

"We're not mine; we're boffo"

by Qzz(f)zzq from Sinfthe (Rigel)

I am honored to write this story about the Edmonton Science Fiction and Comic Arts Society's Noncon II convention held at the Edmonton Inn this weekend. Imagine my complete surprise when I pops down to visit my dear Terran Thorsby friends and old Milf sez, "Hey Qzz(f) zzq, why don't we check out an SF convention?"

Well, I couldn't refuse. After the pretty dull six-month stint I just spent on Saturn Base, this kind of thing's the best way to start off your furlough. After snorting some great Vegan "thunderfuck" that a Denebian laid on me, we achieved escape velocity and left Thorsby in Thrumbo Wattskiller's *Bronc* and settled into a nice, gentle weekend orbit around Noncon's 752 party suite, the Crystal Ballrooms, and the Edmonton Inn tavern.

So there we are and who do we run into — Xn'n(g) cna, an old schoolmate of mine, in the tavern. But she's in trouble. A cretinous Terran type is trying to do something he shouldn't (even by Terran standards).

"Lay off you eater-of-raw-meat-Imperium scum," shouts Xn'n(g) cna, getting ready to do something that violates all regulations concerning frontier worlds. I leap up to try and stop her but I'm too late; I hear his scream. "She burned me, her...her, oh mi god, it's fake!"

The Terran's cretin friends all guffaw. "Too hot for you," they snort in unison. I manage to *thrummel* away most of the charge just a nanosecond before she put her foot to a most sensitive portion of the Terran anatomy.

"Are you out of your mind(s)?" I plead, *thrummeling* away the charge as fast as she builds it up.

"Ah let her go, Joe," sez one of the cretins, "they're weirdos who're from that weirdo convention."

Only because I'm Rigelian and could anticipate Xn'n(g) cna's actions did a number of cretinous Terrans narrowly escape being rendered sterile.



Some of the conference delegates checking out the various materials collected for Noncon II.

photo Milfred Campbell

Later Xn'n(g) cna sez: "I'm sorry I lost my head(s)."

"You better believe it," I sez, "this whole sector would've received off-world status for at least another century with a trick like that."

"I know," she sez looking down at her beer, "but the thing is that this world is being overrun by the Imperium's dream police and spies."

"Nonsense," I sez, "the Coalition has been monitoring Terra for a long time now. That's what the Saturn Base is all about."

"But I've been *here* for two or three years now. The Imperium's effecting changes here that you're hardly aware of. Listen to me, Qzz(f) zzq. The Coalition's become lax arguing ideology while the Imperium continues to expand. We have to *do* something."

Now I admit I don't know much about ideology or politics, and after the Vegan "thunderfuck", I didn't really want to get into that kind of a discussion; I just wanted to enjoy the convention. But Xn'n(g) cna wouldn't be put off. "Well, alright, we'll check the convention out, but take a good look around you."

So Xn'n(g) cna, my Thorsby friends and I started wandering about. We went through the hucksters' room, which I figure was the star attraction of the whole convention. There you had a wide assortment of SF and Fantasy magazines and art books, jewelry, T-shirts, comics and a whole kaboodle of fantasy and SF games, which is a recent innovation since I last visited Terra. Each game comes with a complete set of rules which requires one player to be designated as a rule master. The games can involve any number of players and can literally carry on for years.

Then there was the art room which had some fine art, especially by artists Poyser and Macklin of the U.S. There were things like the Fantasy Make-Up Workshop, Writers' Workshop and Sound Poetry.

"Pretty innocuous stuff," I sez to Xn'n(g) cna. "Where are your Imperium bogeys?"

"Can't you see it? *Battle Star Galactica*? *Star Wars*? The militaristic motif that's creeping into the art? The complacency? There's so little of this that's provocative. And it isn't here, it's out there too. This world is edging towards total war."

I really had to work at keeping her calm till we were treated to an address by Gordon Dickson, Noncon's guest of honor, a prolific SF writer who has turned out 150 pieces of fiction and 35 novels. His address dispelled my increasing fears of Terra's ability to withstand any Imperium infiltration. Here was a man who looked at Terra's future with great optimism, yet discussed the need to temper progress with social awareness, and (no need to be bashful) *humanity*.

We all rode pretty high on the dynamism and sincerity of this man's presentation. But in comparison, the costume bacchanal that followed Dickson's address, was a let-down of sorts. There were very few costumes on an SF theme; the best by far were the three or four medieval entries. The only SF-ish costumes were those of Golden

Girl, and Katina from Arnina.

By this time Xn'n(g) cna's rebel blood was reaching boiling point.

"Look at the people in military uniforms," she sez, "and you don't think the dream police've not been visiting Terra?"

"Damn it Xn'n(g) cna, what, by the foul thoughts of the Cygnian droopies do those people know about the Imperium?"

"That's just it, they don't. But where do those strange images rise up from? And why are they gaining such popularity?"

Well, I couldn't really answer her — all I know is that I've seen wilder costumes at some of Thrumbo's Halloween parties and at *Flashback*. The music was pretty odd too — disco? when Terran musicians have been reaching the outer fringes of the galaxy with some of the things they have been doing.

Why, we all wondered, didn't we get to hear more of Richard Reichardt's filksinging?

I agree with Xn'n(g) cna on one point. Disco music is an invention of the Imperium's dream police. We were finally compelled to leave the dance floor when Faustus, one of the Thorsby gang, insisted on singing out at the top of his voice, "We're not mine; we are boffo."

We opted out for the Noncon party suite, 752, where we met some great Terran SF fans. Even Xn'n(g) cna enjoyed herself, meeting the real people behind the costumes. But I think we'll keep a closer watch on all of the Imperium's activity in this sector.

"Imperium or no Imperium, there's been a pronounced swing to the right in this hemisphere," sez Milfred Campbell. "Just look at the popularity of the new Heinlein, Moorcock — and things like Lithium, fascism in fashion, punk rock, Margaret Thatcher, the National Front, the Cuban pseudo-crisis..."

To tell you the truth, that kind of talk reassures me. Xn'n(g) cna's worries are a bit unfounded and I whisper that in her ears. The party's in full swing and I begin to *thn'thrummel* a gentle charge down Xn'n(g) cna's way.

She responds favorably, and it's like the old days in Sinfthe all over again.

The Thorsby Collective is a direct outgrowth of a summer retreat held at Pigeon Lake, and organized by Milfred Campbell for the purpose of combatting fascism and plain old silliness in the Arts and Sciences.



A Milfred Campbell self-portrait? No. Rather, one of the many costumes highlighted at Noncon.

photo Milfred Campbell