

## Alien Laced

Luis Upista studied the room with half-open eyes.

Man... who *is* he? *Where* is he? Why is *he* here?

This plane wasn't meant to fly—it has no wings. But something—some incredible force—is flying me in it. But, Luis reflected, as he swallowed the coffee, that gummy concoction was worth it. If you were stoned, that is.

Stoned. He was that. Stoned, smashed, blind, turned on and flying so high and so cool and everything so just exactly right. The evidence supporting this phenomenon is overwhelming. But Luis was in another world, his head lolling back, his eyes veiled, and one hand lying limp on the table before him like a discarded napkin. And in time we hope to make Orange Wig a name to be feared by pot-smokers everywhere.

One of the earliest and most often cited records is the story of Chuck Yeager's plane.

“Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the Chicago River, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. That square had bread, heavy bread, and he was ready to lay out cab fare just to make a buy.” Luis decided, “We don't like your kind around here, fatso.”

“Give it to ‘em, Luis!”

And when the living creatures went, the wings went with them: and when the living creatures were lifted from the earth, the wings were lifted up. He poured the marijuana into the paper from a small brown envelope. From every window... From each rooftop... came hail of garbage, bottles, tin cans—there were many accounts of encounters with tyrants of the air, and their aerial ships. Pinpoints of lantern light. Phantom chariots driven by Orange Wig appearing in

the night sky. Into the eyes of Penelope Toussaint.

“Back off! Go chase a mad scientist or something.”

One day, among other instances, it chanced in Wicker Park that three people wearing orange wigs were seen descending from these aerial ships. The entire city gathered about them, crying out that they were magicians sent by Luis Upista’s enemy to destroy the crop of Orange Wig. These aliens went by the name AFFA. Luis Upista heard the pattern of footsteps behind him and saw the familiar figure visible again and then again over his left shoulder. A man wearing a gray overcoat and a droopy felt hat shading his face—the creep who hasn’t spent a cent for repairs in years.

It befell that an anchor was dropped from the sky, with a rope attached to it, and one of the flukes caught in the arch above the door. Two hours later Luis Upista smashed Mrs. Miriam Dos Santos’ mailbox with a hammer and reclaimed the envelope.

Jimmy’s is a small Chinese restaurant one flight above the street on Milwaukee off Artesian Avenue. Penelope had never seen it before, but now she was eating pork laced with alien vegetables. Luis Upista, the poet, was lighting up a joint in the corner. Then he passed the joint to a girl with long red hair: Penelope Toussaint.

“I’ll smoke,” she said. It would be her first time.

“Hemp,” he said. “Tea, gauge, grass. A million names for a million games. Let’s blow up, little girl.”

“I want to ask the aliens a question, Luis.”

“Do it, Dollface.”

“Do you favor any government, religious group, or race?”

“No, we do not. Signed AFFA.”

The high came gradually. Her body felt dynamically alive. She listened to the blood rushing through her veins and arteries, and quivered to the softness of her enveloping clothing.

“Will there be a third World War?”

“No. Signed AFFA.”

She felt Luis’ hand on her arm and her whole body wakened to his touch. Suddenly she wanted him, wanted him more than ever.

“Luis...” She muttered.

“Are Catholics the chosen people?”

“No. Signed AFFA.”

“My sweater, Luis,” she said. “Take it off. Touch me, touch me, it feels so good, so fine, so wonderfully fine, and I’m high, I’m way up in the air, way way way up in the air—”

“Can we see a spaceship or a flying saucer?”

“When do you want to see it? Signed AFFA.”

And then Luis was really making her, through and through, and it wasn't right because there they were in a roomful of people and everybody could see them, movement by movement.

“Can we see it now?”

“Go to the window. Signed AFFA.”

(M. Comte, Cmdr. Yeager and Lt. Cmdr. Herman all go to the window.)

Her hips were humming like a dynamo and trying to behave like a centrifuge, whirling, swirling with her good man who felt so good, good, good. Until the sky fell in and the world blew up in a shower of stars—you hear me? Stars, stars all over so your body could smile all over at the sight of all your secrets flowing out.

“Are we looking in the right direction?”

“Yes. Signed AFFA.”

In the time it takes to draw a single breath... the span of a heartbeat... Luis Upista looks into his own soul, and his life changes. These people do *not* see apartment houses with wings, upsidedown elephants, chairs, three-hundred-foot-long mosquitoes, or television sets winging their way across the sky. To hell with Atomix, Luis thought—the coffee was on the house for a change.