

The Zillian Chronicles – Legends

Part 1: Ahkmontread

Part 2: Richard

Part 3: Seabass

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The Meetup

It was dark and cold in space.

Unfortunately not dank, thought Ahkmontread. As his great grandmother was part Gorvaylian beetle, so he had a preference for dank spaces.

Ahkmontread had been drifting for days. His thick Mungabi hide protected him from the chill and vacuum of space, and his insectoid heritage allowed him to slow his metabolism and enter a state of hibernation for short periods of time. He waited, reflecting on the horrible accident that led him to this place.

He had started his week as the overseer of a Mungabi slave vessel. The job was not hard or prestige (Ahkmontread had served for many years in the Mungabi imperial military, seeing many more dangerous missions and circumstances), but it was essential to Mungabi infrastructure. While Ahkomtrear did not enjoy it, he worked to provide a living for himself and to give back to his people.

The space glider had lifted off, and the flight was going normally, when a strange ship's signal appeared on their navigational radar. Ahkmontread had ordered the pilot to commence evasive maneuvers, as he figured it was better to be safe than sorry. Suddenly, an explosion tore into the glider, and Ahkmontread found himself floating in the vacuum of space. He remembered little more.

Finally, after five long days, a Mungabi search vessel entered his vicinity.

Salvation has arrived, Ahkmontread thought to himself.

The vessel's rear hatch opened, and a Mungabi rescue crew, clad in protective space suits, rushed out to retrieve Ahkmontread. They ushered him into the ship and gave him food and water.

After another day, a Mungabi lieutenant approached Ahkmontread.

“Who are you?” the Lieutenant asked in Mungabi.

“I am Ahkmontread. I am captain of Slave Ship Four Three Nine Bravo,” Ahkmontread replied.

“Interesting,” the Lieutenant said. “Are you well?”

“Well enough,” Ahkmontread growled. “What does Mungab require?”

The Lieutenant looked down at Ahkmontread, as if analyzing him. Finally, he spoke.

“What do you know about Uranus?”

Ahkmontread was sent for one job and one job only: To help exterminate an insurrectionist on Uranus known as “Seabass.” Ahkmontread did not know who he was, but was told that he was a danger to local Mungabi leaders and their plans for the system. As a Mungabi soldier, Ahkmontread had been trained to carry out missions to quell human rebellions. Today was different, though--Mungabi forces had hired a deadly mercenary named Sniperman. Sniperman was little-known across the galaxy--because none of his enemies survived to talk about him. He wasn't the most dangerous man in the entire galaxy, but he was definitely in the top four for the sector. Even though Sniperman was human, he had no second thoughts about betraying his brethren. Ahkmontread, Sniperman, and other Mungabi forces were on their way to the Uranus Spaceport where Seabass was located.

“Look alive, boys. T minus 4 minutes until we reach our target. When we get there let me do the talking. I don't want any of you uncultured aliens ruining my chances of getting a fortune,” said Sniperman.

“We’ve landed,” said the pilot as he opened the doors of *Hrunting*, Sniperman’s ship.

Ahkmontread walked right behind Sniperman down the dock up until they got to the dockmaster, Seabass.

“What can I help you with, boys?” said Seabass.

“We are part of the Open Solar System Foundation and we would like to have some words with you in private regarding your family,” said Sniperman with a fake grin on his face, trying to hide the lie he just made.

“I have no family, they are all dead. My father once said...”

“Just come with me,” interrupted Sniperman.

Once the group reached a dark alleyway, Sniperman pistol-whipped Seabass in the face.

“What was that for, man? I thought you were going to give me money!” said Seabass.

“Shut up,” said Sniperman. “You are under arrest by the imperial Mungabi Army. We have some questions to ask you back at HQ,” he added.

“Ok, but first you are going to have to catch me!” shouted Seabass as he ran away.

Sniperman quickly ordered the Mungabi security forces to chase the man down. None of the Mungabi soldiers could keep up with the fast Seabass, except Ahkmontread. Ahkmontread chased Seabass for a good two minutes down the tight streets of the Uranus Spaceport. Ahkmontread was just about to grab Seabass when, all of a sudden, he was disabled by a man of janitorial status spraying Raid. This man was named Richard.

“I’m sorry, man. To be fair though, you totally got in my way of getting rid of this insect infestation. They don’t take care of themselves, ya know,” said Richard.

“Ahhhhh, it burns! Take me to a hospital!” screamed Ahkmontread in pain.

“I’ll help,” said Seabass, remembering what the pain of Raid in the eyes feels like.

The two new friends rushed the decrepit Mungabi to the hospital. Once they got there, they pushed themselves to the front of the line at the E.R and got Ahkmontread the care he needed. While waiting for Ahkmontread's recovery, Seabass said, "I have to get out of this system; I'm no longer safe. Do you know of any place where I could be safe from Mungabi forces?"

"Well," said Richard, "the Hinterland is a very safe place in the outer reaches of the galaxy. I could go with you because I'm trying to get to Cannis Majoris which is in the same system. It has the lowest number of men of janitorial status per spatial acre, and I aim to change that."

"Wow, thanks," said Seabass, right as Ahkmontread got out of the E.R.

"Cannis Majoris?" asked Ahkmontread. "This is quite a coincidence. Cannis Majoris, the Great Sun, is a star central to the religion of the Mungabi people. All Mungabi are supposed to undergo a pilgrimage to the Great Sun and pay it homage. I have not yet completed this pilgrimage, and I am getting on in years. I would like to journey with you, if I may, so that I might experience the Great Sun firsthand and bring honor to my people."

Ahkmontread then turned to Seabass. "You saved my life, Seabass, even though I was coming to kill you," he said.

"What?" questioned Seabass.

"Ignore what I just said. Is there anyway I can repay you?" asked Ahkmontread.

"Well, since you are a Mungabi, you must know the galaxy very well. Maybe you can lead Richard and I to Canis Majoris," said Seabass.

"I will offer you two protection all the way to Canis Majorus," stated Ahkmontread.

Thus started the pilgrimage of these three unlikely friends across the galaxy...

Ahkmontread

“A hope isn’t a plan.”

That was a lesson I had learned fairly late in life--right now, actually. I was hoping for freedom, to escape with Seabass and this man of janitorial status, but I had no plan.

I hurried through Uranus’s spaceport, glancing around nervously to ensure that we weren’t being followed. I kept an eye on Seabass, that strange man who I was assigned to capture, to ensure that he did not fall into the hands of my brethren. Behind us, Richard, the man of janitorial status, waddled along, carrying a mop and struggling to light a Spacecig™.

“Richard?” I asked, my Mungabi vocal cords struggling to form the fluid human words.

“Call me Dick,” the man of janitorial status interrupted.

“Is your narcotic substance a priority at the present moment?” I asked, struggling to form the proper words. My time as a Mungabi soldier and slave detainer had not led to a mastery of the intricacies of human language.

“Huh?” Richard mumbled around his Spacecig™. He waved his hand and continued walking. “Eh, whatever.”

Seabass turned. “Where is our destination, my fellows? The Great Seabass must escape his captors!”

Richard paused and thought for a moment. He absent-mindedly began wiping the tile beneath him with his mop. “Well...” he finally spoke, thinking hard. “The space-buses, patent-pending, usually leave the most frequently and don’t require a ticket ahead of time, so probably those.”

“Where are they?” I said in my rough voice.

“Uh...” Richard said. “I think...The other direction.” Richard pointed behind us. “Yeah,” he said around his Spacecig™, “definitely that way.”

“But that is the way my fellow warriors are,” I protested.

“Don’t worry about it, dude,” said Richard. “Just don’t act suspicious!”

We turned and hurried down the hallway towards the space buses (patent-pending).

We had walked for about three minutes when we heard the clatter of footsteps coming from a hallway perpendicular to ours.

“Those are Mungabi boots!” I hissed.

My warning was too late. Two Mungabi warriors came around the corner, each holding a laser-rifle.

“AH!” Richard screamed, dropping the Spacecig™ from his mouth.

The Mungabi swung towards him. Then, they saw Seabass and me.

“Eyes on target, and traitor,” one said into a communication device.

“Roger Roger,” the device sent back, crackling with static. “Permission to engage.”

The warriors stepped forward and flicked the safeties off of their rifles. “Surrender,” said one through a snarl, “or die.”

Richard panicked. “AH!” he screamed again. He scrambled forward, swinging his mop. It crashed into one of the warrior’s heads, and the Mungabi went down. Richard flailed widely, striking the other a few times.

“We have to help him!” I shouted.

Seabass and I jumped forward and tackled the other Mungabi. He collapsed to the ground, unconscious. I grabbed their laser-rifles and handed one to Seabass.

“We need to move!” I growled.

“Will they let us bring these on the space-bus, patent pending?” Seabass called as I began to sprint down the hallway.

“I hope so, because they’re pretty cool!” Richard exclaimed.

The two of them ran after me. I followed signs hanging from the ceiling, leading to the “Space-Bus [patent pending] Terminal.” Finally, I reached the gate and saw that one was about to depart.

“Where is this one headed?” asked Seabass curiously.

“Who cares, as long as it’s not here?” Richard said.

We sprinted past the boarding official by the gate, who didn’t seem to care too much that we didn’t buy tickets, and slid to a stop aboard the space-bus, patent pending, just as the door was about to close.

“Talk about good timing,” said Richard.

Through the window, we saw a squad of Mungabi gathering outside the gate. One of them seemed to be arguing with the boarding official, gesturing wildly at our space-bus, patent pending. It was too late for the Mungabi to do anything. The space-bus’s engines ignited, and the slow but powerful air-space drive began to propel us out of Uranus’s toxic atmosphere. As we left the gate, I looked out the window once more. Standing about ten yards from the Mungabi was a single human. He watched us intently, calm but focused.

“Sniperman...” breathed Seabass.

“What?” Richard said.

Seabass did not answer. The man turned away as our space-bus, patent pending, lumbered into the sky. Its clonk-speed drive engaged, and we were on our way across the galaxy.

As the space-bus, patent pending, flew through space at clonk-speed, I surveyed its passengers. In the front row of seats was an interesting cast of characters, including a doctor, a retail professional, and a Pepeian, along with several whose occupations or origins I could only guess at. Near the middle of the space-bus, patent pending, were five gangsters, two on one side and three on the other. From time to time, they stared at each other intimidatingly, then returned their attention to the backs of the headrests in front of them. Behind the gangsters were four children who looked like family, but I could not be certain if they were related (as a Mungabi, I was less able to determine whether humans were blood relatives based on appearance). In the back of the bus was another assorted group, including a young man who spoke mainly in mumbles and a strange human who seemed to be performing a Mungabi prayer ritual. Counting Seabass, Richard, and myself, there were 21 passengers. There was also a pilot and a copilot.

I speak now of the people that I met

While riding that space-bus like a comet.

We were all heading to Cas Vades the planet,

For gambling, pleasure, or entertainment.

The man, the myth I speak of is Lil George.

He survived being thrown off a big gorge.

He loves his money and he loves his dough,

He just takes it from the streets, don't ya know.

Lil George has got a really good business;
No one can compete with his thoroughness;
He goes sweepin' the street with gangs and gats,
Keeping his turf good with his chains and bats.

Lil George does not go unless he's packin'
Always pumped up and ready for action.
With fur suits, silver chains, and one gold tooth,
He's reckin' and rollin' through the hooth.

The little boy who no one can understand,
But can pilot his race pod with just his left hand.
He is well studied in all the classes of school,
But people still perceive him as a fool.

His speech is incomprehensible;
His actions are never reprehensible;
Skid wants to be seen as a hero--
But every race he plays, he gets a zero.

Skid is a member of a prestigious breed;

In the meetings they drink a lot of meed.

The boys call themselves the left handed league;

All planets fear their impending blitzkrieg.

Skid is from a moon of saturn named titan.

He gets mad when you mistake him from triton.

By trade Skid is a renowned roid racer,

But is not known for being a skirt chaser.

Woody Oak has a large heart

And acts like Napoleon Bonaparte.

Ironically, he is very small in size,

Also an advocate of free enterprise.

He rolls through the togroth on high alert.

This is why the locals call him "Squirt."

Woody is close with his cousin "Skidmark;"

In addition, he is known to be a pool shark.

Squirt has some controversial connections--

One with Lil George and his insurrections.

Some say he has made counterfeit bitcoin

Because he grew up in the tenderloin.

This gentle-hearted man, or moose, or seed

Came from a lab on the planet Saheed.

He is big and tall and strong and yellow;

He really is quite a frightened fellow.

This kind alien's name is Muss Terd Sied;

He is very smart and he loves to read.

With his skin he can absorb rays of light

These rays are food for him, except at night.

Sied has for hair leaves of green and for arms

He has branches, thick and strong; He eats marms

When there is no light for him to consume.

They say he's a pilot; he's good, I presume.

Doctor Syoosch hails from a land of poems;

Fantailsia is where he makes his home.

This man writes all day and he writes all night--

He must make sure to get ev'ry word right.

Doctor Syoosch's hands are shaking a lot;
Parkinson's ails him--Healthy he is not.
He started life as a saver of health,
But couldn't save his own with all his wealth.

Nowadays he writes books for all the childs,
Including Mungabis out in the wilds.
He rhymes and he rhymes and he rhymes all day;
About him there is not much more to say.

This strange man Dukwan has quite the problem:
He thinks himself to be a Mungabem.
For all of his life he does not admit
That he is in fact a man, not a Mitdt.

He knows a lot of traditional skills:
Dancing and singing and curing some ills.
He can dance longer than the Great Sun burns
And sing quicker than a fidget spinner turns.

Dukwan is mostly of average stature;

His hand does have a single stress fracture.

He thinks that he is oh so very smart,

But in truth he has an arrogant heart.

As an inhabitant of Sarbisia,

Which is now a true dystopia,

Mohommad yearns for a sweet relief.

Living here is an erroneous belief.

On the run from the rebel force,

If caught, will be treated like a work horse.

Once a miner of the lython crystal,

Now owns a semi-automatic pistol.

He is the proud owner of a cold sore,

Received when he fought in the great Boer War.

Mohammad Areej was: quite a brave one

Until he was betrayed by his stepson.

Earth's moon is where he lay his head;

Cosmo once lived on a lowly homestead.

He is known to be quiet and true--
That is, until you let him taste that brew.

He acquired wealth from his famous moonshine.
At one point, he even owned a cruise-line.
Since then Cosmo has been long exiled;
As a hobby, he makes JPEG files.

Cosmo Cox seems to be a sullen soul
Shown by this here public opinion poll.
The only survivor of his family,
This is quite a bitter reality.

Far he comes from the planet Pepeia.
Is it strange that he uses onomatopoeia?
Ault is quite a radical one indeed,
For he is a very dangerous breed.

Once he said, "We are far superior,
everyone else in this land is inferior."
Through his veins runs the blood of a frog,
but acts like a Rhodesian hunting dog.

He has few friends and his family has gone;
Some say that he is an unholy spawn.
His home planet is rather dark and dank;
Because of this, he smells like a septic tank.

Ivan is a communist sympathizer.
He is indeed quite the womanizer.
He fought in the war against the Left Handed League,
So now he suffers from combat fatigue.

Weak he is to that sweet soviet gin,
This is one of his many deadly sins.
He has a very explosive personality,
Yes, Russian is his nationality.

Ivan is known to be an exceptional cook;
Few know that he is really a crook.
Also, he is extremely fond of improv;
This is why they call him Molotov.

This lady's name is pronounced "la dash a"

But I believe it is spelled "L-a."

She gets mad when it is mispronounced;

If you do this, you might just get pounced.

She is trained in the art of wujitzsu.

L-a isn't afraid to show the crew;

She is from the department of retail,

But her name tag reads "Abigail."

Candy "Shoog" is in Lil George's gang;

She doesn't like to cuss, so she says "dang;"

Candy's been on the street for fourteen years

And, by this point in her life, has no fears.

Candy is in on the ways of the street.

With Lil George she has never known defeat.

Unlike many people, she's got street-smarts,

But unfortunately she has little heart.

Crystal's Martian, one of the last alive,

She found Lil George while working at a dive.
She's been in his gang for maybe six months,
And has not yet been in a streetfight once.

Crystal has little knowledge of the street;
Compared to Candy, she is somewhat sweet.
Her outlook on life is always so bright,
But she finds that Shoog is usually right.

He does not know his nationality,
In this story he's just a fatality.
While the other orphans he tries to lead,
He finds that he can just never succeed.

Our dear orphan has had a hard-knock life,
With failures and misfortunes it is rife.
It usually is not good, instead bad;
Orphan 1 does not even know his dad.

He doesn't know when he was ever born,
But in his heart it has been horribly torn.

Back at the orphanage He called “for rent,”
He spent twelve days looking for his parent.

He is always saying to us “why life?”
Because of that we never give him a knife.
But he is quite the sweet comic to us
When we need to fill time on the space-bus.

This orphan doesn't even know his own name,
This fact is indubitably a shame.
Outlandish he is among his brothers,
For he is impaired and can't see colors.

He sees his life go by in black and white,
His grief and cheerlessness are quite a sight.
Referred to in numerical order,
he developed an anxiety disorder.

Orphan Four is remarkably clueless;
For some strange reason his eyes are hueless.
Unlike the others, he is not depressed,

Perhaps because, when he can, he just rests.

Orphan Four is a special kind of child.

His voice is soft, and also sweet and mild.

It's quite a shame, the speaker must relay:

Orphan Four just might not prevail today.

Lil nut is always quite a character;

It's bad when he becomes a competitor.

Big Nut is always there to keep him still;

They are both from a place called Gangsville.

He is a staunch member of Tanja Klub;

Lil George sees him as a worthless scrub.

It's bad they have a conflicting business;

When they meet there is too much bitterness.

Big Nut is an irksome daddy figure.

To Lil Nut the man always seems bigger.

Back home on Neptune, Big Nut is the boss,

But he has this thing for alfredo sauce.

Alcohol made his family no more.

Now he stands as but the very last Boer.

Why Big Nut chose to come, I do not know;

My guess is that he needs to make some dough.

He is the pilot of the space bus *Blob*,

It's an anomaly how he got his job.

He got his name while living on the rez,

He was not good in the sky, everyone sez.

You may ask, "Why is 'Flies like Rock' his name?"

"It is a cool nickname;" that is his claim.

Flies Like Rock is a tall man in stature.

The pilot considers him a slacker.

Richard has had a rough upbringing

And developed a distaste for mudslinging.

Now he has an uncontrollable urge to clean

Anything and everything that can be seen.

Richard's human parents never loved him,
So he was adopted by Mungabis on a whim.
By nature, he developed a sense of greed
And also the love of a special mead.

Richard became addicted to Spacecigs™.
For this reason he is not good with kids.
Now known as the man of janitorial status,
He might need a breathing apparatus.

Seabass has no noble profession,
And of family members he has none.
When they lived, they were tough on ole Seabass,
He was obedient through his dad's class.

Seabass has a truly nasty humpback.
It is only seen when he sits out of wack.
On the bus trip, he really wants his sleep.
He is a dock master, it's not that deep.

Seabass is on the run from a bad man;
The man goes by the name, Sniperman.

All Seabass strives for is life-long safety;
He would also love to have a pet kitty.

He is a dreadful man, its sniperman
You can hide on mars or in iran.
It doesn't matter, he will catch you
This man will capture you out of the blue

On this pilgrim trip, he is not really
But has a bigger role than most, surely
This man is a deadly mercenary
he is hired by the military

Don't forget, Sniperman is very tall
You can not mistake him for being small
He has a long brown beard and uncombed hair
His secret soap is something he won't share

And, of course, myself:

Ahkmontread is quite an old Mungabi.

Besides serving Mungab, he has no hobby.

He strives to go to the holy Great Sun,

And no one will stop him, not anyone.

Ahkmontread remembers the glory days

When there were planets to conquer and raze.

Though by now, for him, these old days are done,

He still can use a Mungabi laser gun.

Ahkmontread is very old, tough, and fierce;

He has thick hide, which few blades will pierce.

He'll often let out an ornery bellow,

But his friends know he can be a glad fellow.

Of his laser-rifle, he is so fond;

With it he has forged a strange sort of bond.

He stole it from a bad Mungabi guard,

And now uses it as his final card.

Ahkmontread devoutly follows the Five;

These pillars of Mungabism keep him alive.

Pilgrimage and preying, feasting and fate;

On the fifth one, none will elaborate.

I headed to the cockpit to inquire of the captains where we were headed. The cockpit door was open, and, as I entered, the copilot, a human, turned to me.

“Welcome, friend!” he exclaimed. “My name is Flies Like Rock; I come from a land called The Rez! I am glad to have you aboard my space-bus, patent pending, the *Blob*.” He gestured to the pilot. “This is Muss Terd Sied, the pilot. He doesn’t talk much, especially while he’s flying.”

Muss Terd Sied turned and waved a leafy arm at me. This strange being appeared to be a hybrid of a man, a moose, and a mustard seed.

“Uh...” I started. “Hi. My name is Ahkmontread,” I said. I am a Mungabi.”

Flies Like Rock jumped backward, or as far as he could in the cramped cockpit. “A Mungabi?” he cried. “The terrors of the Earthian system?”

I swelled with pride. “The same,” I said. “The destroyers of Draant*, the conquerors of Carbitia*, the--” Then I stopped. “At least...I was. Now I’m on the run from my own people.”

Flies Like Rock grew calmer, apparently satisfied by my explanation. “That sucks, doesn’t it?” he asked. “Why are you here, on the *Blob*?”

“As I said,” I began, “I am on the run. I know that I will be captured eventually; after all, none can escape the Mungabi. I only have one goal left in my life...”

Flies Like Rock nodded solemnly. “I understand how you must feel.” He paused. “Actually, no, I have no idea how you feel. What is this goal that you speak of?”

“I wish to make a pilgrimage to the Great Sun, Cannis Majoris.”

Flies Like Rock nodded again. “Ah, Cannis Majoris. I’ve seen it, obviously, but I’ve never been there. But you’re in luck! We’re headed in the right direction.”

“We’re going to Cannis Majoris?” I asked excitedly.

“Well, no. First we’re going to Cas Vades, the entertainment hub of this sector. From there, you could probably find another transport that will take you to Cannis Majoris.”

“Thank you, Flies Like Rock,” I said. “I shall leave you alone now.”

I exited the cockpit and sat down next to Seabass and Richard.

“Are we there yet?” asked Richard.

“Richard--” Seabass began.

“Dick.”

“Dick...We will get there when we get there,” Seabass said.

“This is so boring, though. Couldn’t we have chosen a closer Cannis Majoris?”

“Actually,” I said, “we are going to Cas Vades first. The co-pilot referred to it as the ‘entertainment hub of this sector.’”

“Cas Vades,” said Seabass. His eyes twinkled from memory. “I had some good times there...”

“How far away is it?” Richard asked.

The Pepeian opened his eyes from a nap. “They say that it’s two days.” He paused. “At least, that’s what mainstream media wants you to think!”

“Okay, thanks,” said Richard. “Does anyone have any ideas to pass the time?”

I ignored him. The rest of the *Blob*’s passengers did, too.

Richard was undeterred. “I know! We can tell stories!”

One of the gangsters groaned. Richard kept talking.

“Alright, here are the rules. Each passenger can tell one story. We only have to tell a few stories today since it’s almost time to go to sleep anyway. Each story has to have a moral

message, and it must be fictional, to make it more interesting. Also..." Richard thought for a second, trying to come up with another rule. "You have to say a poem before it, a rhyming prologue that introduces your story."

"What do we get out of this?" Seabass whispered to Richard.

"A sense of pride and accomplishment!" Richard said with enthusiasm.

One of the gangsters from the group of two looked up. "Hey, man, Lil Nut ain't about dat gay stuff."

The older gangster next to him slapped him on the head. "Shut up, son," he whispered.

"Hey, you think you can tell me what to do just 'cause you're Big Nut and I'm just Lil Nut?" the first gangster asked.

"No," Big Nut answered. "It's because I'm your father. And because I will make you 'disappear' if you keep disrespecting me like that."

"Man, this gangsta stuff isn't as cool when your old man's in it," Lil Nut grumbled. "I still ain't sayin' no story."

"Oh, yeah?" one of the gangsters from the rival group said. "That's just because you can't handle my mad rhymes! I'll tell you a story--I'll tell all o' you a story. You'll always remember my story as the greatest story you ever heard!"

"Oh, yeah?" Lil Nut said. He reached for his hip, but was stopped by Big Nut.

"You want to start a gang fight in the middle of a space-bus, patent pending, moving at clonk-speed? Son, you're dumber than I thought."

Lil Nut slumped over, defeated. "Yeah, I guess you're right, dad."

The gangster from the other group stood. "Prepare yourselves," he said, "for a ballad by Lil George!"

I'm Lil George, comin' at ya from the hooth;
I'm tellin' you today of a big truth.
Loyalty's the name of the truth I speak,
Loyalty for the tall, small, the strong, the meek.

They say growin' up in the hooth is rough.
Well, I'm here to say it takes someone tough
To survive the hooth, to survive the streets;
You all always have to stay on your feets.

Loyalty is a most important trait
For any friend, gangster, brother, or mate.
With no loyalty it is hard to try;
In fact it's often easier to die.

This tale I tell ya is of a brother [figuratively, not literally]
Who was named Funky Dave by his mother.
Dave was a good brother, loyal and true,
But his cousin Jim was not loyal, too.

Tellin' this tale, it breaks my heart to hear
About poor Dave, who might've died last year.

He was a good homie, a friend, a pal,
He always boosted his brothers' morale.

Now let me begin.

It all started on Lumon, one of the central colonies on the moon. Funky Dave and his fellow gangsters were chilling in the hooth. There were four of them, all sitting together around an abandoned lunar rover. One was Funky Dave. The others were Packin' Parker, notorious on Lumon for his involvement in gang wars; Traxoloth, an alien from a nearby star system (by the way, you guys don't need to know what type of alien or what star system; I'm telling you, it's really not important); and Jim, Dave's cousin and a longtime friend of Traxoloth. Anyways, the four of them were chilling and relaxing, just letting the day fly by and watching the Earth beneath them. Suddenly, a strange spaceship came swooping out of the sky. It was like nothing any of them had ever seen before, not that any of them did much traveling (besides Traxoloth). The mystery ship was followed by dozens more, all identical. They entered Lumon's microsphere and landed; a lot of men came rushing out, securing the area.

The four gangsters were curious about these strange visitors, so they decided that the obvious thing to do was investigate. They approached the landing site, which was a large courtyard surrounded by moon-rock buildings. Traxoloth, the most experienced of all of them with different aliens, approached a man who appeared to be the leader of the group.

"Who are you all?" Traxoloth asked. "And why are you guys here?"

The leader of the landing force snarled at him. "We do not speak to your kind!" he said.

"But you're speaking to me now--" Traxoloth said.

The leader hit him in the face with a backhanded slap, and Traxoloth went sprawling. He quickly crawled back to the others, who were waiting by one of the moon-rock buildings.

“Did you find anything out?” asked Packin’ Parker.

“They were even ruder to me than Fat Tommy was when we were on his turf two weeks ago!” exclaimed Traxoloth.

“So?” Funky Dave asked. “What’d you find out?”

“I think...” Traxoloth lowered his voice, talking in a whisper. “I think they’re Mungabi.”

“Moon grabbies?” asked Parker. “What are those?”

“No,” Traxoloth said. “Mungabis. An alien race of conquerors. I’ve heard about these guys in my travels, but I’ve never seen one up close before, let alone a whole invasion force.”

“Oh,” said Parker. “Well, we can’t let them get away with this! Messin’ with my boy here. Let’s show ‘em a thing or two!”

“Um...Parker?” asked Traxoloth. “There’s four of us, and, like, three hundred of them.”

“So? No one disrespects me or my brothers!” Parker said.

Funky Dave stepped forward, hand on his belt. “Well, Parker, I hope you’re packing, because we’re about to start something.”

Parker grinned. “They don’t call me Packin’ Parker for nothing. Let’s go, boys!”

The four gangsters rushed forward, guns blazing. Strangely, the Mungabi soldiers didn’t seem too concerned. Most of them simply went back into their landing crafts, where they were safe from the small arms carried by the gangsters. About twenty remained outside, rifles ready.

“Oh, man!” yelled Funky Dave. He was beginning to have second thoughts about Parker’s plan. “Get down!”

A wave of lasers rushed towards them. Dave, Parker, and Jim all managed to duck in time; they scrambled behind a moon-rock bench and waited behind it, fearing for their lives. Traxoloth wasn't so lucky; he disappeared into the lasers.

"Alright, what's the plan?" shouted Parker.

"Dude, I thought you were the one with the plan!" screamed Jim.

Dave looked around. "Alright, I got it," he shouted. "See that moon-rock building? We run for that and don't look back. Once we're inside, we're safe!"

Jim looked nervous. "I don't know about--"

"ThreetwooneGO!" screamed Dave. He ran out from behind the bench and skidded into the open doorway of the building. He looked behind him. Packin' Parker was sprinting as fast as he could. Lasers rained around him, and chunks of damaged stone flew through the air.

Parker stumbled. A laser had hit him. Then another came, and another. He fell to the ground.

Dave was too stunned for words. Then he looked up at Jim, who hadn't moved.

"Jim! Get over here!"

Jim didn't move. Dave gave up and dove farther into the building. He looked around and saw a Lumon security guard, fully equipped with a rifle and ammunition. The guard was stunned.

"Hey!" Funky Dave yelled. "I thought your training prepared you for this stuff!"

The guard looked at him, still a little shell-shocked. "Yeah," he said. "But my training never prepared me for stupidity of this magnitude."

Dave was a little offended. Nevertheless, he ripped the gun out of the guard's hands and aimed towards the doorway. A Mungabi charged through the door, but Dave quickly shot it. Another came, and another, with the same results; Dave was able to eliminate each before

they could get to him. Meanwhile, lasers kept striking the building, keeping him from retreating or seeking a safer shelter.

All of a sudden, the lasers stopped. The building was quiet. No more Mungabi soldiers tried to enter the room. Dave stayed ready, though; he had been in too many fights to expect any easy victories.

Jim tumbled into the room, out of breath. “Dave!” he yelled. “You’re still alive!”

“Jim! I thought you were dead!”

“Look,” said Jim. “We don’t have any time to waste. The Mungabi have returned to their landing ships, but we don’t have long to get to a safer spot.”

For some reason, Dave never wondered why two gangsters were able to scare platoons of Mungabi enough that they remained in their landing ships. He whole-heartedly trusted Jim. Dave stood, putting the rifle’s safety on and slinging it over his back. He peeked out of the door.

“Alright, Jim,” he said. “The coast looks clear--”

Dave felt a sharp blow to the back of his head. “What the--”

He fell to the ground and received a kick to his ribs. Dave looked up to see Jim standing over him.

“Sorry, Dave,” said Jim. “It was the only way.”

A trio of Mungabi appeared. One handed a single bitcoin to Jim, then patted him on the back and let him go on his way.

“Is that all I’m worth to you?” shouted Dave. “A single bitcoin?”

The other two Mungabi grabbed him. They dragged him back to their landing ship, where he was never seen again.

The story didn't end well for Jim, either. About two weeks later, the Mungabi invaders had taken control of all of Lumon. They rounded up all the humans in the colony and "recruited" most of them as slaves to work on Mars. However, they recognized Jim. It is never good to be recognized by a Mungabi invasion force.

The Mungabi found Jim's actions to be most dishonorable, although helpful in the short term. For accepting a bribe and betraying his friend, Jim was executed by the Mungabi soldiers.

Lil George sat back down.

"That was very good," said Richard. "I'm glad that I was able to hear this."

Seabass rolled his eyes, and I blinked rapidly, a Mungabi sign of boredom or annoyance.

"Next?" Richard called.

"I have a story to share," I said, standing. "It is a tale about Mungabi heroism and fortitude, and faith in our Five Pillars!"

"All right, you got it," Richard said.

I began:

I am a Mungabi named Ahkmontread.

Of the great Five Pillars, much has been said.

But in case you all might not have yet heard,

I will go over them now, with a word.

The first of these good Five Pillars is Fate,
Something that some don't believe in of late.
Fate rules all things, every part of your lives--
Even, they say, whether you live or die.

The second Pillar is known as Preying;
Be sure not to confuse this with praying.
For "praying" with an "a" is done with hands,
But Mungabi Preying is done with war-bands.

The third Pillar is called by us Feasting,
For Mungabis don't fast in the least -ing.
We don't always gorge, but we know how to eat,
From fruits to veggies to all kinds of meat.

The fourth Pillar is the high Pilgrimage;
This trip is not just to any old ridge.
We must make a journey to the Great Sun
To praise the past, and give thanks for our spawn.

What about the fifth Pillar? You might ask.
There is a reason to save this for last.
About this fifth pillar, nobody speaks;

Not a single mention, nor the smallest squeaks.

The story I tell is of a great man,

Who went to serve Mungab with all his Mxran. [SEE GLOSSARY]

Despite great adversity and much fear,

He held to the Pillars for many a year.

Now listen well, for I shall begin my tale, the tale of a legend from our people's past.

Many years ago, when the Mungabi first mastered space flight, the first explorers to leave the planet were not organized armies and navies, but smaller war-bands. A leader of one such band was Matatarkh. Matatarkh was a brave warrior, a fighter with few equals. He and his band of forty courageous Mungabi raided systems adjacent to ours, seizing much plunder and booty. Even while marauding, he served Mungab above all, working to better his people and the planet as a whole. At the time, the Five Pillars of Mungabism were not officially established, but emerging as beliefs. Matatarkh followed all of these fledgling beliefs, helping to define and solidify many aspects of the Pillars.

Matatarkh was a strong believer in Fate. He was fearless in battle because he knew that when his time would come, it would come, regardless of what he might do to stop it. If Mungab required victory, he would win bravely; if Mungab required death, he would die bravely. While he took the initiative to raid and fight at will, he was always ready for his final battle, as he felt that no one could know when one's final moment was.

Matatarkh was a pioneer in setting ground rules for Preying. With his war-band, he swept neighboring systems ruthlessly, preying on the strong and the weak alike. Nothing could withstand his might. However, he had limits, limits that he influenced other Mungabi to follow. For example, one should never prey on another Mungabi society, unless this Mungabi society is treasonous or deserves it. One should never prey on an ally, unless the ally is a backstabbing coward. One can prey on the weak, but it is far more honorable to prey on the strong.

Matatarkh was an avid feaster. He and his men could eat for days in between raids. Due to their great success and system-wide fame, none of his warriors were ever short of food. However, food consumption was to be limited before Preying, so as to not dull the body during combat.

Matatarkh was among the first to make the pilgrimage to the Great Sun, Cannis Majoris. While a few explorers blazed the path before him, he was the one who made the route safe from enemies, vanquishing those who stood in his way. The Mungabi have revered the Great Sun for millenia and have long desired a way to journey to it; Matatarkh made safe this way.

One day, Matatarkh was raiding on the planet of Hilbarz, home of the Hilbarites--giant, snowy beings. Matatarkh had conquered a small village and was taking their valuable ice sculptures; Hilbarite ice sculptures were seen as a sign of luxury in certain Mungabi sects. As he was looting the village's booty, however, a group of Hilbarites from a neighboring village rose from the snow and ambushed him and his war-band. These Hilbarites were much more warlike than the band that Matatarkh had raided, and they quickly decimated Matatarkh's forces. Soon, only

Matatarkh and seven of his best men were left alive. They were taken prisoner and were held in an ice cave deep beneath the village's main snowbank for over a year.

Throughout the year, Matatarkh and his men suffered greatly. They endured freezing temperatures, little food, and constant pain at the hands of the Hilbarites. Several of the men considered giving up and willingly offering themselves to the Hilbarites as laborers. Matatarkh, however, urged them not to. He remained stalwart through whatever trials the Hilbarites through at them. Throughout his imprisonment, Matatarkh clung to the Five Pillars. He believed strongly in Fate, trusting that his life would end in the way required by Mungab. He knew that he could endure anything that the Hilbarites threw at him until his time came. Matatarkh also followed the ancient custom of Feasting; when the Hilbarites would bring him and his warriors food, which was rarely, all of the Mungabi would eat as much as they possibly could, gorging themselves on the dull, tasteless food of Hilbarz. Luckily, all eight of them had already pilgrimed to the Great Sun; the thought of that massive star was enough to give hope to even the most hopeless of the Mungabi.

One day, the Hilbarites let Matatarkh and his men loose for a few hours. This was their greatest mistake. Finally, Matatarkh would be able to Prey once again.

It was the night of a grand festival. The Hilbarites were celebrating the first snowfall of the year, a time for joyous celebration, and also the time when new Hilbarites could come up from the snowbank and join the tribe. Having mercy on Matatarkh and his war-band, a few of the Hilbarites loosened their restraints and gave them time to roam freely, the first time that they were able to do so in a year. Matatarkh rallied his men and, though weak, defeated their Hilbarite captors. The Mungabi survivors made their way back to Mungab to heal and recuperate from their ordeal.

The Mungabi did not take kindly to the Hilbarites' treatment of Matatarkh. A large force was assembled, the greatest war-band in Mungabi history, and sent to Hilbarz. There, over the course of three months, the planet was razed and the Hilbarites were defeated. If any survived, they retreated deep into the wild, far from the reach of the victorious Mungabi conquerors. The Mungabi returned home and were hailed as heroes. Matatarkh was praised and would always be remembered for his prowess in battle and his dedication to the Five Pillars.

What is the fifth Pillar? That, my listeners, is a great mystery for you and for many Mungabi. To put it simply...

We don't talk about the fifth Pillar.

"Okay," Richard said. "Good job." He glanced at a clock. "I'm glad that we were all able to band together and tell a few stories, but now I think that it is time to go to sleep. We shall resume storytelling tomorrow morning. Could anyone hit the lights for me?"

With that, the lights shut off, and I let the embrace of sleep enfold me.

"We are nearing the surface of Cas Vades," Flies Like Rock's voice spoke from the loudspeaker.

I blinked the sleep from my eyes. "Whuh..." I grumbled.

Richard awoke and jumped to his feet. "Huh?" he asked, indignant. "I thought it was gonna take a few days!"

Muss Terd Sied turned from his chair. "It was," he said. "But I know all the shortcuts!" he added jovially.

Shortcuts in space? I thought. What were these lunatics talking about?

I gave the thought no further mind. Muss Terd Sied and Flies Like Rock seemed like decent pilots, if a little eccentric.

“But...” Richard muttered, “how are we gonna tell more stories?”

“Shut up, Dick,” I growled in my rough Mungabi voice.

“Entering atmosphere,” called Flies Like Rock.

Richard shrugged and looked out the window. “I guess we’ll have a little time after we enter the atmosphere to tell stories.”

I looked out of one of the *Blob*’s many windows, surveying the surface of Cas Vades. The whole landscape was one of dense forests, with narrow streams winding through the trees.

“I thought this planet was inhabited,” I said.

“It is!” said Flies Like Rock. “Look out the front.”

As the *Blob* soared over tree after tree, I looked out the cockpit window to see a collection of bright lights and buildings far in the distance.

“Behold,” said Flies Like Rock. “The city of Cas Vades, capital of Cas Vades.”

He turned to me.

“You see, my Mungabi friend, this planet is mostly forest. In fact, besides lumber, it has no notable export. Cas Vades does most of its business in tourism, and in gambling. All across the galaxy, people come to this shining gem. The city is gigantic, 50 miles from the outer edge to the center. Over 60 million people. Skyscrapers a mile high. Casinos, clubs, sports centers. The center of the entire city is a vast stadium home to our famous ‘roid races. You may have heard of them; be sure to check them out during your stay.”

“Okay, thanks--” I said, but I was cut off by Flies Like Rock.

“The city is led by the Barron, a man who, if I recall correctly, is descended from a great Earthian leader. Perhaps if you are lucky, you will have a chance to meet him.”

The cockpit was silent for a few minutes.

“Um...” said Muss Terd Sied quietly. “You can go back to your seat now. It’s kind of cramped in here.”

“Oh,” I said. “Right.”

I sat back down just as Richard stood up. “Who’s ready to tell another story?”

Seabass awoke. Evidently, he had slept through the entry into Cas Vades’s atmosphere.

“I could tell one,” he said groggily. “It’s about a great man, a hero who I remember, and a legend who never died.”

“Sure, go for it, dude,” said Richard as he lit a space-cig™.

“No smoking,” Flies Like Rock called.

Richard grumbled to himself as he put it out, and Seabass began his tale.

Now who am I? I am the great Seabass

I hope this prologue has a lot of class

My father’s last words before goodbye

“Hero’s are remembered, but legends never die”

I am but a pathetic dock master

Now my life is an utter disaster

remembered in history is what I need

Maybe that is my father’s final creed

My final quest is to be a legened
 To reach this I know I am destined
 OOps I forgot all about my story
 It's in the category of glory

Now where was I? Oh yeah! here is a tale
 It is based on the adventures of Gale
 Gale is from the strange place known as earth
 it is weird, but it is her place of birth

Gale loved to read books, She read them all day
 Her favorites included heroes who would slay
 Gale truly wanted to be a hero
 But what how to become one, she did not know

Gale had just left the county library with a copy of *Humans across the solar system*. It was quite old, dating back to the times when earthians began colonizing their know system. Since then Earthians have colonized every planet and moon in the solar system. All was well, what could go wrong. Well I know what could go wrong. An alien invasion began. Day by day the known solar system was conquered by the dreaded Mungabi Galatic Empire. The day came when the invaders reached the outer atmosphere of earth itself. There were many people who wanted to give up and surrender to the mungabi. Gale said "NO!". she wanted to be a hero like

the characters she read in her books and she believed this was her chance to shine. Gale found a small space pod and flew it to the Mungabi Flagship. When she got there she stealthy made her way through the ships ventilation system. No human had ever been this brave. She was truly in territory untouched by man. Sad news is, she was caught five minutes after she boarded. Gale failed, but she was brave. Does she count as a hero? This is question that has different answers. It just depends on who you ask.

As Seabass finished, Flies Like Rock called to the cabin, “It appears we have some company. They are flying abnormally close to us, but it appears that they, too, wish to experience the spectacle of Cas Vades.”

“How close?” Seabass asked, alarmed.

“I don’t know, three hundred yards or so.”

He rushed to a window and peered outside. Three ships were trailing the *Blob*, behind and to the left of it. Two were small and nimble, the size of an Earthian antique car with wings. These were short-range Mungabi fighters. I had logged more than a few hours in them during my time as a Mungabi soldier. The third craft, however, was different. It was larger than the *Blob*, but long and sleek. The ship was jet-black, and several cannons and missiles hung from it. It swept towards the *Blob*, several yards in front of each Mungabi fighter.

Seabass grew pale. “Oh crap, dude.”

“What?” I growled, reaching for my laser-rifle.

“It’s *Hrunting*.”

“Who?” Richard asked.

“The ship. Sniperman’s ship,” Seabass said.

As we spoke, a faint beeping sound erupted from the back of the *Blob*, growing steadily louder. It came from the pocket of the mumbling young man, who reached for it frantically. He pressed a button and spoke quietly into it as Richard, Seabass, and I all walked slowly down the aisle towards him.

“Um,” said the strange child. “Now’s not reawy a good time,” he mumbled into the beeping device before shutting it off and turning to us.

“Who are you and what was that device?” I growled, flipping the safety off of my laser-rifle. Natural gas slowly began to hiss from it.

“I’m Skidmawrk,” he said, emitting a strange laugh as he said the words. “Skidmawrk Jwunwer.”

“Well, *Skidmark Junior*,” I said, very slowly. “What. Was. That. Noise?”

“I dunno,” he said bashfully. “It wasn’t a twacking devwice, that’s fwor sure.”

“Can I blast this little punk?” I growled.

“I see no reason to disbelieve this man,” Richard said.

“Shut up,” said Seabass. “Skidmark, who even are you? Why are you here?”

“I am a ‘*void wacer*. Didn’t you even wead my pwologue?”

Seabass looked confused.

“I’m hewre to compete in the international ‘void wace against the best ‘wacers. I haven’t won a wace yet but today will be the day.”

“Um...Good luck,” said Seabass. “This kid’s fine.”

I flicked the safety back on my laser-rifle and lowered it. “Yeah,” I grunted. “I can’t even remember why we walked back here in the first place.”

As we made our way back to our seats, I looked out the window. The ships were gone. We were alone in the sky once again, heading towards Cas Vades.

“Would anyone like to tell another story?” asked Richard.

“Actually,” an old man said, standing. His joints creaked as he rose. “I got me a good story for ya’ll. Y’all might just think I’m some crazy old-timer coot who don’t know nothing worth a lick, but I actually got me some good life advice for you fellers right here that you might wanna hear. So pay attention and lend me yer ears for a minute--”

The old man paused. He was silent for a minute.

“Is there a story here?” Ault Wright said.

“Story?” the old man asked. “I got plenty o’ stories. In fact, I spent my whole life moonshinin’ on the moon, since long before your daddies were knee-high to a whipper-snapper. You see, here, my name is Cosmo Cox, and I make me some o’ the finest moonshine this side of Betamaletauri--”

I tightened my cheeks in a Mungabi expression of pure confusion.

“Anyway,” Cosmo said, pausing for breath. “I was tendin’ my shop one day, when this man named Zillian comes strollin’ in lookin’ for some gin--”

A laser beam lanced through the top of the *Blob*, destroying part of the floor and ceiling, and vaporizing Cosmo. I looked through a skylight, miraculously still intact, to see the black shape of *Hrunting* swooping from the cloud. Another laser beam jumped from the attacking vessel, smashing into the cockpit. Muss Terd Sied was gone. A third streamed towards the rear of the *Blob*, taking out the atmospheric propulsion system.

I strapped myself into my seat and clutched my laser-rifle. “We’re going down!” I bellowed.

Flies Like Rock desperately grabbed at the controls, managing to swing the *Blob* around a few degrees. “I have no idea how to fly this thing!”

“What?” Seabass screamed.

“I’m not really a pilot, Muss Terd Sied hired me because he felt bad for me!”

Seabass lept forward and grabbed the controls from Flies Like Rock. “Oh, geez,” he muttered. “I haven’t flown in years...”

I hoped that I had misheard that part. Surely Seabass was a good pilot.

“We’re going into the trees!” Seabass shouted into the cabin.

Behind me, everything was in disarray. Passengers screamed, cried, and grabbed each other for security. One, the strange man in the back, seemed to be engaged in a Mungabem prayer ritual. Ault Wright frantically blinked his frog eyes, his tongue whipping around as if he was trying to catch flies. The four siblings rolled up and down the hallway, miraculously avoiding being thrown through the massive hole in the *Blob*’s fuselage. Skidmark was nowhere to be seen.

The *Blob* dipped downward as Seabass wrestled the damaged craft towards Cas Vades’s surface. It careened through the treetops, pursued by the steadily gaining *Hrunting*. Suddenly, Seabass screamed, “Brace for impact!”

It was too late for the old dockmaster to do anything. The *Blob* headed straight towards a massive tree, almost twice as tall and wide as the other trees. Seabass frantically pulled to the right, but he was too slow. The space-bus, patent pending, plowed into the tree, smashing in on itself and toppling the ancient forest-dweller. The crumpled *Blob* fell for a final time, collapsing on the forest floor below.

As we hit the ground, my vision failed and I slipped into unconsciousness.

When I woke up, everything hurt. I opened my eyes and groaned. Around me, the *Blob* was a wreck; the walls were caved in, seats were destroyed, and electrical equipment smoldered. Nearly everything was destroyed. Remarkably, my laser-rifle was still intact; more remarkably, I was still intact.

I stood and looked around. Amazingly, Richard was alive. He clutched his mop and a can of Raid while desperately trying to light a Spacecig™. Most of the other passengers, however, were not so lucky. Cosmo Cox had been completely vaporized by the first laser strike. Every single other passenger involved had died in the crash, with the exception of the human who thought he was a Mungabem.

“Who are you?” I barked to him, coughing as I finished my question.

“They call me Dukwan,” he said, shaken.

“Are you injured?”

Dukwan ignored my question. “Mother...” he said. “She always said...to...If there was ever a space crash...” He pulled out a small bottle of hot sauce and drained it in one sip, trying to remain calm. “I...I survived....Mother...She says...” Suddenly, he jumped out of his seat and hurried towards one of several holes that had been torn in the side of the *Blob*.

“I have to get out of heeeeeerrrrreeeeee!” he yelled. He lept through the hole and disappeared into the wilderness.

“Well, he’s not going to be of any help,” I growled to myself.

I looked around more. Where was Skidmark? The poor kid had probably gotten killed by a laser beam, or lost during our race through the trees. I felt bad for the little guy.

I walked back down the aisle and entered the cockpit. Flies Like Rock was clearly dead. There was nothing left of Muss Terd Sied except for a single, moose-like antler.

Looking past the cockpit, I saw Seabass. He had been thrown through the front window and had skidded across the leafy ground. I feared the worst; there was no way a mere human could have survived this. As I watched, though, I heard a small groan. The former dockmaster lifted his head, then slowly raised himself from the ground.

“Seabass!” I yelled.

“Legends...never die,” he wheezed. He stood and turned. “Did...anyone else survive?”

“Dukwan, that Mungabi wannabe,” I said. “He ran away already. He was in quite the hurry. Other than that, just you, me, and Richard.”

The man of janitorial status climbed from the wreck as I spoke. “Dick!” he called.

“Right,” I said. “Where to, Seabass?”

“The only way off this rock,” he said. Seabass stood and gazed off into the distance. “The city of Cas Vades.”

Richard

“Cleanliness is next to godliness.”

These were my Mungabi parents’ last words before they sent me off the the University of the Sanitation Arts nearly 30 years ago. These five words would set the stage for my later life and would have a profound effect on my actions during the present. I have heard stories about about the filth that goes on in Cas Veda--they continue to paralyze me with dismay. Discombobulated after the crash, Ahkmontread, Seabass and I stumbled over to a cliffside that provided us with a view of the surrounding area.

“I think I’m going to be sick,” I muttered, barely able to assemble a sentence. I felt a great amount of stress at the sight of the contaminated vicinity as I reached in my pocket to clutch a Spacecig™.

“Wait here,” I said to the band of survivors. ”I need to find some more smokes.”

“Those are offensive to your health, Richard, you really need to quit,” said Seabass hastily.

“You will only refer to me as ‘Dick’ from now on,” I replied with aggression. “Just worry about yourself.”

I floundered down to the nearest convenience store, leaving the others behind at the crash site. I could feel my emotions taking control as I became more consumed with the scum in Cas Veda. After seemingly hours of walking I finally arrived a local Redicaliac.

“One pack of premium Spacecigs™ please... as soon as possible.” I told the clerk.

“Three Bitcoins,” he answered.

I then felt my heart skip a beat as I reached into my pockets, realizing that my sack of bitcoin was left among the rubble of the space-bus (patent pending) crash.

I asked, “Would you barter a pack for a cleaning service?”

The clerk replied, “No bitcoin, no Spacecigs™.”

There was no way I would walk all the way back there. I felt my anxiety levels continue to rise as there were no Spacecigs™ to provide some sweet relief from the abnormally high filth levels. Now I was losing control of my actions. When the clerk turned away, I reached over the counter to snatch a singular pack of Spacecigs™. I quickly stuffed it down my pocket and began to walk towards the exit thinking I was home free... but was I gravely mistaken. At this moment I felt time stop as loud alarm screeched.

“Hey! Stop right there!” shouted a voice behind me.

Instinctively, I made a run for it.

I looked over my shoulder to see a guard reaching in his pocket for what appeared to be a zaperska. After a instantaneous “ZAP” and 6900 volts later I dropped right to the floor.

“You made me use this!” yelled the security guard.

After losing all feeling in my legs I tried to pull out a premium Spacecig™ from my pocket and attempted to light it. The sight of the disheveled man standing over me was too much to bare. I blacked out.

When I opened my eyes again I was all alone in a dark and dank room. Before too long, I realized that I been restrained with orveelian ropes. While I lied on the cold floor for a long duration I had a lot of time to think. In deep thought I was reminded of a moral story my birth parents parents once told me. But before I state it I want to use a little rhyme scheme in the format dah DAH, dah DAH, dah DAH, dah DAH.

Before I reveal my tale to you

Context needs to provide a clue.

When adopted by my Mungabi parents

Not before I collected their inheritance

They instilled in me many beliefs

I even met many Midtuq chiefs

One was respect for environment

Through this I could reach enlightenment

Even though they are dead at this point

I remember them well from this standpoint

I have still much more to learn

Despite my circumstances being stern

I have to clean all around me

Or you might as well bury me at sea

Back on Earth is where I learned the most

However, I do not intend to boast

I lived on a farm and planted tobacco

Somehow didn't alert the Child Labor Bureau

I shared a room with eight or nine kin

This is where my story shall begin.

My Earthling father was forced to harvest tobacco at three years old. This takes quite a toll on your mental state of being - and so does having 32 brothers and sisters. Needless to say, he was not treated well, and was only utilized to tend to his master's cash crop. I was told that the only thing keeping him going was playing with this group of chicken that he had raised himself since they were only chicks. One fateful day he went outside to find that each of his seven chickens had laid an egg. Full of excitement, he put the eggs in a bucket to show his brother, Earl. Unfortunately for my biological father, he tripped and fell leading to a mass exodus of the fragile eggs from the bucket. It goes without saying that these unborn chicken capsules, if you will, were mutilated in the process. Full of guilt and sorrow, he swept up the destroyed shells leaving no trace of what happened behind. From my father's story I learned many a lesson. Most importantly it familiarized me with the famous adage, "Don't put all of your eggs in one basket." or bucket in my father's case. I believe that this instance is where I developed the urge to clean up everything as well. My father's rough upbringing encouraged him to raise his own children likewise. Wait... hold on... who's that?

I saw a ghastly figure step into the room.

"Glad to see that you've awakened." Said the man.

"Wh.. Who.. are you... is that you Seabass?" I replied.

The man chuckled,"You are not as smart as you look."

"What do you want from me ?" I pleaded in desperation.

“Just relax.” ordered the strange figure as he whipped out a Spacecig™ placed it in my mouth and proceeded to light it.

“You stole from one of my retail stores. When I heard that there was an insurrectionist running about I knew I had to meet him. My name is Barron - The Barron that is.” said the man.

And at that moment the doors behind me opened and out came Ahkmontread and Seabass in shackles.

“Are these your friends?” asked The Baron, “I have the best friends, you should meet them. They are just outstanding. They love me.” he laughed.

“No more games, tell us what you want!” bellowed Ahkmontread.

“I have quite the interest with my most popular attraction Roid Racing here in Cas Vades. I want to enter one of you into the race. If you lose all of you become my slaves... except one of you will be sacrificed”

“*Gulp, And if we win?” I asked.

“I will grant you one request.” The Barron said.

“We want your best Spaceship!” Seabass added hastily.

“You want my famous *Spidget Finner*, eh? Well I do own the best spaceships in the galaxy after all.”

“How do we know that you will hold up your end of the deal?” questioned Ahkmontread.

The Baron took another Spacecig™ out of the carton and began to smoke it.

He exhaled, “Trust me.”

After a long pause one of the guards motioned towards The Baron. He nodded, and shortly after a short and stout being was brought into the room obviously struggling to break free from his restraints which I presumed to be orveelian ropes.

“Wichard?” the person said.

“Skid? Is that you?” I replied.

“Well, well, well looks like we got us quite the friend-fest here today don’t we!” The Baron interjected.

I could hear somewhat of a growl coming from the other side of the chamber. I then knew it was Skidmark because it is customary of people from the hooth to produce such a sound.

“Now which one of you fine folk is going to take part in tomorrow's race. If you don't choose, I'll pick for you.” uttered the tycoon.

We all turn and face Skid. He nodded in agreement.

“Good, it is settled then. Be ready for the Roid Race in T minus 1380 minutes... And of course good luck!” The Baron released a hardy laugh as he exited the chamber.

After 1379 minutes had passed, a guard entered the holding cell and escorted Skid down to vessel that would transport him to the asteroid field.

“You got this Skid.” I said encouragingly as he walked out.

“Uhhhh tanks mayne.” Replied Skidmark with his hands shaking nervously.

As soon as the door slammed shut behind him.

Ahkmontread said, “Were doomed!”

“We are going to end up just like the Draanitites!” remarked Seabass soon thereafter.

The three of us waited in the dank cell anxiously for word on the outcome of the Roid Race.

Three hours had now passed without hearing a word.

“Wait do you hear that?” I asked.

The sound I heard was of footsteps nearing our chamber.

Seabass said, “Oh no! It's The Baron's executioner!”

As the steel door opened we all cowered in fear for what would happen next.

“Uhhhhhh guize I tink I whon.”

We all turned to see Skid standing there triumphantly.

“Hahaha I knew he'd pull it off!” I said full of joy.

“Wow, I'm quite impressed.” said The Baron solemnly.

“Time for you to deliver on your promise.” interjected the wise Seabass.

The Baron motioned to the guards who promptly removed the orveelian ropes and directed us to The Baron's private docking bay.

“Here she is, my trusted *Spidget Finner*.” said the heartbroken man. “This is worst trade deal in the history of trade deals, maybe ever!” The Barron added as his sadness began to turn into rage. We then quickly boarded and the newly acquired spacecraft propelled us out the hanger in a flash and we were back on track bidding Cas Vedas farewell.

“Now it's time to see that star!” I said as I embraced a premium Spacecig™.

Seabass

“Don’t forget, kid, heroes are remembered, but legends never die.”

Those were my father’s last words before he left this world. Thinking about all I’ve been through in the past week, I wondered if I could become a legend. I started out as a mere dock hand in a crumby spaceport, and now I was on my own ship, captain of my own future. Truth is, I didn’t want to go to Cannis Majoris just to look at a ball of light. It is located in the Hinterland. There I would be able to start over with my life and live in safety from Mungabi tyranny. The Hinterland is one of the few places not under Mungabi control. Most of all, I would be safe from that dreaded man, Sniperman. I thought about this all the time, but then I remembered one of my closest buddies on this trip is Mungabi. Pretty scary, DUDE!

All of a sudden, my self-destructive thoughts were completely interrupted by the sound of something falling behind me. When I looked back it was Richard struggling to clean the floors while embracing a Spacecig™ in his mouth.

“Can you keep it down, Richard? I’m trying to keep the spidget finner spinning. If it stops spinning, then we lose thrust!” I said.

“Call me Dick. How many times do I have to say it?” he shouted back, and in return I screamed, “I state my case!”

Silence fell over the ship after I said that, and it wasn’t interrupted until Ahkmontread came into the cockpit to join me.

“You think Sniperman is still on our tail?” I asked.

“Who knows? He could be anywhere after that last encounter we had with him,” he said

I stared at him for good two minutes and thirty seconds. My dad did this when he thought I wasn’t telling the truth. For some reason, I didn’t think Ahkmontread was telling the

whole truth. I felt something in my lower rib cage, something small telling me to keep my distance from this half-insect, half-Mungabi mutt. After all, Ahkmontread was working with Sniperman to get me at first.

“Seabass, you know a lot about spaceships since you worked at a spacedock on Uranus, right?” said Ahkmontread.

“Uh...Sure, there is the port, bow stern, wheel...”

“That’s good,” he interrupted me. “Can you make this thing go faster? I really want to get closer to that star. I feel so close, but so far.”

I responded by saying, “Let me see what I can do.”

The truth is that I had no idea what I was doing with my last job. Hell, I didn’t even know where I was supposed to pick up my paychecks. Trying to look half intelligent, I took a hammer and walked over to Richard.

“Hey Richard.”

“Dick,” he responds.

“Dick, do you know how to make this ship go into clonk-speed?” I asked.

“Of course,” he said, as he started taking me to the back room where the Spidget’s turbo-engine was.

He walked into the room and looked at the engine, then, all of a sudden, he dumped a bucket of water on it and the whole thing shorted out.

“Idiot, what did you do that for!” I exclaimed.

“Sorry, it was covered in grease. I had to atleast try to clean it,” he stupidly remarked.

“What happened, why did we lose thrust?” exclaimed Ahkmontread.

“Well, *apparently* Richard thought it would be a good idea to throw water on the the turbo-engine,” I said, trying to throw Richard under the bus so that I didn’t get in trouble or look stupid.

“You asked for my help,” remarked Richard.

“Why would you need help, Seabass, don’t you know how to do this on your own?” said Ahkmontread.

I felt numb while trying to figure out what to say, when, all of a sudden, the ship shook and threw us all down to the floor.

“What’s wrong?” shouted Richard.

“The Left-Handed League, they followed us and now they captured our *Spidget Finner*,” said Ahkmontread.

All of a sudden, we heard a knock from the space door. Shivers went down my spine and across my brow because I realized what’s on the other side.

“It’s sniperman. They docked us,” I said.

“It can’t be,” said Ahkmontread.

“They are after me, so I guess I’ll open the door,” I said.

“They want me just as much for being a Mungabi traitor, so I’ll be right behind you.”

“Sounds good,” I said.

We walk over to the door, and, when I opened it, a short fellow was there waiting and exclaimed, “Hewo!”

“Skidmark?” I said in disbelief.

“I thought it was Sniperman coming after me,” I followed.

“It is the Weft-Handed Weague and we awr aftwer you, I’m with Sniperman,” he said.

“SNIPERMAN!” I screamed, as I was about to fall to the floor out of disbelief.

“Yes, it is I, Sniperman,” said a figure in the background walking up towards us, who I presumed was Sniperman.

“Hired by the Mungabis and the Left-Handed League to chase you down and exterminate you for your treasonous acts. Take them to the prison cells,” he said.

All of a sudden, black bags were put over our heads so that we knew not where we were going.

When they took the bag off my face, I realized I was in a room all by myself, lit up by a single light in the center of the room.

“Time for interrogation and extermination,” said Sniperman, as he walked into the room.

“Where are my friends?” I asked.

“You mean those traitors, thugs, and fiends you call friends? They are safe in the room across from us, but don’t think their fate is any different than yours,” he said.

“Okay,” I said blankly.

“Before I get started, I’m going to tell you a story with a moral. The story will start out with this rhyme scheme of AA BB. It will be broken up into stanzas with four lines...”

“Like a prologue,” I interrupted.

“If that is what you want to call it, you low-life scum,” he snarled back.

I am the evil man, sniperman

I always have a deadly plan

I am the most feared mercenary

When I go after you, It gets scary

I grew up on my own, I fed myself
When I come, most choose to kill oneself
I always have my rifle at my side
I call her betsy, She is my only bride

But this is completely beside the point
I don't want to sound like a powerpoint
My story is about a man of debt
If you have it, Your life is in much threat

The times I have seen the richest man fall
Just because his debt was very tall
For example, I tell the tale of mark
Mark was a good broker in the ozark

One late monday morning he hit it rich
Some say it was all because of a glitch
It matters not how he got the bitcoin
This is how he lost it all like purloin

Mark Had made it big. He felt like he was on top of the world. Never had he imagined that he could make enough money to buy a spaceship and go travel. Of course this was all on layaway. Mark moved to one of the most elite suburban neighborhoods in all the galaxy. Of

course, he had a mortgage. But he was okay, he had enough money and he was making enough money to pay his monthly fees. One day while mark was trimming the bushes when his neighbor Keeth pulled up.

“Hey mark” Keeth called

“What is it?” asked mark

“I got a new 4D television for just 99999 bitcoins, you have to get it. Its what all the elites are doing.”

“I’ll think about it.” said mark.

Truth is Mark already was thinking about where he would buy it. He took out a mighty loan and got a 4D tv. The nicest one in the neighborhood in fact.

A week later while Mark was watching TV, his door bell rang. He got up, opened the door, and he saw Keeth

“Hey mark” said Keeth

“What is it?” asked Mark

“I got a new gismo. In fact everyone has it. It is the cool thing to do. You should get one. I got it on sale for only 9990 bitcoins” He said.

“Well, I’ll think about it.” said Mark

It was too late. Mark needed this gismo just to fit in. He bought the gismo and he felt cool.

This pattern went on for a long time until Mark’s monthly bill was more than the amount of bitcoins in his bank account. To fix this he got more loans from shady bankers.

Mark accrued so much debt that one day the Mungabi Intergalactic Revenue service came to his house and arrested him. They were mad because Mark failed to pay taxes. Mark's life is now in ruins and he works as a civil servant on the planet of Mungab.

"You know why you are here, Seabass?" he said to me.

"Not really," I said, confused about why he was chasing me in the first place.

"Seriously?" he said in disbelief. "You harbored a fugitive (Xaania) responsible for the murder of the Supreme Overlord of the Left-Handed League, and you haven't paid your taxes of bitcoin in three years."

"So if this has to do with the murder of the leader of the Left-Handed League, why did the Mungabi hire you to track me down?" I asked.

"Cwuz the Mungwabi awr the Weft-Handed weague" said Skidmark from behind, who startled me with his presence

"The punishment for those who harbored fugitives and never paid their taxes of bitcoin is a life term of slavery in a Mungabi labor camp, Seabass."

"You will never get me to talk!" I screamed to bring my point across.

"I don't half to," said Sniperman as he pulled out a fidget spinner "But this will," he said.

Before he could use the vile instrument on me, Richard broke into the room and disabled Sniperman and Skidmark by spraying Raid in their eyes.

"Time to go!" shouted Richard.

“Where?” I asked.

“To the *Spidget Finner*,” Ahkmontread said angrily with his gritty voice as he threw a laser rifle to me.

We were going down the hallway to where we thought the ship was when, all of a sudden, a Mungabi platoon force opened fire on our location.

“They are in our way!” I said.

“Gee, thanks for the help, Seabass,” said Richard in a smart-alec remark.

“Just keep shooting; I have better accuracy than these runts,” shouted Ahkmontread.

Streams of green and blue light were flying everywhere. The entire corridor wreaked of natural gas from the rifles. (Mungabi rifles work like a stove. If you leave them on they, spew natural gas)

“This is going nowhere, Ahkmontread, we are bound to be caught!” said Richard while he was trying to light his spacecig™. “I can’t even light this darn spacecig™!” he continued.

After giving all his effort to light the spacecig™, he gave in and threw it behind us. I looked back to see where it landed and not only did I see a smoldering ciggerette, but also Sniperman approaching to our direction. We were now surrounded by enemy forces. I was about to give up and just surrender when I remembered: ‘Legends never die’. If I am a legend, then I can’t die.

“Time to go!” I shouted, as I charged towards the Mungabi security forces and away from Sniperman. As Ahkmontread and I charged, we looked back and saw Richard fiddling with something in his pocket.

“Dude, what are you doing?” I asked.

“I got a giant match that has never failed me in lighting a spacecig™.”

Ahkmontread quickly remarked, “Wait, don’t, the natural gas in the air will ignite and cause a...”

It was too late. Richard lit his match and the entire place went into a blaze. We were all thrown back and the ship was burning down. I thought it was over, until I heard Ahkmontread say, “The *Spidget Finner* is connected to that door; if we get to the ship and disconnect fast enough we might be able to get out of this fiery mess.”

Everything was on fire as we ran down the hallway. When we got to the door, Ahkmontread used his muscular arms to open it. When we got into the ship, I quickly pulled the lever to disconnect the spidget finner from the Mungabi vessel. As we looked back through the window all we could see was fire coming out from every orifice of the Mungabi ship.

“Looks like Sniperman and Skid are dead now. Good job, Richard,” said Ahkmontread.

“It’s Dick, but thanks,” responded Richard.

“Sniperman isn’t dead,” I said.

“How do you know?” asked Ahkmontread.

“Legends never die,” I said.

“I don’t think you understand what that quote means, Seabass,” said Richard.

Conclusion

We had been in space for many days. Ahkmontread said that we were almost to the Great Sun, but, as time went by, I grew more and more wary on the vessel. I was about to go to sleep for the last time when Ahkmontread said, “We are almost there, we just have to get around the planet of Sarbisia.”

“How much longer, then?” questioned Richard.

“Give it twenty minutes. Then, the Great Sun will be in full view. It will be brilliant,” said Ahkmontread.

As we rounded the planet of Sarbisia, we could see the Great Sun in the distance. My hope began to grow. I had so much excitement for the future that awaited me. My dreams were once again interrupted, but this time it was by the dreadful *Hrunting*.

Sniperman has come once more, I thought to myself, fearing what lay in store for me next.

Hrunting wasted no time in docking our ship and taking us hostage.

“How could this be happening again?” bellowed Ahkmontread.

“We can stop them,” Richard said, as he starts throwing us Mungabi laser-rifles.

“Yeah, we got away before, so let’s do it again,” I said.

“It’s too wate,” said Skidmark from behind us, once again taking me by complete surprise.

“Geez, kid, do you ever die?” said Ahkmontread in his rustic Mungabi voice.

In response Skid laughed in a jovial manner and said, “I dunno.”

“It’s twime to twake you to Snwiperman,” he continued.

“No!” I screamed.

“What do you mwean?” asked Skid, as he ordered the boarding Mungabi soldiers to take aim.

“I mean, I’m the only one Sniperman wants. Let my friends go and take me only,” I said in a confident voice.

“Okwee,” said Skidmark, as he pulled out a bat. He then hit me in the knees to take me to the ground so that he could hit me upside the head, rendering me unconscious.

I awoke in a dark room in a cushioned chair. I tried to move but there were restraints on the chair.

“It’s no use. Those are Orveelian ropes. You will never brake them,” said Sniperman, who just entered the room.

“You are aboard my dreaded *Hrunting* and I am about to kill you once and for all,” he continued.

“Can you adjust these ropes? I’m kind of in an uncomfortable position,” I pleaded.

“Well, since I’m about to kill you, the least I can do is let you live restraint-free for your last few breaths,” he said as he pressed a button, freeing me from my bondage.

“Are my friends safe?” I asked.

“Yes. I had no need for them. There is no bounty for their heads like yours. Now, where were we?” he asked.

“I was about to kill you and escape this ship,” I said with pride.

“What?” Sniperman said in a surprised expression as I leaped forward onto him.

We were going at it for what seemed like an eternity to me. At times, I thought I was winning, but sometimes it seemed as if he had the upper hand. Eventually, I had Sniperman pinned down with my legs.

This is my chance, I thought.

I looked around and saw the bat that Skidmark had hit me with about two feet away.

“This is the end for you, my master!” I screamed.

“What do you even mean?” he said.

But it was too late. He had blacked out due to the final blow I gave him with the bat.

I got up and saw Skidmark staring at me from the cockpit room. All of a sudden his entire body was silhouetted by a giant orb of light behind him. It was the Great Sun.

“Yow *idiot!*” Skidmark bellowed. “You distwacted me fwom fwying the pwane. Now we awr gowing to dwie fwom cwashing into the Gweat Sun.”

“I’m not an Idiot,” I said. “I’m a legend!”

Epilogue

After Seabass had been taken aboard *Hrunting*, Ahkmontread and Richard had rushed to the controls of the *Spidget Finner*. They hurriedly detached the two ships and pulled back the *Spidget Finner*, slowly drifting apart from *Hrunting*.

“What about Seabass?” asked Richard, already puffing thoughtfully on a space-cig™.

“What about him?” growled Ahkmontread, trying to mask his worry. “He’ll be fine. If anyone can beat Sniperman, Seabass can.”

“But it’s not like Seabass is a highly lethal galactic mercenary--”

“Yeah,” said Ahkmontread. “But Seabass is better. Seabass is a legend.”

The two watched in silence as Sniperman’s ship slowly drifted away. Suddenly, it began to accelerate--not from its own engines, but from the power of gravity.

“The Great Sun,” whispered Ahkmontread. He placed a hand over one of his hearts.

“Legends never die,” murmured Richard. He put out his spacecig™ and watched with sadness.

Hrunting fell ever closer to the sun; its engines did not fire, as if no one was piloting the ship. Finally, the craft drew too close to the massive star; with a fiery blaze, it disappeared into the flaming ball.

Ahkmontread and Richard were silent for a long time.

“Well,” Ahkmontread said, fighting back tears. “Now what?”

Richard made no attempt to hide his own tears. “BWAAAAA!” he bawled. He lit a spacecig™ for comfort and managed to calm down some. “Well, Ahkmontread,” he said, “I have no idea.”

They sat down in the pilot and copilot seats of the *Spidget Finner*, gazing at the vast space in front of them.

“Time to go,” said Ahkmontread.

“Where?” asked Richard, wiping down one of the control consoles.

“We’re about to find out.””

The *Spidget Finner* accelerated into clonk-speed, leaving behind the Great Sun forever.

Glossary

Blob -- A space-bus (patent pending) piloted by Muss Terd Sied, and copiloted by Flies Like Rock. It makes frequent trips between Uranus and Cas Vades before its combustion and eventual destruction.

Carbithia -- A region known for rebellion and anarchy; only the mightiest forces of the Mungabi were able to force these people into submission.

Cas Vades -- A planet known as the entertainment and pleasure hub of the outermost reaches of the Milky-Way galaxy. Gambling, crime and human trafficking are exceedingly common here. The sprawling capital of Cas Vades, Cas Vades, is the center for these activities, as the rest of the planet is sparsely inhabited.

Draant -- A system in the inner region of the Milky Way Galaxy that was very prosperous... that is, until the Mungbis ransacked the planet, leaving no proper form of government in place. The system emotionally collapsed soon thereafter.

Draantinities -- A once flourishing alien race with a current estimated population of only 69 persons; they originated from the planet "Draant." They have been hunted to near extinction due to the fact that their bones are made up completely of ivory. Their culture and traditions have since been adopted by numerous species from across the multiverse. In recent history, the new-order Mungabis have tried to preserve the Draantinities through breeding in captivity in an effort

to promote biodiversity in the galaxy; however, such attempts have been futile. For this reason, a great reward (in bitcoin) will be dispensed if a live Draantinite is handed over to a Mungabi official.

Fantailsia -- A region of Saheed particularly known for exporting poetry.

Five Pillars of Mungabism -- A set of beliefs founded by the new-order Mungabis and greatly influenced by Mungabi legend, which includes Fate, Preying, Feasting, and Pilgrimage to VY Cannis Majoris (the Great Sun) if one is able. There are really five, but they don't talk about the fifth one.

Gangsville -- A figurative location that gang bosses such as Big Nut and Lil Nut are said to be from, representing areas that are rife with crime and often have multiple generations of gangsters in power.

Gorvaylian beetle -- The only intelligent species of insect known in the galaxy; not known to have a hive mind, unlike many other social insects. This alien species is unique because they are the only civilization who welcomed Mungabi forces with open arms. They live peacefully with in the Mungabi Intergalactic Empire. Mungabi and Gorvaylian beetles are known to interbreed in many systems.

Great Sun -- The traditional Mungabi name for VY Cannis Majoris (the largest known star in the universe); the Great Sun is a central character in Mungabi religion, and much religious worship

is centered around it; all new-order Mungabi are expected to make a pilgrimage to it if they are able to do so.

Hilbarite -- A native of Hilbarz; Hilbarites are notable for being ten feet tall and for seemingly being constructed of snow. They are a fierce, tribal people, very protective of their ancestral snowbank homes. Most were wiped out by the Mungabi years ago, but a few small populations survive in the deepest caves and highest mountains of snowy Hilbarz.

Hilbarz -- A snowy planet home to a race of sentient snowmen; the Mungabi folk hero Matatarkh was said to have raided here and undergone a year-long captivity by the ruthless Hilbarites.

Hinterland -- An area located in the outermost region of the Milky Way. This is the only place in the known galaxy that the Mungabi have yet to conquer.

Hooth -- Uranian slang for a low-income area; similar to “the hood” on Earth.

Hrunting -- Sniperman’s ship. It is long and sleek, designed for speed and maneuverability. The entire ship is jet-black to inspire fear in Sniperman’s targets, as well as for camouflage in space. It is armed with several cannons and missiles.

Left-Handed League -- A society formed by left-handed people, for left-handed people. It started as a secret society indigenous only to Earth, and has mainly humans as members. Over

time, the League grew, and it eventually became one of the ruling authorities on Earth after the Mungabi invasion. The Left-Handed League has become a puppet organization for the Mungabi.

Lumon -- One of the first Earthian colonies on the moon; it grew to become a large city, but, after a few short decades, became derelict and unmaintained; it was a hotspot for organized crime before it was cleared about by Mungabi invaders.

Lython Crystal(s) -- This is the main export of the Sarbisian system. Found underground, brave men have to mine this rare substance. It is used to power all large warships in the Mungabi imperial navy. This valuable ore is the main cause of civil war within the Sabisian system.

Marm -- An edible grub found in the soil of Saheed; while nutritious, marms are not known for being appetizing.

Microsphere -- An artificially-created miniature atmosphere for use in hostile biomes, planets, moons, etc.; it simulates the conditions of a species' home planet to allow for the comfort and survival of the species. Humans have created microspheres for most of the major moon colonies, as well as a few more distant ones.

Mitdt -- A priestly member of the Mungabem sect; Mitdtuq (plural) are the highest-ranking class of Mungabem and are seen as the ultimate spiritual authority among all of the Mungabis.

Mungab -- The home planet of the Mungabi; Mungab can also refer to the collective group of all Mungabi, or the greater good or need of the people.

Mungabem -- A particular sect or race of Mungabi, known particularly for their religious officials; seen as leaders by other sects.

Mungabi -- An ancient alien race native to the planet Mungab; known for tough, leathery skin, high-tech weaponry, and aggressive tendencies; the Mungabi have overrun much of the galaxy through military aggression.

Mungabi Laser Rifle -- A weapon utilizing very interesting technology that has a faster rate of fire than any other projectile tool in the galaxy, making it ideal for mowing down waves of enemy infantry. However, when the rifle is engaged for long amounts of time, it emits natural gas from the cooling cell. This is a flaw in the design and was never the intention of the Mungabi firearm developers.

Mxran -- A Mungabi's interior spirit or strength; a spiritual quality akin to valor or courage.

Orveelian Rope -- A very strong restraining device that is made up of the flocculent fibers from the Gorvaylian beetle.

Pepeia -- A swampy planet approximately 69 parsecs (224.94 light years) away from VY Canis Majoris; in the Rhodesian system and renowned for its dank landscape. Darkness consumes the planet for most of the year.

Pepian -- An indigenous inhabitant of the planet Pepeia; known for frog-like features and behaviors akin to a Rhodesian hunting dog. They have an innate distrust of authority.

Redicaliac-- A well known convenience store chain based in Cas Vendas.

Roid Race -- A competitive race that takes place in both space and on the local planet. It is known as “Space NASCAR” on Earth. Roid racing typically makes use of asteroid belts as a track of sorts - inexperienced racers are known to face fatal injuries.

Roid Racer -- One who competes in a roid race.

Saheed -- A planet three habitable systems from Earth; it is known for its scientific and poetic prowess and is referred to by many philosophers as the “Land of Eternal Enlightenment.”

Sarbisia -- A planet known for civil war; currently, a war between a hostile dictator and radicals has engulfed the planet. This had led to a multitude of refugees fleeing from Sarbisia.

Space-bus (patent pending) -- A new mass-transit system developed to service major spaceports, such as those of Uranus and Cas Vendas; space-buses (patent pending) are slow and not very

agile, but they are cheap to produce, easy to maintain, and have a high passenger capacity for their size.

Spacecig™ -- The most addictive substance in the galaxy. It contains genetically modified tobacco (a cash crop of Williamsburg, Virginia) that contains 99.97 times the amount of nicotine in the average run-of-the-mill tobacco plant. Studies show that just one Space-cig™ increases your chances of lung cancer by 500%. The Mungabi's have tried to ban this product for hundreds of years due to mass casualties. These attempts have all been in vain because of heavy resistance among the masses.

Spidget Finner -- A ship that once belonged to Seabass; it has remained on Cas Vades for many years before Seabass reclaimed it for a journey to Cannis Majoris. The *Spidget Finner* consists of a central, disk-shaped pod, with three triangular arms projecting off of it; these arms rotate around the pod as the ship moves through space. This ship is old and requires maintenance, but is surprisingly quick and nimble during normal space travel.

Spatial Acre -- A three-dimensional acre; an acre cubed.

Tanja Klub -- An organization that is affiliated with and conducts business with several different gangs across Earth's sector and nearby systems

Togroth -- Saturnian slang for a low-income area; similar to "the hood" on Earth.

War-band -- A small group of Mungabi marauders with no official military rank or structure; usually, war-bands have one or several leaders and a rough, though unofficial, system of rank. War-bands usually do not attempt full-scale invasions; instead, they opt for hit-and-run attacks or raids. Traditionally, war-bands also work together to observe the second Pillar of Mungabism, Preying.

Whipper-snapper -- An obscure alien race often referred to as “old-timers;” while little is known about whipper-snappers, they are known to be diminutive beings.

Wujitzsu-- A resurgence of an ancient tradition of combat involving patience and physical domination over one's opponent. Mitdtuq are known for their mastery of this art.

Zaperska-- A taser like weapon widely used by security guards in hostile systems.