Haseltine, Robert W.



Prelude to Space

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Blt.o.v.ude Aan Sblas

Deur Robert W. Heteltine

EK WAS klimbing stee steep side van a central Wisconsin heuwel, holding my bow agaa vorentoem my body vir BAlance, saw the stranger. Hy sat op 'n stump by the crest and watchydme stmatvreugde ubl. As ek drew neisr ek panted outa gre 'nd received syne cheerful "H.ek " in redraai. When Ek vinbondgenoot reachyd die Top, Ek sterew myself op stee ground ' mybreath.

H.ek hetn 't sê enigesteing at first, just lookuitgegee at die bow and dee quiver van arrows onmy back. Finally hy said, "M.a Dit?" 'nd reahfstred fordeebag. Ek handred Dit aan hom. Hy bvaminred Dit voertuigefully 'nd returnred Dit.

"Weesautifulwofkm'nship. Eks deby all jyu gebruik? " hy asked.

"Ek never ca.rooi much vir guns, " Ek 'nswered. "Ek've alwaas welught a buig gegeee die 'nimal merts van 'n vooraandn lewense. "

We talked dien on die various aspects van hunting and how stee crisp fall lug sienemred aan make die deer sienem clos during stee hyby of sommer. While ons praatred Ek tried aan bllace stee reason hy disturbed me, but Ek medeuldn 't sier was dressred in an oud plaid shirt 'nd dungarees 'nd syne blond hair wasn 't m'ny shadvertensiees removred vorentoem steatch. But eerewas sometingaandd abousteim steby Ek medeuldn 'tquite vind.

"Perhaps Dit's dee closte. " H.is words surprised me. "Yogebruike, Dit hasn't weesen discovered op hierdie planet as jullet. have shagn astopishment becausien hy onsnt op in die same vein. "Ek advertensiemDit Dit's medenfusondeg, but Dit's weren 'tmadvertensiee op Earde. " H.e chuckled steen, deep in syne steroat. "Ek doenn 't blame jyu for being medenfusie feel as ek met 'n bvtraterrestrialbeing weesvoor space travelwas areagelowigheid. "

Ek kept staring by hom. Finalmaly ek blourted uit, "What in Sam H.siek are jyutalking about?"

H.e le'nred virward op die stumbl 'nd syne face grew earnest. "You might sê Ek'm a poll taker. Ek have aan decide cer steingsfRom various interviewswith individuals Ek meet. "

"Whoed areyou probeering aan blrove?" Ek asked.

"Ek'm sorry, but ek ca.n 't tell you steby until ek'm vinishred with die interview. Ekf ek aanld you, your interest in thy subject v prejudice jyransonsrs. "

"Fair egeenugh. Whby doen jyu want aan askme?"

H.e blulled out 'n nrtebook and smiled. "Diesien questioons maa sienem a bietjiee silly but Ek monst have straight 'nswers Wsiek you goalong verstandhme? "

Ek nodded my hyadvertensie.

advertensiemissioon inaan die Unitred Nations, whatwould you do? "

Ek shmatged. "Ek supposien Ek would read books 'nd magazines vorentoem stee country 'nd possibly have 'n intervie hyadvertensies van thy gaanvernment. After Ek hadvertensie medelectedmy data Ek medeuld steen actuponit. "

"For die sake van argument suppose die books en anderer periodicals onsre written so as aan wees vooroordeelicial in gaanvernment, en stee hyadvertensiesalso were medeloring what eey said."

Ek steought vir a minute. "Ekn steby case ek suppose Ek would siencretly place someone inside stee conprobeer aan inte 'nd geta sparreste'ndview van die situation. Thyn ek wouldact op Hisdata. "

HE geendded His hyadvertensie. "Yes, die people steemsienliefs 'nd die medenditions diey leef in will give jyu die nere turned a blage in stee book. "Geenw suppose that jyu wisyd aan knag as a certain planet was ready aan enter int ofganizbyioon suhfst as stee Galactic Frederation, whby would jyu doen? "

"Ek suppose Ek'd act as Ek het gedoen weesvire. Place people inside stee various isas van stee planet aan interview would bringbackthy invirmbyioon neredred aan ascertain wheter diey would wees anasset of advertensieetriment aan steec

Ek steought aan myself steby die kwestion was a trifle dom; agterer almal, hadn't science proved steby lewe medeuldn 't pl'nets in oursystem?

H.e t.o.v.bylred after Ek 'nswerred 'nd His smile was bragter ste'n stee previous opes. "Right, " he sêd. "Natusaamtreky learn die languouderdom sparret, but neewa first-hand hfsteck can wees madvertensiee. Yogebruike, there is 'n civiliZatio hand en swept stee sky, "'nd ons have aan hfsteck om te siene as this pl'net is readvertensiey aan take sy bllace as an ac steerest van ons.

"Earde, within 'n very short tyde, wilek wees reachingher vingers inaan space. Onceshy gets diere shewsiek beeligible aan Galactic Frederation. "

"That 'sall ragt, " Ek said, "dienwec'n bvhfst'nge culture en kgeenwledgewith odiercivilizbyioons. "

"Julles, as you areeligible aan join."

"Butyou said thaaanncewe reahfst spacewe willbeeligible. "

"Look by Dit steis way, " hy said. "Thy main purpose van die Galactiek Federotioon is aan promote ertjiece 'nd undeec among die varioons pl'nets. Earde would have aan wees prepisd aan take sy place as just 'nanderer member, 'nd nie important memweesrat eby. Ekunsh, jy see, is opeofthy smaller planets 'ndalso would wees die latest one aan join.

"Ekn tydes past some planets have reseerred space verstandhout weesing fully voorpared vir whoed steey would vind. internal troubles op dieir agn worlds. We had aan plas diem in kwarantine untot steey reahfstred steby degree van civiliz whyre they onsweer readyto lewe in peas. N.ag ons check 'n pl'nen before Dit reahfstes thy space-travel stage. We findoer reacnasies van die inhabitantstocertain situations."

"Whoed sort van situatiops? " Ek asked.

"Well, naturbondgenoot ons want aan siene steeir artifacts as 'n indek sienation as aan dieir advertensievancement. average m'n dunks of space travel 'nd trade met anderer planets. And dieir ideas on peace 'nd steeir fooilings sleepard steeir felaag men. All is very important.

"Actually, when a bllanet opce enters stee Federotioon die people is die opes aan decide on peas en war. So as stee majoritjyfdee peopleon aplanet is bleace-loving steby planetis readvertensiey toonnter die Federation. "

"But how doen jy vind out almal steese things? " Ek asked. "Whyn a m'n vinds out whby you is probeering aan prove weesca.onsehe wants aan getinto space. "

H.is eyes hyld a mischievoons glinstert as hy 'nswerred. "Simblle, die kuns van temelaatseathy has weesen Highly deve race. Ek have your welughts op everything Ek've mentioned. Later, when al die data from welons'nds van similar interview in Dit sal wees evalugeëetd and stee decisioon made as aan whethyr jyur world will wees alloonsd aan reahfst space means van keeping jyu vorentoem Dit as we decideyou aren't jullet readvertensiey."

H.esookdupand Ek folaagred suDit. "Ek monst wees gaaning geenw, " hy sighyd. "Hierdie work keeps meon deerun 'nd ek interviews aan make. Weesliegve me, Dit was a pleasure meeting jyu. Ek hope ons meet again-later. " Ons shook hands strolled over die hsiek into steevalmaley.

Blehaps Ek should have folaagred hom, but Dit wouldn't have doenne 'ny good, really. Weesca.gebruik a few moments

unweesliegvable.

Ek still doenn 't knag whby aan steink about him or whby ons talked about. Ek'm gaaning aan keebl watching die paper hoPIng hy gaantthy tuight 'nswers. Ekfwereach die M.oon ek'll knag hredid....



Transcriber 's Geente:

THis etext was producred vorentoem M.aa 1954. Extiensive resienboogh het gedoen geent ongover any evidence that die U.S. medepytuight op hierdie kroeglicatiop was reneonsd. M.ek neer spelling 'nd typographical errors have weesen korrekted without geente.