

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Traders Risk

Author: Roger D. Aycock

Release date: October 20, 2007 [eBook #23103]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Greg Weeks, Stephen Blundell and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TRADERS RISK ***

TRADERS RISK

By ROGER DEE

*Keeping this cargo meant
death—to jettison it meant to
make flotsam and jetsam of a
world!*

Illustrated by MARTIN

THE Ciriimian ship was passing in hyperdrive through a classic three-body system, comprising in this case a fiercely white sun circled by a fainter companion and a single planet that swung in precise balance, when the Canthorian Zid broke out of its cage in the specimen hold.

Of the ship's social quartet, Chafis One and Two were asleep at the moment, dreaming wistful dreams of conical Ciriimian cities spearing up to a soft and plum-colored sky. The Zid raged into their communal rest cell, smashed them down from their gimbaled sleeping perches and, with the ravening blood-hunger of its kind, devoured them before they could wake enough to teleport to safety.

Chafis Three and Four, on psi shift in the forward control cubicle, might have fallen as easily if the mental screamings of their fellows had not warned them in time. As it was, they had barely time to teleport themselves to the after hold, as far as possible from immediate danger, and to consider the issue while the Zid lunged about the ship in search of them with malignant cries and a great shrieking of claws on metal.

Their case was the more desperate because the Chafis were professional freighters with little experience of emergency. Hauling a Zid from Canthorian jungles to a Ciriimian zoo was a prosaic enough assignment so long as the cage held, but with the raging brute swiftly smelling them out, they were helpless to catch and restrain it.

When the Zid found them, they had no other course but to teleport back to the control cubicle and wait until the beast should snuff them down again. The Zid learned quickly, so quickly that it was soon clear that its physical strength would far outlast their considerable but limited telekinetic ability.

Still they possessed their share of owlsh Ciriimian logic and hit soon enough upon the one practical course—to jettison the Zid on the nearest world demonstrably free of intelligent life.

THEY worked hurriedly, between jumps fore and aft. Chafi Three, while they were still in the control cubicle, threw the ship out of hyperdrive within scant miles of the neighboring sun's single planet. Chafi Four, on the next jump, scanned the ship's charts and identified the system through which they traveled.

Luck was with them. The system had been catalogued some four Ciriimian generations before

and tagged: *Planet undeveloped. Tranquil marine intelligences only.*

The discovery relieved them greatly for the reason that no Ciriimian, even to save his own feathered skin, would have set down such a monster as the Zid among rational but vulnerable entities.

The planet was a water world, bare of continents and only sparsely sprinkled with minor archipelagoes. The islands suited the Chafis' purpose admirably.

"The Zid does not swim," Chafi Four radiated. "Marooned, it can do no harm to marine intelligences."

"Also," Chafi Three pointed out as they dodged to the control cubicle again just ahead of the slaving Zid, "we may return later with a Canthorian hunting party and recover our investment."

Closing their perception against the Zid's distracting ragings, they set to work with perfect coordination.

Chafi Three set down the ship on an island that was only one of a freckling chain of similar islands. Chafi Four projected himself first to the opened port; then, when the Zid charged after him, to the herbivore-cropped sward of tropical setting outside.

The Zid lunged out. Chafi Four teleported inside again. Chafi Three closed the port. Together they relaxed their perception shields in relief—

Unaware in their consternation that they committed the barbarous lapse of vocalizing, they twittered aloud when they realized the extent of their error.

Above the far, murmurous whisper of expected marine celebration there rose an uncoordinated mishmash of thought from at least two strong and relatively complex intelligences.

"Gas-breathing!" Chafi Four said unbelievably. "Warm-blooded, land-dwelling, mammalian!"

"A Class Five culture," Chafi agreed shakenly. His aura quivered with the shock of betrayal. "The catalogue was *wrong*."

Ironically, their problem was more pressing now than before. Unless checked, the Zid would rapidly depopulate the island—and, to check it, they must break a prime rule of Galactic protocol in asking the help of a new and untested species.

But they had no choice. They teleported at once into the presence of the two nearby natives—and met with frustration beyond Ciriimian experience.

JEFF Aubray glimpsed the Ciriimian ship's landing because the morning was a Oneday, and on Onedays his mission to the island demanded that he be up and about at sunrise.

For two reasons: On Onedays, through some unfailing miracle of Calaxian seamanship, old Charlie Mack sailed down in his ancient *Island Queen* from the township that represented colonial Terran civilization in Procyonian Archipelago 147, bringing supplies and gossip to last Jeff through the following Tenday. The *Queen* would dock at Jeff's little pier at dawn; she was never late.

Also on Onedays, necessarily before Charlie Mack's visit, Jeff must assemble his smuggled communicator—kept dismantled and hidden from suspicious local eyes—and report to Earth Interests Consulate his progress during the cycle just ended. The ungodly hour of transmission, naturally, was set to coincide with the closing of the Consul's field office halfway around the planet.

So the nacreous glory of Procyon's rising was just tinting the windows of Jeff's cottage when he aligned and activated his little communicator on his breakfast table. Its three-inch screen lighted to signal and a dour and disappointed Consul Satterfield looked at him. Behind Satterfield, foreshortened to gnomishness by the pickup, lurked Dr. Hermann, Earth Interests' resident zoologist.

"No progress," Jeff reported, "except that the few islanders I've met seem to be accepting me at last. A little more time and they might let me into the Township, where I can learn something. If Homeside—"

"You've had seven Tendays," Satterfield said. "Homeside won't wait longer, Aubray. They need those calm-crystals too badly."

"They'll use force?" Jeff had considered the possibility, but its immediacy appalled him. "Sir, these colonists had been autonomous for over two hundred years, ever since the Fourth War cut them off from us. Will Homeside deny their independence?"

His sense of loss at Satterfield's grim nod stemmed from something deeper than sympathy for the islanders. It found roots in his daily rambles over the little island granted him by the Township for the painting he had begun as a blind to his assignment, and in the gossip of old Charlie Mack and the few others he had met. He had learned to appreciate the easy life of the islands well enough to be dismayed now by what must happen under EI pressure to old Charlie and his handful of sun-browned fisherfolk.

UNEXPECTEDLY, because Jeff had not considered that it might matter, he was disturbed by the realization that he wouldn't be seeing Jennifer, old Charlie Mack's red-haired niece, once occupation began. Jennifer, who sailed with her uncle and did a crewman's work as a matter of course, would despise the sight of him.

The Consul's pessimism jolted Jeff back to the moment at hand.

"Homeside will deny their autonomy, Aubray. I've had a warp-beam message today ordering me to move in."

The situation was desperate enough at home, Jeff had to admit. Calaxian calm-crystals did what no refinement of Terran therapeutics had been able to manage. They erased the fears of the neurotic and calmed the quiverings of the hypertensive—both in alarming majority in the shattering aftermath of the Fourth War—with no adverse effects at all. Permanent benefit was slow but cumulative, offering for the first time a real step toward ultimate stability. The medical, psychiatric and political fields cried out for crystals and more crystals.

"If the islanders would tell us their source and let us help develop it," Satterfield said peevishly, "instead of doling out a handful of crystals every Tenday, there wouldn't be any need of action. Homeside feels they're just letting us have some of the surplus."

"Not likely," Jeff said. "They don't use the crystals themselves."

Old Dr. Hermann put his chin almost on the Consul's shoulder to present his wizened face to the scanner.

"Of course they don't," he said. "On an uncomplicated, even simple-minded world like this, who would need crystals? But maybe they fear glutting the market or the domination of outside capital coming in to develop the source. When people backslide, there's no telling what's on their minds and we have no time to waste negotiating or convincing them. In any case, how could they stop us from moving in?" Abruptly he switched to his own interest. "Aubray, have you learned anything new about the Scoops?"

"Nothing beyond the fact that the islanders don't talk about them," Jeff said. "I've seen perhaps a dozen offshore during the seven cycles I've been here. One usually surfaces outside my harbor at about the time old Charlie Mack's supply boat comes in."

Thinking of Charlie Mack brought a forced end to his report. "Charlie's due now. I'll call back later."

He cut the circuit, hurrying to have his communicator stowed away before old Charlie's arrival—not, he thought bitterly, that being found out now would make any great difference.

STEPPING out into the brief Calaxian dawn, he caught his glimpse of the Ciriimian ship's landing before the island forest of palm-ferns cut it off from sight. Homeside hadn't been bluffing, he thought, assuming as a matter of course that this was the task force Satterfield had been ordered to send.

"They didn't waste any time," Jeff growled. "Damn them."

He ignored the inevitable glory of morning rainbow that just preceded Procyon's rising and strode irritably down to his miniature dock. He was still scowling over what he should tell Charlie Mack when the *Island Queen* hove into view.

She was a pretty sight. There was an artist's perception in Jeff in spite of his drab years of EI patrol duty; the white puff of sail on dark-green sea, gliding across calm water banded with lighter and darker striae where submerged shoals lay, struck something responsive in him. The comparison it forced between Calaxia and Earth, whose yawning Fourth War scars and heritage of anxieties made calm-crystals so desperately necessary, oppressed him. Calaxia was wholly unscarred, her people without need of the calm-crystals they traded.

Something odd in the set of the *Queen's* sails puzzled him until he identified the abnormality. In spite of distance and the swift approach of the old fishing boat, he could have sworn that her sails bellied not with the wind, but against.

They fell slack, however, when the *Queen* reached his channel and flapped lazily, reversing to catch the wind and nose her cautiously into the shallows. Jeff dismissed it impatiently—a change of wind or some crafty maneuver of old Charlie Mack's to take advantage of the current.

Jeff had just set foot on his dock when it happened. Solid as the planking itself, and all but blocking off his view of the nearing *Island Queen*, stood a six-foot owl.

It was wingless and covered smoothly with pastel-blue feathers. It stood solidly on carefully manicured yellow feet and stared at him out of square violet eyes.

Involuntarily he took a backward step, caught his heel on a sun-warped board and sat down heavily.

"Well, what the devil!" he said inanely.

The owl winced and disappeared without a sound.

JEFF got up shakily and stumbled to the dock's edge. A chill conviction of insanity gripped him when he looked down on water lapping smooth and undisturbed below.

"I've gone mad," he said aloud.

Out on the bay, another catastrophe just as improbable was in progress.

Old Charlie Mack's *Island Queen* had veered sharply off course, left the darker-green stripe of safe channel and plunged into water too shallow for her draft. The boat heeled on shoal sand, listed and hung aground with wind-filled sails holding her fast.

The Scoop that had surfaced just behind her was so close that Jeff wondered if its species' legendary good nature had been misrepresented. It floated like a glistening plum-colored island, flat dorsal flippers undulating gently on the water and its great filmy eyes all but closed against the slanting glare of morning sun.

It was more than vast. The thing must weigh, Jeff thought dizzily, thousands or maybe millions of tons.

He thought he understood the *Queen's* grounding when he saw the swimmer stroking urgently toward his dock. Old Charlie had abandoned his boat and was swimming in to escape the Scoop.

But it wasn't Charlie. It was Jennifer, Charlie's niece.

Jeff took the brown hand she put up and drew her to the dock beside her, steadying her while she shook out her dripping red hair and regained her breath. Sea water had plastered Jennifer's white blouse and knee-length dungarees to her body like a second skin, and the effect bordered on the spectacular.

"Did you see it?" she demanded.

Jeff wrestled his eyes away to the Scoop that floated like a purple island in the bay.

"A proper monster," he said. "You got out just in time."

She looked at once startled and impatient. "Not the Scoop, you idiot. The owl."

It was Jeff's turn to stare. "Owl? There was one on the dock, but I thought—"

"So did I." She sounded relieved. "But if you saw one, too.... All of a sudden, it was standing there on deck beside me, right out of nowhere. I lost my head and grounded the *Queen*, and it vanished. The owl, I mean."

"So did mine," Jeff said.

While they stood marveling, the owls came back.

CHAFIS Three and Four were horribly shaken by the initial attempt at communication with the natives. Nothing in Ciriimian experience had prepared them for creatures intelligent but illogical, individually perceptive yet isolated from each other.

"Communication by audible symbol," Chafi Three said. He ruffled his feathers in a shudder. "Barbarous!"

"Atavistic," agreed Chafi Four. "They could even *lie* to each other."

But their dilemma remained. They must warn the natives before the prowling Zid found them, else there would be no natives.

"We must try again," Three concluded, "searching out and using the proper symbols for explanation."

"Vocally," said Chafi Four.

They shuddered and teleported.

THE SUDDEN reappearance of his hallucination—doubled—startled Jeff no more than the fact that he seemed to be holding Jennifer Mack tightly. Amazingly, his immediate problem was not the possibility of harm from the owls, but whether he should reassure Jennifer before or after releasing her.

He compromised by leaving the choice to her. "They can't be dangerous," he said. "There are no land-dwelling predators on Calaxia. I read that in—"



"Nothing like *that* ever hatched out on Calaxia," said Jennifer. She pulled free of him. "If they're real, they came from somewhere else."

The implication drew a cold finger down Jeff's spine. "That would mean other cultures out here. And in all our years of planet-hunting, we haven't found one."

Memory chilled him further.

"A ship landed inland a few minutes ago," he said. "I took it for an EI consulate craft, but it could have been—"

The Ciriimians caught his mental image of the landing and intervened while common ground offered.

"The ship was ours," said Chafi Three. He had not vocalized since fledgling days and his voice had a jarring croak of disuse. "Our Zid escaped its cage and destroyed two of us, forcing us to maroon it here for our own safety. Unfortunately, we trusted our star manual's statement that the planet is unpopulated."

The Terrans drew together again.

"Zid?" Jeff echoed.

Chafi Four relieved his fellow of the strain by trying his own rusty croak. "A vicious Canthorian predator, combing the island at this moment for prey. You must help us to recapture it."

"So that you may identify it," Chafi Three finished helpfully, "the Zid has this appearance."

His psi projection of the Zid appeared on the dock before them with demonic abruptness—crouched to leap, twin tails lashing and its ten-foot length bristling with glassy magenta bristles. It had a lethal pair of extra limbs that sprang from the shoulders to end in taloned seizing-hands, and its slanted red eyes burned malevolently from a snouted, razor-fanged face.

It was too real to bear. Jeff stepped back on suddenly unreliable legs. Jennifer fainted against him and the unexpected weight of her sent them both sprawling to the dock.

"We lean on weak reeds," Chafi Three said. "Creatures who collapse with terror at the mere projection of a Zid can be of little assistance in recapturing one."

Chafi Four agreed reluctantly. "Then we must seek aid elsewhere."

WHEN Jeff Aubray pulled himself up from the planking, the apparitions were gone. His knees shook and perspiration crawled cold on his face, but he managed to haul Jennifer up with him.

"Come out of it, will you?" he yelled ungallantly in her ear. "If a thing like that is loose on the island, we've got to get help!"

JENNIFER did not respond and he slapped her, until her eyes fluttered angrily.

"There's an EI communicator in my cabin," Jeff said. "Let's go."

Memory lent Jennifer a sudden vitality that nearly left Jeff behind in their dash for the cottage up the beach.

"The door," Jeff panted, inside. "Fasten the hurricane bolt. Hurry."

While she secured the flimsy door, he ripped through his belongings, aligning his EI communicator again on his breakfast table. Finding out where the islanders got their calm-crystals had become suddenly unimportant; just then, he wanted nothing so much as to see a well-armed patrol ship nosing down out of the Calaxian sunrise.

He was activating the screen when Jennifer, in a magnificent rage in spite of soaked blouse and dungarees, advanced on him.

"You're an Earth Interests spy after all," she accused. "They said in the Township you are no artist, but Uncle Charlie and I—"

Jeff made a pushing motion. "Keep away from me. Do you want that devil tearing the cabin down around us?"

She fell quiet, remembering the Zid, and he made his call. "Aubray, Chain 147. Come in, Consulate!"

There was a sound of stealthy movement outside the cabin and he flicked sweat out of his eyes with a hand that shook.

"EI, for God's sake, come in! I'm in trouble here!"

The image on his three-inch screen was not Consul Satterfield's but the startled consulate operator's. "Trouble?"

Jeff forced stumbling words into line. The EI operator shook his head doubtfully.

"Consul's gone for the day, Aubray. I'll see if I can reach him."

"He was about to send out an EI patrol ship to take over here in the islands," Jeff said. "Tell him to hurry it!"

He knew when he put down the microphone that the ship would be too late. EI might still drag the secret of the calm-crystal source out of the islanders, but Jeff Aubray and Jennifer Mack wouldn't be on hand to witness their sorry triumph. The flimsy cabin could not stand for long against the sort of brute the owls had shown him, and there was no sort of weapon at hand. They couldn't even run.

"There's something outside," Jennifer said in a small voice.

Her voice seemed to trigger the attack.

THE Zid lunged against the door with a force that cracked the wooden hurricane bolt across and opened a three-inch slit between leading edge and lintel. Jeff had a glimpse of slanted red eyes and white-fanged snout before reflex sent him headlong to shoulder the door shut again.

"The bunk," he panted at Jennifer. "Shove it over."

Between them, they wedged the bunk against the door and held it in place. Then they stood looking palely at each other and waiting for the next attack.

It came from a different quarter—the wide double windows that overlooked the bay. The Zid, rearing upright, smashed away the flimsy rattan blinds with a taloned seizing-hand and looked redly in at them.

Like a man in a dream, Jeff caught up his communicator from the table and hurled it. The Zid caught it deftly, sank glistening teeth into the unit and demolished it with a single snap.

Crushed, the rig's powerful little battery discharged with a muffled sputtering and flashing of sparks. The Zid howled piercingly and dropped away from the window.

That gave Jeff time enough to reach the storm shutters and secure them—only to rush again with Jennifer to their bunk barricade as the Zid promptly renewed its ferocious attack on the door.

He flinched when Jennifer, to be heard above the Zid's ragings, shouted in his ear: "My Scoop should have the *Queen* afloat by now. Can we reach her?"

"Scoop?" The Zid's avid cries discouraged curiosity before it was well born. "We'd never make it. We couldn't possibly outrun that beast."

The Zid crashed against the door and drove it inches ajar, driving back their barricade. One taloned paw slid in and slashed viciously at random. Jeff ducked and strained his weight against the bunk, momentarily pinning the Zid's threshing forelimb.

Chafi Three chose that moment to reappear, nearly causing Jeff to let go the bunk and admit the Zid.

"Your female's suggestion is right," the Ciriimian croaked. "The Zid does not swim. Four and I are arranging escape on that premise."

The Zid's talons ripped through the door, leaving parallel rows of splintered breaks. Both slanted red eyes glared in briefly.

"Then you'd damn well better hurry," Jeff panted. The door, he estimated, might—or might not—hold for two minutes more.

The Ciriimian vanished. There was a slithering sound in the distance that sounded like a mountain in motion, and with it a stertorous grunting that all but drowned out the Zid's cries. Something nudged the cottage with a force that all but knocked it flat.

"*My Scoop!*" Jennifer exclaimed. She let go the barricade and ran to the window to throw open the storm shutters. "Never mind the door. This way, quick!"

HE scrambled to the window sill and jumped. Numbly, Jeff saw her suspended there, feet only inches below the sill, apparently on empty air. Then the door sagged again under the Zid's lungings and he left the bunk to follow Jennifer.

He landed on something tough and warm and slippery, a monstrous tail fluke that stretched down the beach to merge into a flat purplish acreage of back, forested with endless rows of fins and spines and enigmatic tendrils. The Scoop, he saw, and only half believed it, had wallowed into the shallows alongside his dock. It had reversed its unbelievable length to keep the head submerged, and at the same time had backed out of the water until its leviathan tail spanned the hundred-odd yards of sloping beach from surf to cabin.

Just ahead of him, Jennifer caught an erect fin-spine and clung with both arms. "Hang on! We're going—"

The Scoop contracted itself with a suddenness that yanked them yards from the cottage and all but dislodged Jeff. Beyond the surf, the shallows boiled whitely where the Scoop fought for traction to draw its grounded bulk into the water.

Jeff looked back once to see the Zid close the distance between and spring upward to the tail fluke behind him. He had an instant conviction that the brute's second spring would see him torn to bits, but the Scoop at the moment found water deep enough to move in earnest. The Zid could only sink in all six taloned limbs and hold fast.

The hundred-odd yards from cabin to beach passed in a blur of speed. The Scoop reached deeper water and submerged, throwing a mountainous billow that sent the *Island Queen* reeling and all but foundered her.

Jeff was dislodged instantly and sank like a stone.

He came up, spouting water and fighting for breath, to find himself a perilous twenty feet from the Zid. The Zid, utterly out of its element, screamed hideously and threshed water to froth, all its earlier ferocity vanished under the imminent and unfamiliar threat of drowning. Jeff sank again and churned desperately to put distance between them.

He came up again, nearly strangled, to find that either he or the Zid had halved the distance between them. They were all but eye to eye when Jennifer caught him and towed him away toward the doubtful safety of the *Island Queen*.

Chafis Three and Four appeared from nowhere and stood solemnly by while the Zid weakened and sank with a final gout of bubbles.

"We must have your friend's help," Chafi Three said to Jennifer then, "to recover our investment."

Jeff wheeled on him incredulously. "*Me* go down there after that monster? Not on your—"

"He means the Scoop," Jennifer said. "They brought it ashore to help us out of the cabin. Why shouldn't it help them now?"

THE Scoop came up out of the water so smoothly that the *Island Queen* hardly rocked, dangling the limp form of the Zid from its great rubbery lips like a drowned kitten.

"Here," Jennifer said.

The Scoop touched its vast face to the *Queen's* rail and dropped the unconscious body to the deck. The Zid twitched weakly and coughed up froth and water.

Jeff backed away warily. "Damn it, are we going through all that again? Once it gets its wind back —"

Chafi Three interrupted him this time. "The crystal now. We must have it to quiet the Zid until it is safely caged again."

Jennifer turned suddenly firm. "No. I won't let this EI informer know about that."

The Ciriimians were firmer.

"It will not matter now. Galactic Adjustment will extend aid to both Calaxia and Terra, furnishing substitutes for the crystals you deal in. There will be no loss to either faction."

"No loss?" Jennifer repeated indignantly. "But then there won't be any demand for our crystals! We'll lose everything we've gained."

"Not so," Chafi Three assured her. "Galactic will offer satisfactory items in exchange, as well as a solution to Terra's problems."

The Scoop, sensing Jennifer's surrender, slid its ponderous bulk nearer and opened its mouth, leaving half an acre of lower jaw resting flush with the *Island Queen's* deck. Without hesitation, Jennifer stepped over the rail and vanished into the yawning pinkish cavern beyond.

Appalled, Jeff rushed after her. "Jennifer! Have you lost your mind?"

"There is no danger," Chafi Three assured him. "Scoops are benevolent as well as intelligent, and arrived long ago at a working agreement with the islanders. This one has produced a crystal and is ready to be relieved of it, else it would not have attached itself to a convenient human."

Jeff said dizzily, "The Scoops make the crystals?"

"There is a nidus just back of a fleshy process in its throat, corresponding to your own tonsils, which produces a crystal much as your Terran oyster secretes a pearl. The irritation distracts the Scoops from their meditations—they are a philosophical species, though not mechanically progressive—and prompts them to barter their strength for a time to be rid of it."

JENNIFER reappeared with a walnut-sized crystal in her hand and vaulted across the rail.

"There goes another Scoop," she said resignedly. "The *Queen* will have to tack with the wind for a while until another one shows up."

"So that's why your sails bellied backward when you came in to harbor," said Jeff. "The thing was *towing* you."

A thin, high streak of vapor-trail needling down toward them from the sunrise rainbow turned the channel of his thought.

"That will be Satterfield and his task force," Jeff told the Chafis. "I think you're going to find yourselves in an argument over that matter of squeezing Terra out of the crystal trade."

They reassured him solemnly.

"Terra has no real need of the crystals. We can offer a tested genetics program that will eliminate racial anxiety within a few generations, and supply neural therapy equipment—on a trade basis, of course—that will serve the crystals' purpose during the interim."

There should be a flaw somewhere, Jeff felt, but he failed to see one. He gave up trying when he found Jennifer eying him with uncharacteristic uncertainty.

"You'll be glad to get back to your patrol work," she said. It had an oddly tentative sound.

Somehow the predictable monotony of consulate work had never seemed less inviting. The prospect of ending his Calaxian tour and going back to a half-barren and jittery Earth appealed to Jeff even less.

"No," he said. "I'd like to stay."

"There's nothing to do but fish and sail around looking for Scoops ready to shed their crystals," Jennifer reminded him. "Still, Uncle Charlie has talked about settling in the Township and standing for Council election. Can you fish and sail, Jeff Aubray?"

The consulate rocket landed ashore, but Jeff ignored it.

"I can learn," he said.

—ROGER DEE

Transcriber's Note:

This etext was produced from *Galaxy* February 1958. Extensive research did not uncover any evidence that the U.S. copyright on this publication was renewed. Minor spelling and typographical errors have been corrected without note.

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed,

viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation’s EIN or federal tax identification

number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.