

The Euphoniphier

By Naomi Stock 6/28/12

“Come in, Sergeant,” boomed the General into his mic. A young man stepped in, the door sliding shut behind him.

“Go ahead and sit down, Sergeant Fellows. I have heard a lot about you.” The Sergeant sat and the General took in the scrawny man sitting in front of him. The Sergeant seemed to wilt in his seat, and his skin had a sickly yellow tinge to it. My, thought the General, this is not how boys his age should look. The General cleared his throat and carried on cheerily, “I’ve noticed you’ve seemed jumpy and nervous lately, and decided to give you permission to be re-located to a different planet. Some exotic air would do you good. Would you like that, Sergeant?”

“No, thank you sir.”

“Then what’s the problem?”

The Sergeant shrugged dejectedly. “I want to live in a peaceful non-violent universe with no war. To find that one day, weapons don’t exist and humans have once again become the creative intelligent creatures we once were. That’s what I want.”

The General snorted. “That’s what we’d all like. Now please Sergeant, you may choose any of these new zones to be sent to. Perhaps Saturn?” he asked, pointing at the holographic map hovering above his chair.

But the Sergeant was still thinking aloud to himself, speaking in a sleepy almost hypnotic voice. “What would we do, what would the *worlds* do if we all woke up and our weapons had died like prehistoric creatures, destroyed, replaced by something more creative?”

The General decided he had to deal carefully with the young Sergeant. He scratched his bristly mustache and coughed deeply. "That is a very interesting idea, but the solar system would find itself in a panic. Millions of tragedies would occur," the General said with a smile. He decided he would play along with the Sergeant's silly game.

"But *after* that," explained the Sergeant, "people will restart civilization, start fresh with new ideas."

"Pfft. They would re-arm as fast as possible."

"What if they couldn't?"

"Then they'll find a way to fight differently. Listen Sergeant, we are fighting a galactic war at the moment, and we are winning because of one thing: our weapons. If those weapons were removed from our armies, civilization would gasp and die. We would lose all hope of having the Universe at our fingertips. Now let's put this nonsense behind us and talk about reality. Please, tell me where you would like to be re-located, or I will choose a planet for you."

"What if I told you it was reality, sir?"

"What is?"

" My invention. I call it the Euphoniphier. It can change any destructive item into a musical instrument. It will help power humanity to branch off from its destructive nature and become the peaceful beings we once were."

The General laughed rudely. "You can't be serious."

"I am. It's been a dream of mine. To rid the world of all harmful objects. After studying the atoms in our space armor, I found a way to rearrange the atoms to change

into, let's say, a tuba. My machine is powered by a supernatural rock substance I found when touring the outskirts of Venus. I call it Icknanodite. Using this rock I was able to make the molecules in weapons suddenly collapse, then re-form as a different solid. That part took some time, but I was able to accomplish the Euphoniphier after several years. All I have to do is walk near a weapon of any sort, ray gun, battle cruiser, nuclear bomb, disintegrator or submarine, and it will immediately turn into a snare drum, or any other instrument for that matter. Sir, we don't need the whole Universe. Humans should be content with the planets we *do* have! This is the answer to a life without war!"

The General stared at the Sergeant across his desk. "I want you to see Dr. Ray for a full examination. Have you been drinking lately, Sergeant, or experienced any family problems or love affairs?"

"You think I'm lying about my invention. You think I'm crazy," said the Sergeant indignantly. "I assure you I am not. My invention is small, so small it can fit in my pocket. It is so powerful that its effects extend for 1,000 miles. Touring this planet in a matter of days will rid it of all its weapons. Then I will tour the Earth, Saturn, Venus, until all planets are free of war. There will be peace, there *will* be thanks to my incredible invention."

"Sergeant, please go on over to Dr. Ray," ordered the General hastily, backing up as far as possible in his chair. He was feeling rather nervous about this insane man being in his office. "We'll let the doctor decide if it's a good idea to send you to a new zone."

"There's no need. I will be leaving my post in the next few minutes, sir. Thank you for your precious time."

“Now just a minute Sergeant, we can talk about this. There’s no need to leave, we don’t have to re-locate you. You’re in no danger.”

“That’s true sir. Good-bye.” The Sergeant stepped out of the room and the General was left in silence. He sighed and dialed his communication screen. “Hello Dr. Ray? Yes I was about to send him over to you, I’m not sure if it’s safe for him to be wandering about.

“Yes, the poor boy is slightly deranged. What did you say? Just a second Doctor let me write this down.” The General reached into his desk and fished through it, looking for a pen. His fingers brushed past something hard and solid. At first he thought it was his gun, then realized it was a completely different shape and size. He slowly withdrew a piccolo, and sat, staring at it for some time. In the distance he could hear the doctor’s worried voice over the speakers.

“Sir? Sir? are you there?” Dr. Ray’s anxious face appeared on the monitor. The General slowly turned to the screen, his expression blank. “Doctor, please hang up.” After confirming the small click on the other line, he calmly redialed.

“Hello guard office? Yes this is the General. Mmm Hmm. Listen, Sergeant Fellows should be exiting the compound about now. Yes, that’s him. I need you to kill him. Shoot him down. He cannot leave!” The General had now worked himself up into a frenzy and spittle was flying in all different directions as he screamed, “Shoot him! No questions asked! The Universe is at stake! He is a danger to us all!”

“But sir, I can’t!” The guard spluttered.

“I order you to!” the General bellowed back.

"No sir, you don't understand! Our disintegrators have disappeared! We can't kill him with guitars and trumpets!"

"Just go after him! Kill him, choke him, throttle him! I'll be right out!" He turned off the screen. The General jerked open his bottom drawer to get his backup ray gun. A beautifully polished flugelhorn perched atop his new leather holster. He cursed and grabbed the horn, brandishing it like a club. His face was a beet root red and his wild eyes glittered. He screamed a battle cry and waving the horn, ran out, the automatic door sliding shut behind him.

The soft sounds of off-key piano and violin music wafted down the hallways and out into the hot, Mars air.