



Ma-laraq

**Report by Jalkora Tel'ran, psychiatrist to High Theocrat Dalshora XIX
Pre-Imperial Year 6743 (E.Y. -64)**

The subject is one "Saltheras Arkham", initiate in the sect of Glowden, led through the grace of the Pantheon by my master Dalshora XIX. As a member of the Theocrat's League of Explorers, he is entitled to free medical care, and so I was sent. His case intrigues me, but I have no real conclusions to work on, so I present you the full text of our meeting, with the hope that my betters might see things that I have missed.

JT: Hello Saltheras. I've been sent to talk to you. Do you know why?

SA: We know. We have seen it. The path called for your kind to come to us, it must be.

JT: What do you mean, "your kind"?

SA: You're different from the others. You don't see what the others see.

JT: I am female, if that is what you mean. Most doctors are. Do you mean that you cannot recognize the other gender of your own species?

SA: Species are flesh. Flesh will soon pass. Sun and moon, mind and shadow.

JT: Yes. Yes, precisely. Let's move on. I've been looking up your records in our archives. You seem to be very talented, finding a fold route our own scientists missed.

SA: There is always a way through the mind. Science blinds, only the mind sees true.

JT: So you feel that your success was caused by your superior mental ability?

SA: Not "your", "ours". Not "ours" either, but "theirs". Flesh will pass, but essence remains. You see, it is essence that binds us, binds our races.

JT: What races? Do you mean the low-gee worlders? Or are you talking about a different species? Surely the Theocrats would be informed if a non-Enaran species was found.

SA: I will release him, so that you might understand before the coming dark. Your kind is not fit to be with us in this way, the well will not be among you when it is time.

JT: Release him? Who is "him"? Who are you holding?

[Note: At this point, Saltheras' voice became radically different. I can only hypothesize that this is a different personality surfacing. I am moving in theory here, not established results, so I cannot provide a more orthodox explanation.]

SA: They... they told me that it couldn't be done; find a way to the eastern places. But *they* wanted me to find it. I think they're trying to warn us. They know more than we do, they can bend our minds in places... *[At this point the subject exhibited self-destructive behavior, thrashing about randomly. Luckily, he was fully restrained.]* No! no, they must be warned, told of what is to come... No... they... *[If we are to hold with the admittedly thin evidence for a personality split, it is at this point that the primary personality*

resurfaces.] I apologize, Jalkora. We pressed too hard, trying to bend the tarnished mirror to reflect the light.

JT: It seems there is a link between your statements. You mention another race, "they". Who are *them*?

SA: We are starshine and starlight, but also rock and rubble. We are both of them, the ones of Laraq.

JT: Ah yes, Laraq. Your report mentioned this planet. The prospector probes said it was barren and lifeless, without even minerals worthy to be mined. Is this where "they" are from?

SA: We dwell there no more. Fire and sorrow, ruin and shadow. It was because of the others, the ones in no place and everyplace, but now is not the time. Now is the time near the era of growth, when we will find the way out.

The subject then became docile, and, unfortunately, silent. I believe there is a coherent series of beliefs behind Saltheras Arkham's delusions, but no doubt I am an "outsider", and unable to comprehend. It then seems to me that Arkham must be isolated and restrained, as a cure seems unlikely at this point. Just to be sure, I have ordered a drastic increase in his anti-hallucinogens and sedatives. Hopefully this will contain his symptoms.

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To: "Odysseus" @ havennet.pcc/Office of Foreign Intelligence
From: "Good Samaritan" @ irduenet.pcc/irdue public terminal #45001
Subject: Pass Routine Override 01, "Urgent"

Jack: I don't know if this is going to reach you in time, because I don't know how much time we *have*. This is big, Jack, bigger than I thought. They've got some kick-ass interception software after me at the moment; I think they may have an AI working for them, possibly more. I trust you understand the implications of this. This means high level infiltration, or the ability to influence software over long distances. I don't know which one is the "worst-case scenario"; they both seem to mean that we're screwed.

I don't know if I can give you xenology; they are at least partially pure energy, or at least they can appear that way. They seem to eschew direct apparition, preferring to work through puppets. I don't know if this means that they *can't* physically manifest. Heck, I don't know anything, really. All I know is that I was only in the room for an hour, but it felt like an eternity. You know all those embarrassing moment's you've had? The first break-up, the time you forgot your lines in the school play, whatever. They brought them *all* back at the same time, and then just kept piling on the pain. No clue what they wanted, or why I'm still alive and free. I'm pretty sure they're still after me, but I would rather die than be caught again. I've *seen* it, Jack. I know there are worse things than death. I can feel them closing in, now. Maybe that's why I'm still alive; I'm more sensitive to that kind of thing than most. Take whatever measures you feel are appropriate to make sure the word gets out. We can't sit on this one, not like with Project Apostle. Now that I think about it, *they* seem to be linked to the project in some way. If I don't turn up, cancel the project. I think the idea of sunk costs is quite applicable; I've never seen anything evil before. Not misguided, not working under a delusion, not even duped by propaganda; just pure evil. Think about that, and God bless.

-"Good Samaritan"

To: "Good Samaritan" @ irduenet.pcc/personal account services
From: "Jack Carson" @ havennet.pcc/Office of Foreign Intelligence

Quoted text:

>> Thanks for the info, Jack. Nothing to report here. How are the kids?

>> -"Good Samaritan"

Sam, I appreciate you asking about the children; Rebecca and Jason are fine, thank you. Still, this is hardly an "Urgent" message. The "Odysseus" address should be used only for official business, i.e., intelligence reports and warnings. Also, you're past due for your analysis of the reported psychic incidents on Irdue. Please have that on my desk ASAP, I'll need the info before I can make my recommendation to

President Yang about the Firstborn's genetic tests. I'd like at least one other verifiable case of the phenomenon before I risk my career over this. Madame President does not suffer fools gladly, and I intend not to put myself in that category. My best:

-Jack Carson

Local Newscast: "The Haven Update"

Colleagues and friends alike mourn the loss of Jack Carson, Minister of Internal Security, who was found dead in his office hours before a meeting with President Yang. The cause of death was apparently severe internal hemorrhaging, combined with a massive stroke. He is survived by a wife and two children, ages 8 and 14. Carson's funeral is private, by invitation only, and will be held at Our Lady of the Supernova tomorrow at 9:00 A.M. Haven Standard Time. A public remembrance will be held in front of the Council building at 11:45 HST the following day.