocker, Nack became animated, making motions as if he were warning Milton to stay away. Milton couldn't hear Nack clearly, the sound was absorbed by the cube. Milton tried to read Nack's frantic lips, which seemed to mouth one word over and over.

"REFRIGERATOR?REFRIGERATOR!!!!" Nack was yelling from inside the cube (at least the word sounded like 'refrigerator' to Milton).

"Hmm," Milton thought to himself, "why would this guy be needing a refrigerator at a time like this? Doesn't look like he's got any food or ice cream in there that he has to keep cold."

From time to time, Nack in the dark glass cube would fall back away from the side and disappear into the interior. But eventually he faded back into view. This looked kind of like an 8-ball in cube form.

The fibbometer machine on the spaceship spoke up.

- Reciprocator..Reciprocator.
ReciproCalifornia -

"Reciprocator?" asked Milton. He hadn't heard that word before.

Milton pressed the Help button labeled F3 on the side of the panel in front of him. A large turquoise background display screen lit up on the dashboard in front of him.

VW 777, SpaceRocker Model 2001
Help Index: Please type the first letter(s) of
your inquiry.

Milton typed an "R".

1.Randolph: Emperor of the 7th sector,
2150.

2.Reciprocator: implement used in
producing reciprocals. Often needed when
stuck inside the Cube of Undefinedness.

- 3.Reciprocal: value returned by a Reciprocator
- 4.ReciproCalifornia: planet where Reciprocators are produced.
- 5.Refrigerator: often confused with Reciprocator, however can in no way be used to produce reciprocals.

Next Milton typed "C".

- 1.Carrie Ann: Top 40 song from a long ago era.
- 2.Chipped Beef: Breakfast delight from a long ago era.
- 3.Cube of Undefinedness: Where infinities and reciprocals of zero are stored. When stuck inside this cube, see Reciprocator to convert back from infinity. Also see ReciproCalifornia

"So, what is this Reciperator all about?" asked Milton. But of course Nack couldn't hear his question, being that he was stuck inside this Cube of Undefinedness.

The Fibometer on board the SpaceRocker knew what the deal was, though.

- Cool dudes, L.A. in Outer Space. Check it out, man. ReciproCalifornia, here we come.
We love L.A. -

"ReciproCalifornia? Fibometer, what are you talking about?" Milton pushed the purple colored buttons.

- Do You Know the Way to San Jose. Surf like an Egyptian. Walk backwards. -

Milton looked from the SpaceRocker to Nack inside the cube.

- Hop in, let's go for a ride, Mr. Surf Guru. -

"Oops, here we go again", said Milton to himself, falling back into his seat as the space-ship zipped into it's next journey.

Meanwhile, on the planet of ReciproCalifornia a young man stood under a green sun.

"Wow, looc frus," said the sun tanned ReciproCalifornian. He and his surfing buddies had just stepped over the crest of the sand dune and eyed the backwards surf.

Everything in ReciproCalifornia was backwards. The Reciprocal dudes ran across the beach and rode a wave backwards out from the shore.

3.2

Eventually, with the help of Fibometer and the navigational capabilities of the VW 777 SpaceRocker, Milton arrived in ReciproCalifornia. Somehow, though, Milton had landed in the ocean just offshore. He could see the SpaceRocker resting comfortably on the sand fifty feet away.

A strange voice and dialect greeted him from outside the ship.

"Ho, wow, nam, ekil tahw nac ew teg rof ti?"

Milton had forgotten to switch on the translator device.

"Fibo, how does the Translation Verifier (TV) work?"

- You never know until you try. -

The young man dressed in the tie dye T shirt and frayed blue jeans stood looking quizzically at Milton.

"Ekil tahw did ti yas, nam?"

"Fibo, come on. We don't have time for this guessing game."

- Keep patient, my dear Watson. If you cry any harder you may spring a leak. -

"Fibo!"

- Get off my back, jazzman. -

"Ekil wow nam, nihetib looc."

"Fibo, what's this guy saying? You know we've got to get a Reciprocator for Nack."

"Rotacirpicer? Yhw tn'did ouy yas os.?"

The spindly sun tanned dude with the tie dye shirt pulled Milton out of the water and across the sand dunes away from the backwards surf.

Milton noted the odd sensation that the ground seemed constantly trembling as he ran behind the barefoot surfer from ReciproCalifornia. Backwards. Another odd thing was that this surfin dude was running backwards. Strange place, Milton thought, not like L.A.

Around the bend in what seemed to be a road was a large building with smokestacks where the smoke went down into the building. On the front in large block print was written:

S R O T A C I R P I C E R
G I B ' N L L A M S

3.3

"TThheerree hhee iiss. WWee hhaavvee hhi-imm iinn tthhee SSiighhtteerr SScooppee."

Smos, on his way to Zagrophobe to get the NEF, was stopping off to delete totally and most assuredly Nack Neroy.

"PPrreeppaarree UU-DD-MMaann ffoorr fffirriinnngg rraayy."

Smos had spotted the Cube of Undefinedness and was sighting directly towards it with the U-D-Man Weapon.

As Nack spun to the surface his eyes saw Smos about to fire. In the tiniest glint of a second, Nack realized the plug was about to be pulled and his small existence ended entirely.

Wop bop a loo bop
a lop bam boom

Smos pulled the trigger on the U-D-Man Weapon, and the B-Complex Ray shot towards Nack. In a moment the Magic-8 Cube was complexed into imaginary status (IS) and disappeared. No trace was left, not even a poof.

Squeak. Milton pressed the large 1/X button on the old Reciprocator he held aimed at the 8-Cube. The reciprocator was an older model TI 80, the only one that he was able to barter from the factory in ReciproCalifornia, and most of the keys were rusty.

Milton saw the Magic-8 Cube vanish.

"Uh oh, did I screw up, Fibo? Am I too late?"

- All's well that ends in the well. -

Chapter 4

Smos Takes Orders from Zarnov

4.1

"Ssiirree, Nneerrooyy hhaass bbeeeenn ddeelleettedd," Soms reported to Zarnov via the CTR (Cross Town Traffic Radio).

"Ggooodd, Ssmmooss. II nneeeddeedd tthhee ppeesskky Nneerrooyy ouutt ooff tthhee wwaayy eennttiirreelly. Nnooww ggoo unnniinnmmppeeddeedd too Zzaaggr-roophhoobbee."

"Yeess, too sstteeaall tthhee NNEEFF, Ssiirree."

"Pplleeaassee, Ssmmooss, wwaattchh yyouurr sseemmannttiicss?too oobbttaiinn tthhee NNEEFF. II neevveerr sstteeaall."

On his Doomica Planet, Zarnov turned away from the CT set.

"Nnooww tthhee aannihhiillaattioonn ppoowweerr ooff tthhee unniivveerrsseess wwiill bbee mmiinne."

Blip, blip.

The tiny green dot blinked on and off on the Cathode Cryogenic Radar (CCR) on the SpaceRocker.

Blip, blip.

"Fibo, is something wrong with the CCR?"

Milton kicked the panel, trying to get the

green blip to stop.

"With Nack gone, now this whole dumb spaceship could fall apart, and I wouldn't have the slightest idea how to fix it."

- Nick, Nack, Neroy's back, now you've found the bone. Time to shoot the curl. -

"Neroy's back? What's that, Fibo? Don't be ridiculous. This place is empty except for a few galactic clusters."

Blip, blip, blip. The green dot on the radar scope continued to blink on and off.

- Follow the green blinking road. -

Milton was exasperated. "I don't know what that silly machine is talking about."

Then Milton's eyes noticed a button in the center of the SpaceRocker's control panel. It was marked GO TO. Milton pushed the GO TO button, and a menu popped up on the Central Display Panel.

GO TO:

1. Lunch
2. Galaxy Selection
3. Universe Coordinates
4. Green Blip

Milton chose option #4 by touching the screen. Suddenly the SpaceRocker accelerated into the dark space, and once again Milton had no idea where he was being taken.

4.2

The SpaceRocker pulled up close as if it were parallel parking. The spinning, amoebic-like object glowed next to the ship. Milton recognized a human form inside the gel-like substance. It looked like Nack Neroy! Was he still alive?

A long tube device extended from the side of the ship. A panel opened inside by Milton's right hand and out dropped a short cord with a 3 pronged plug on the end. Milton stared at the cord for a few seconds until he noticed a backlit panel underneath that said "Plug In Here." Milton complied with the directions and immediately a loud machine generated sucking noise started up.

- Catch the wave, man. -

"What wave, Fibo?"

The long tube outside the ship maneuvered itself towards the gooey amoeba ball containing the form of Nack. With clockwork precision, the tube moved to the amoeba and sucked up the form. In a second a blob spurted into the SpaceRocker's cockpit, right beside Milton.

"Yech!" said Milton.

"Yech to you," said the form. "Help me wipe this stuff off."

"So what took you so long, Feinsworth?"

"You're lucky I'm here at all... and the name's not Feinsworth - it's Nickelby... Milton Nickelby. I'd rather be on a beach than here buzzing around in this contraption."

- Brethren and Sistern, let us seek the way of Peace and Harmony guitars -

"Shut up, Fibo. So, Milton, what's happening with Zarnov?"

"Huh?" Milton didn't have the vaguest idea. "Who's Zarnov?"

"We gotta get moving, he's probably halfway to Zagrophobe by now. Or at least he's sent that fool Smos. Did you see that nut try to delete me?"

"I saw that box thing you were in disappear."

"Who brought you here? The SpaceRocker? Fibo, how much time have we got?"

- Not much to sneeze at. -

"Is Smos in Zagrophobe?"

Milton was still off track. "Why would this guy Smos want to go there?"

Fibo, is the NEF still in place at Zagrophobe, or has Smos got it?"

- Let's play some Ping Pong. -

"C'mon, we better go. What was your name... Maxwell?"

"Milton."

"Milton, we probably don't have much time. Let's head out. Fibo, cruise control."

Nack slid into the driver's seat of the SpaceRocker. He poked the Panel Activator Button and the Display Map showed up.

"Coordinates V-8 Niner, Oh Oh Seven. Hey Milton, better strap yourself in. Ready for a jolt."

- La Di Da -

Before Milton had hooked his shoulder harness, the SpaceRocker was suddenly not where it had been the moment before.

Chapter 5

Zagrophobe

5.1

The purple sun was just rising in Zagrophobe's green sky. It looked like it was going to be a lovely day.

"That was quick," said Milton.

"Yeah, you've been Hibernated for quite some time. Seems like yesterday, doesn't it, that I was almost deleted by Smos."

ZIP ZAPPER ZIP

"What was that? Hey, you've lost your color. You're all black and white."

"We've just entered the Absolute Value Gates that surround Zagrophobe. We've just been absolute-value-tized."

The giant ape with two heads stood in the glass room. The walls were painted in holographic images of worlds throughout the universes. In the middle of the white room was a glass case enclosing a ball measuring a little more than 3.14 inches across. The ball was Omega striped orange and purple.

"SSmmooss, wwhhy aarreenn'tt yooouu iinn ZZaaggroopphhoobbee yyeett??" the CT radio set blared inside the cockpit of Smos's Legion BuzzBomb.

"WWee hhaadd aa sslligghhtt pprroob-
bblem wwiitthh tthhee eenneerrggi-
izzeerrss, ssiirree. FFoorr ssoommee
rreeaassoonn, wwee hhaadd sskkiipeedd
tthhee llaasstt ooiill cchhaannggee aanndd
lluubbee."

"I ccooulldd ccaarree lleess aabboouutt
yyoouurr ttrriivviall sshhiipp, SSmmooss.
JJuusstt ggeett mee tthhee NNEEFF."

Universal Warrior Smos winced as Zarnov's command echoed loudly through his cockpit. He had meant to have the 3000 LightYear routine maintenance work done last sun cycle, but it had just slipped his mind. His BuzzBomber had thrown an elliptical rod. Fortunately there had been a spare in the trunk.

"ZZaaggroopphhoobbee CCiittyy LLiim-
miittss."

Smos turned to the view screen when he heard the announcement of his navigator. The lights of Zagrophobe, a mystical city suspended with no planet, came into view.

5.2

"There it is!"

"Wow, look at that big ape. It's got two heads!"

"Shh," cautioned Nack. "That's Pong, and he'll rip your one head off if you're not quiet. What we want is there in the center of the room, in the glass case."

"That funny colored little ball?"

"That funny colored little ball is the NEF Ball."

"NEF Ball?" asked Milton. He knew of a toy back in California with a similar name, but he doubted if this was at all close to the same thing.

"NEF - Negative Entity Force. It's only the most important force in all the Universes. Back in your time physisists spent all their time and money looking for it. That's what Zarnov has sent Smos here to get. Luckily we arrived first."

"But how are we gonna get it?" Milton couldn't see a way around that giant ape.

"Simple. You'll set up a distraction for Pong while I slip in and snag the NEF Ball."

"Me? How can I set up a distraction for Pong? And what happens if he catches me?"

"Don't let him catch you, is what I'd advise. Now go out there and start waving your arms or whatever it takes to get his attention. But first wait until I get in position."

Nack edged his way slowly along the wall amidst the holographic paintings. He hoped he blended in well. Milton sat and waited for Nack's signal. Meanwhile the ape just kind of sat there, scratching himself under his arm.

Suddenly Milton saw Nack start frantically

waving his arms. That's funny. He thought he was supposed to do the arm waving, not Nack. Then Milton watched Nack disappear into the wall.

"Uh oh," said Milton to himself.

"Zibber watsis bloomingdales shopping spree de corps."

Milton heard the strange phrase muttered from behind. Then he noticed the strange flourescent green hand on his shoulder.