

An Annotated History of the Munchie

By Robert Francis

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I must apologize in advance for the quality of this history. It is no way the fault of the Munchie race; in fact the Munchie were great recordkeepers. Their early history was woven into great poetic epics not unlike Homer's Illiad and The Odyssey. However, due to the complexity of the Munchie spoken language their epics do not only follow rhythm and rhyme, but pitch and speed as well. And when translated into English (especially written English) much of their poetic system is lost.

The great oral traditions and culture of the Munchie were recorded into the memories of all of their escape ships. They were kept by a few of the scoutships; primarily for personal use. Unfortunately only three of the Il-Captains were interested in history and Lunchie's scoutship -- one of the three which carried them - - was damaged beyond repair and much of the records totally destroyed save the fragments in this history. The missing pieces were filled in by members of the Munchie whom I have become acquainted with over the years. I would like to thank them for their help and assistance in making this history possible.

THE HISTORY

The race which became collectively known as the Munchie originally came from the sixth planet (known in their language as **Derph**, The World) orbiting the blue giant star **Anya** which earth astronomers have catalogued as Sanduleak -69, 28 in the Large Magellanic Cloud. In the Tenth Gray Year (ca. 118,000 B.C.), massive sunspots on *Anya* were detected telescopically by **Intiac**, an early astronomer. Though his explanation was in error, Intiac's prophecies unfortunately came to pass.

To which Intiac the Heretic spoke:

"To burn mine eyes in shame and loathing.

Hear me not nor understand me. I laugh at thee.

The dark cancers will not heal by mine blood

growing and eating the health of the Sun.

The sky will star. Forever and cold.

When *Anya* dies. It will come to pass...

-- "Intiac's Curse", author unknown

Intiac believed the sunspots he had seen in his primitive telescope were lesions or cancers growing in the bowels of *Anya*. And at this time in Munchie history, cancer was believed to be caused by evil intentions in the host. Intiac's findings and conclusions were -- controversial to say the least. The central religious authority decreed *Anya* to be flawless (as it appeared to the naked eye) and Intiac in error. Though further telescopic observations by Intiac and other scientists continued to show huge numbers of sunspots, the dogma of the central church

prevailed and Intiac was put to death as a heretic; flayed alive following a trial which lasted fifteen weeks. Nothing more was said of sunspots for several generations.

Despite religious interference, the sciences continued to flourish. Astronomers continued to (quietly) chart the number of sunspots and follow them on their trek around *Anya's* surface. However, no one knew why sunspots were forming in the first place. The most popular explanation was the Combustion Theory which postulated whatever was burning on *Anya* was beginning to run out and the sunspots were the bare spots on the surface. Ironically this theory was proven wrong by church scientists who determined the sunspots were transitory objects, changing shape constantly and lasting perhaps only a few months. Debate over what *Anya* was made of and how it could be burning lasted another seventy five years until **Unya**, a brilliant physicist, developed atomic theory and laid down the basic understanding of nuclear fusion. He could not however explain the sunspots.

Nyak, a church scientist and contemporary of Unya, was working with rotating magnetic fields. Using mathematical models, he could describe sunspots to a degree of amazing accuracy. However, his model of sunspot activity didn't explain why the number of sunspots increased from year to year. A new mathematical model became his life's work and Nyak's final solution changed his life forever.

Nyak discovered the sunspots were caused by massive imbalances in the center of *Anya*, and when the total area of sunspots covered 20 percent of the surface, his theory indicated the star would explode. While the church wasn't as zealous as it had been in Intiac's day, Nyak's findings were enough to have him "banned from good civilization" with several hundred of his followers. Thus began an epic journey; first across the seas of The World and later in the cosmic oceans of the sky.

The boats were sailed for fifty days --
 On the sixteenth day Izra¹ screamed and scorched.
 The sky filled with heavenly fire and hid the stars
 For three days and three nights.
 The storm did blow. Did the waves correspond.
 All that was loaded filled heavy with water
 Until the one Kana, son of Tunya, did grow fearful
 He opened his mouth and spoke to Nyak, the Il-Captain²:
 An audience, Nyak, these waters are hungry
 The (hold?) it fills and we are lethargic.
 To this Nyak, the Il-Captain, did cry.
 I command thee, Kana, to get the others.
 We shall feed Izra, but not our lives.
 In Pishtim, we will rebuild.
 And so they removed their burdens

¹Izra was the goddess of clouds responsible for storms at sea.

²Il-Captain was a term for someone in charge of something no one wanted.

and the sea was fed and contented, did return asleep.

The sky returned as Izra was pleased.

The south, to Pishtim, they were directed

and so they did arrive there on the fiftieth day...

-- **"Traveler's Tale: The Exile's Journey to Pishitm, the Far Lands of the South, author unknown**

Despite the material losses suffered in the storms, the outcasts built a thriving community. They built new telescopes and instruments to replace those lost. Eventually they built larger telescopes and observatories, developed new instruments to substantiate their findings and became the leader in high technology. **Calnya**, the thirty-third Il-Captain (now a general term for *leader*) of the colony on Pishtim is credited with developing rocketry and becoming the first space traveler.

"What Il-Captain Saw"

The sky was lit by the Sun though it starred, the eyes.

Surprised, they (the stars) stared, didst they not blink once.

Did I look to see a great curving ground not unlike the maps.

Cloud appeared as dust and (lace?) over land and ocean.

With a thin slice between the World and heaven.

"The Il-Captain Returns"

The World whispered to me, its words a whistle.

Then she cried, a loud shriek

And didst I return in heat and in flame.

Feeling six times more as when I left...

-- **"Space Texts", Calnya believed to be the author**

Space exploration dominated the next hundred and fifty years. Small spacecraft were sent to the different planets in the solar system as well as their nearest stellar neighbors which were less than a light year away. Astronomers refined Nyak's mathematical models and predicted *Anya* would go supernova within a millennium. Before then, climate changes would render The World uninhabitable. The fifty-fourth Il-Captain (whose name has been lost to time) devised the "Great Plan"; the total migration of their population to another planet. The years immediately following the plan's inception were grim ones. The Munchie were almost overcome with the logistics of building gigantic spacecraft, cataloguing plant and animal life and -- most important -- figuring out their destination.

None of the other planets in the solar system were habitable. Besides, they would all be destroyed when *Anya* exploded. Even worse, astronomers determined none of the nearby stars would be far enough away to escape the intense radiation storm following the supernova. In fact, *Anya* could start a chain reaction; exploding

other stars throughout the entire Large Magellanic Cloud. The Grand Plan, already unimaginable in scope, had to be further complicated by extending the journey to another galaxy altogether.

Despite the problems, the Munchie constructed a fleet of hollowed out asteroids in less than 300 years with enough room to fit ten times the Munchie population. The extra room was designed for the upcoming generations of Munchie which would be born in intergalactic space. It took twenty seven years to complete the loading of the fleet, each complete with a sample of every plant and animal of the World. Meanwhile, a small group of scoutships were constructed to explore their galactic neighbor the Milky Way (known as The Nightbloom). These scouts were much smaller in size and with limited supplies. However, they could travel much faster; close to the speed of light. Seventy four spacecraft were launched and after seven years of travel (according to internal ship time; outside 100,000 years passed), SS-37 encountered the Sol system in the winter of 1980 A.D.

ENCOUNTERS WITH OTHER LIFE FORMS

Entry 2040 made by II-Captain

"I am less than a light year from a quiet (G2) star. While it is many times smaller than *Anya*, scientists say it is possible for planets to evolve around such stars. It will be several weeks [ship's time] before I am close enough to detect planets by mass inference and even longer before I can find a world within the habitable zone of this star. The computer estimates the habitability zone within (128 million miles) the surface!

Entry 2101 made by II-Captain

"Fool that I am! I still have not detected any planets within the habitable zone. However, I have discovered a gigantic radio source within the zone. It was so strong in (wavelengths longer than 2 inches) that it burned out my equipment. I only discovered it after putting in replacements. The strength of the signals -- the strongest in this system by a factor of a million; even stronger than a neutron star -- belies a natural origin. But can a civilization actually vomit out that much power to the stars?

Entry 2120 made by II-Captain

"I am in orbit around {Earth} and I have found intelligence. Large satellites share the geosynchronous orbit with me around this planet. Below me, the night side glitters from clusters of light -- regular and unchanging. Through telescopic observations I have detected some vast groundworks projects. However, this race is apparently just beginning to explore space. I have yet to find a manned spacecraft or evidence of such craft on their sister world (sic). Most likely, the inhabitants will have never met other life forms before. Our own history dictates I must be cautious.

Entry 2150 made by II-Captain

"My decision is made. I am preparing to land and initiate First Contact...

-- excerpt from Station log (SS-31), II-Captain (a.k.a.: Munchie Monster) author

On November 30, 1980 (local reckoning), II-Captain of the scoutship Station prepared to make his first landing on Earth in one of the craft's re-entry shuttles. II-

Captain chose the city of Chicago as his primary landing target; believing its proximity to the Great Lakes would make it a seaport and cosmopolitan enough for him to fit in as a trader from another country. Unfortunately, a violent electrical storm damaged his shuttle during the final phase of re-entry. He crash-landed thirty five miles northwest of his target. Il-Captain quickly discovered his plan to blend in had no chance of success. He therefore began to seek out an individual alien he could interface with on a cellular level. The Munchie had developed this type of technology to augment their brains with computers -- both internal and external. Il-Captain hoped this "puppetry interface" would work and he could make contact. On December 9, after several tries with other individuals, Il-Captain was finally successful.

"I found a puppet I liked at the Blackwell School Craft Bazaar today. It only cost a dollar twenty five... I felt funny when I first put him on and all I could do was open and close his mouth. Eric Stern, a friend of my brother, said he was "sure a munchy monster." I liked the name and somehow knew it was right. This was Munchie Monster... My mom asked me where he was from and I told her he was from outer space. There's this big story in my head with pictures but no words. I told my mom and she say I have a big imagination...

-- excerpt from the journal of Bob Francis December 9, 1980

Contact was spurious at first, but gradually both human and Munchie worked out a communication and became friends. Bob was Munchie's only contact with human beings; through him he learned their habits and decided his link must be kept secret. For Bob, the link was dismissed by friends and family as wishful thinking. Therefore no notice was taken as Bob and Munchie constructed several "Munchie Shuttles", so the Il-Captain could return to his scoutship in orbit.

Over the next five months, Munchie made a number of trips back and forth to his scoutship; accessing the technology and using it to construct a number of observation posts on the Earth. He continued his link with Bob and used it to further his observations. However, Munchie -- like most life-forms -- was aging, getting old. Chronologically he was almost 110,000 years old! In relative years, Munchie was past his prime. Il-Captain postponed the inevitable by cloning and replacing various body parts; new eyes, new mouth lining. Eventually it wasn't enough. On May 6, 1981, Il-Captain left Bob's side and returned to Station for the last time.

"Munchie was stolen today. I had him in his brown case like always, but we were going outside, so I put him in my lunchbox and everything in my cubbyhole. When I came back after lunch, it was all gone. I looked all over, checked all the trash cans, but I couldn't find him anywhere... I'm really worried; this is the longest he's ever been gone. I don't know what I'll do if I can't find him. I miss him very much...

-- excerpt from the journal of Bob Francis, dated May 6, 1981.

Munchie had been planning this final journey for several weeks and had been transferring his personality into the computer memory onboard Station (at the expense of much data). A suitable clone body was grown quickly and the memories recopied into the new body. The entire process took more than a month, but on June

14, 1981, Munchie Monster II (also known as Munchie) rejoined Bob and continued his observations.

FINDING COMRADES OLD AND NEW

On December 22, 1981, Munchie picked up a distress signal from the outer solar system; broadcasting on a frequency used only by scoutships. Using the Station, Munchie made a torturous high acceleration maneuver to rescue the newcomer. After a 48 hour race to match velocities with the craft, Munchie was able to come alongside and rescue the Il-Captain of scoutship 67. This new Il-Captain joined Munchie and Bob and was christened Lunchie. Together, they constructed new bases on the Earth and off and then converted Lunchie's now useless craft into a powerful beacon calling out to other Munchie explorers. And as the months and years passed, a trickle of Il-Captains made their way to Earth; staying on awhile then moving on. Munchie and Lunchie established a central point of operations from Earth; organizing all of the data brought in and giving suggestions on where to search for life next.

Scoutship 19 arrive in the summer of 1981, and the Il-Captain renamed Crunchie stayed on for two months. Later, his cloned replacement returned to Earth in early 1982 with some interesting news.

Entry 2191 made by Il-Captain

"Have entered the (HR6422) star system. It is only a (class M2) star, but it has planets! I haven't picked up any radio signals like those around Earth, but I am continuing to check.

Entry 2200 made by Il-Captain

"I was searching the wrong frequencies. A ship came out from the second planet of the system to meet me...

-- excerpts from the Survey log (SS-19), Il-Captain (a.k.a.: Crunchie) author

The Munchie race had found a second alien species. The Omegans (as they called themselves) were technologically more advanced than either Man or Munchie. Their system had been fully explored and colonized and -- in fact -- put on high alert when Survey coasted in. All omnidirectional communications were cut off until their scientists could determine what exactly the Survey was. Crunchie had been sending out a friendship message similar to the one broadcast from SETI scientists on Earth. Fortunately (or unfortunately, depending on your point of view) Omegan scientists could not decipher the message. After two weeks of deliberation, their curiosity got the better of them and they launched a ship to investigate the source and ask the occupant personally. The Omegans had a faster than light drive and a form of teleportation which worked across planetary distances. Thus Crunchie was surprised when four ships suddenly appeared less than ten kilometers from Survey and was doubly surprised when an Omegan knocked on the door to his control room not fifteen seconds later.

Crunchie spent three months with the Omegans and later became the first alien ambassador to their planet. Meanwhile the cultural board of their system government elected one of their scientists to travel to Earth and observe. This was much easier for the Omegans as they were humanoid; though on average sligher and paler than their human counterparts. Nevertheless, the Omegan observer (known as Dwight VanTheemsche) arrived on Earth in August, 1982, and stayed with Bob and Munchie for nearly a year and a half. During that time he filed constant reports on human social customs, political upheavals and -- occasionally -- the differences between him and his "fellow Earthmen".

"So far I have managed to hide my true identity quite well. The only serious problem is my natural time sense which is apparently quite different than theirs. Humans do not or cannot think about several subjects at once and have some difficulty organizing information and giving it priority. I find myself asking questions in an order which seems to them nonsensical...

-- excerpt from "Earth report", author "Dwight Van Theemsche"

Dwight filed his final reports in 1984 and returned to his planet to head a much larger Earth observation force and only returns to Earth infrequently. Meanwhile, Munchie and Omegans continued to share their technology. All scoutships were given the FTL drive for extra speed. Unfortunately, the new drive cut their range short and the Il-Captains could no longer return to *Derph* and share this new gift. After January, 1987, it no longer mattered. Earth based observatories recorded the explosion of *Anya*. The World had ended.

EPILOG

After eighteen months of looking, Omegan astronomers finally found the Munchie escape ships some fifty thousand light years from *Anya*; well out of danger, but still out of range of the new FTL scoutships. They still have 95,000 years of travel ahead of them. The search still continues for the rest of the scoutships. To date, only five have responded. The Il-Captain of SS-25 (named Blue) arrived at Earth in 1984. His ship was refitted for faster than light travel and Blue began searching likely star systems for the other scouts. He found SS-05, the Seek, in December 1986. While his ship was being refitted, the Il-Captain of the Seek told of a new discovery around the Blue Giant star Rigel. A discovery which prompted Dwight to make a special trip to Earth in May, 1987.

Entry 1956 made by Il-Captain

"The blue star is now a small disk in my [viewer]. There is a planet within the habitable zone. I will be making a course correction within the next [sixteen hours] so I can make a close flyby. The planet is large enough to be detected by mass analysis even from this distance. With odds so high of detecting life, I will not be sacrificing much of my speed.

Entry 1969 made by Il-Captain

"The planet is inhabited by an intelligent race. I have detected their buildings on the surface though they don't seem to have any form of space travel. A manned landing will not be possible as their gravity is much higher than Derph's and their atmosphere is poisonous. I will be sending down several unmanned probes to determine how advanced their technology is and perhaps determine whether they are ready to receive aliens...

Entry 1986 made by Il-Captain

"The probes information is beginning to come in. They are not like us at all...

-- excerpts from Seek log, author Il-Captain (a.k.a. Hunchie)

Rigel VII is the home of creatures not based on carbon. They are immense, slow moving beings with a high technology and language (which has yet to be deciphered). Dwight VanTheemsche is heading an expedition to Rigel to observe these beings in greater detail. Blue and Hunchie continue to explore the Sagittarius Arm of the Milky Way looking for the other sixty-nine scoutships still unaccounted for.

On Earth, Munchie and Lunchie help their Omegan counterparts to observe humanity. Only a handful of people are aware of their origins, but Munchie and Omegans agree that they should be able to reveal their alien origin within a century. And well before the asteroid ships of the Munchie arrive, the people of Earth along with Omegans and Munchie will have completely explored the galaxy. Indeed the Nightbloom will be able to welcome the Munchie with open arms.

**Schaumburg
12:04 am, 22 March, 1994**