

Arts

Collegian short stories

Space Invaders of Sigma Draconis

By Jay A. Exner

As Scott Alan Wilson entered the atmosphere of

the second planet of Sigma Draconis, his spacecraft's computer alerted him to the presence of two approaching interceptors. He

directed the computer to take evasive action. Scott had not come 18.5 light-years just to get blasted out of the sky like a clay pigeon.

Scott thought of his mission. He was to destroy the Dracs' home planet before they could take over the Allied Colonies of Earth. The Dracs exterminated humans; Scott was going to exterminate the Dracs — at their source. He had one antimatter time bomb aboard and was going to land, set the timer, and get away from the planet as fast as possible.

The craft was now traveling low over a large forest, away from any Drac cities. Unexpectedly, Scott's craft careened as if out of control, crashed through dozens of "trees," and then impacted thunderously on the spongy alien humus. Dazed, Scott unlatched his g-harness and surveyed the cramped cockpit. His computer console was dead, every electronic device aboard appeared out of commission.

"How did they overload my systems so fast?" he wondered aloud. Suddenly Scott realized that the mission had taken on new meaning. The ship was dead. The Dracs were evidently very near. His mission to destroy the Dracs had become a kamikaze mission!

"Got to get the bomb," he

mumbled, trying to undo the lower hatch to get to the deadly cargo. It was jammed, probably from the impact.

Scott checked the integrity of his space suit. It appeared to be in good condition. He worked the hatch open. He would have to get to the bomb from the outside somehow.

The hatch hissed as he pushed it open, since the at-

"Got to get the bomb," he mumbled, "trying to unlock the lower hatch to get to the deadly cargo."

mosphere of the Dracs' home planet was much denser than that of his cockpit. Scott climbed up and out of the spacecraft, then slid down the side to land firmly on the dark forest floor.

No sense waiting around, he thought. Scott crawled and climbed through a mass of tangled and broken alien flora, until he was at the external port hatch. It had been bent inward in the crash, but he managed to get his fingers inside and pry it open.

Scott got the bomb from its protective container in-

side the compartment, and brought it out into the diffused, orange, Draconian sunlight. He produced a key from his wrist pocket and inserted it into the top of the small, silver cylinder. He turned the key to the right and pressed the single red button below the key. A display showed the seconds counting down from 60.

Scott relaxed, set the bomb down and turned around. He was facing a Drac! The pathetically small, purple, mantis-like alien fired a wand-shaped weapon and Scott was paralyzed. He fell over with a thud.

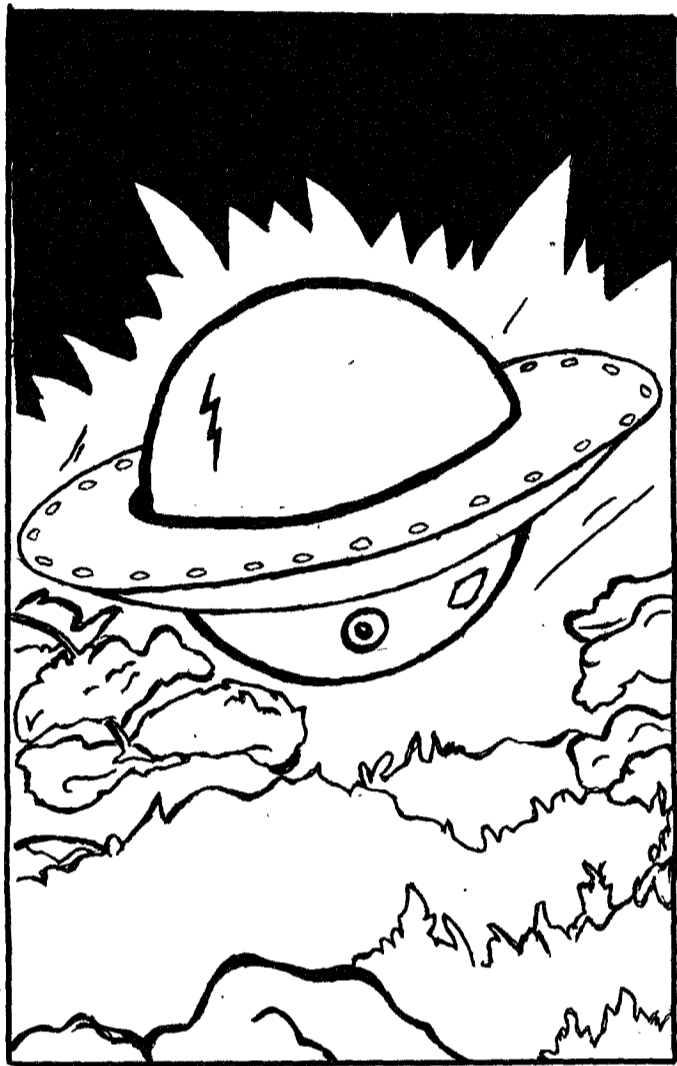
The alien stepped gingerly on four legs over to the bomb and turned the key to the left. The display froze at 39 seconds.

The Drac turned to Scott and fired the weapon again. Scott obligingly died.

"C'mon Scott, you've been playing that game long enough. Take off that helmet so I can go home and make supper," said Scott's slightly perturbed mother.

"Oh, all right," said Scott, removing the game-interface helmet. "But I'll stop those Sigma Draconians yet!"

Scott stepped out of the game cubicle, set the helmet on the contoured seat, and silently followed his mother out of the twenty-first century arcade.



Music magic

By John Cusatis

Allen Krc Classical guitar

Comedy dungeon

By Jay A. Exner

"Is this it, d'ya think?" Garbag anxiously asked the wizard, Dravel. Garbag stood before a massive iron door. He nervously shifted his considerable bulk from foot to foot, causing his specially fitted chain mail to clink.

"My last spell showed writing on the door to the place we now seek, but we should inspect this room anyway, I think," replied Dravel thoughtfully. He adjusted his pointy wizard hat atop his pointy wizard head as he spoke.

Garbag grunted as he pulled on the plain, rusty door handle. As the vault-like door squealed open, a sickening odor floated out into the dark corridor on a draft that flickered the two adventurers' torches. They both froze. Before

them towered a reptilian behemoth. Before they could react, the immense dragon inhaled with an audible hiss, then let loose.

"Hyaaa...schooooo!!" The sound echoed through the dungeon for a long moment. Dravel retched in spasms onto the damp dungeon floor while Garbag stared at the awesome beast as if mesmerized.

"Mother of God, that was the most disgusting thing I've ever seen!" gasped Dravel. "You disgusting swine, you could at least cover your mouth when you sneeze!" he screamed at the dragon.

Dravel, gaining control of himself, began wiping particles of dragon snot from his now soiled cloak. Garbag appeared to be having a profound religious experience. The dragon was occupying itself in opening up a fresh box of Puff's tissues. To coax Garbag out of the cavernous room,

Dravel produced a pre-cooked turkey drumstick from inside his sleeve and waved it before the elephantine adventurer's eyes. Garbag suddenly came to life and relieved the wizard of the drumstick. The dragon watched through bleary, red, hay-fever eyes as the two weary adventurers shuffled out of its den.

"It could be a trap," suggested Garbag. Dravel ignored the suggestion and started petting the furry mongrel's stomach, since it had rolled onto its back. Garbag stepped forward.

"Mother of God, that was the most disgusting thing I have ever seen."

"Let me pet 'im. Here, poochie!" said Garbag as he crouched before the dog. The mongrel dog rolled onto all fours, its hackles rising. The dog growled from deep

within its chest, then detonated in an explosion of sound, smoke and fur!

A short while later, now at the next door, Dravel tugged on an oxidized door handle to behold a mongrel dog in the corner of a small room. The friendly-looking mutt bounded over to Dravel, wagging its tail.

As the smoke dissipated and the fur began to settle, Garbag whined, "But noooo, it's no trap, not if Garbag thought of it!"

Dravel put his hat back on his head, sneezed twice, and pulled a wad of fur out of his mouth. He said, "Well, let's see if the room we're looking for is nearby and stop this useless bickering, okay?!"

Dravel stepped into the corridor. He produced a thin, square, white piece of parchment from the sleeve of his cloak. He then made strange gestures with his hands and spoke a foreign-sounding incantation. As he

finished, Dravel cast the parchment into the air. It quickly flitted down the corridor as if under its own will, passing several doors to either side. Finally, the parchment came to a standstill before a single door, Dravel and Garbag trotting to the spot a few moments later.

"This has to be it!" Garbag shouted with a sense of urgency.

Dravel sputtered between gasps for air, "Yes, yes! There are the M-runes and the double O-runes. This must be the right door. Quickly, open it!"

Garbag pushed the door open and ran inside, Dravel close at his heels.

The door slowly swung closed, the runes on the door being visible to an empty corridor. The runes spelled out two words of great importance to the exhausted adventurers. The runes spelled out "MEN'S ROOM."